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**Dancing around the edges: Dance in the primary  
school classroom**

Miriam Torzillo

**In partial completion of the degree of Doctor of Education**

**James Cook University**

**December 2016**

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## Statement of sources

### Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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Miriam Torzillo

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Date

**Statement on the contribution of others.**

Nature of assistance	Contribution	Name, title and affiliation
Intellectual support	Thesis proposal and publication preparation	Assoc Prof Reesa Sorin
	Assistance with methodological approaches	Prof Neil Anderson
	Editorial assistance – proof reading of three chapters	Ms Gil Cowden
	Proof reading of reference list	Mr Omid Hajhashemi
Creative support	Formulation of pedagogic framework	Ms Peta Weaver
	Illustrations for pedagogic framework-teaching kit	Ms Sarah Ambrose
Technical support	Thesis formatting	Mr Mark Collins - Client Services Librarian

### **Declaration of ethics**

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999), the joint NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997) and the James Cook University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and the research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Research Ethics Committee.

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Miriam Torzillo

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Date

## Acknowledgments

My inspiration for this journey, started some time ago, in my first dance class with Ruth Galene in Sydney, Australia. It was then that I came to understand that dance was more than learning steps, or doing tricks. Since then, many wonderful teachers and dancers have inspired me. The list is long, spanning too many years, notably Margaret Chapple and Keith Bain; Valerie Preston-Dunlop and Marion North; David Spurgeon; Stephanie St Clair and Eleanor Brickhill; Renaldo Cameron; Chris Jannides; Ralph Buck; the team from Ludus Dance Company; Sally Chance; Ann Green –Gilbert; Dee de Wit; Celia McFarlane; Cassie Meador, Matthew Cumbie and the whole family at Dance Exchange. The list could go on, the world of Dance education is a generous and welcoming one, collegiality comes naturally; sharing is what dancers and dance educators do.

The thesis journey is long, and without guides, interpreters, border negotiators, baggage handlers and a support team at base camp it would be impossible.

To the teachers and children I danced with along the way, you are the real heroes. The children and young people especially inspired me to become a more generous and playful teacher and to see the dancer in everyone. To the teachers, thanks so much for taking me on your own journey in dance, I learnt so much from you.

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## **Abstract**

In Australia, Dance education in primary schools has long been relegated to the edges of schooling, outside the recognized remit of education. It has been considered marginal to formal schooling and not worthy of assessment; its products mainly useful for entertainment (Bresler, 1993). If it existed at all, it was usually found within Physical Education (Stephens, 2010); sometimes outsourced to private providers; and almost always consisting of teacher directed and skills based lessons in social dance. Dance education taught according to the intent of the Curriculum, involving making and responding to dance was rarer indeed.

Despite this, some teachers taught dance. In Queensland Australia, following the implementation of a National Arts Curriculum, some music specialists had been directed to also teach dance and drama as part of their programs. This directive inspired a research project to explore the impacts of this directive on teachers and the experience of students in their classes. The project was founded on the researcher's personal experience of teaching dance, and the engagement of students and teachers, when they had the opportunity to learn or teach dance using a collaborative, embodied and creative pedagogy.

The experiences and concerns of children worldwide were echoed in my study. The type of dance learning they enjoyed and preferred provided opportunities to be physically engaged in learning; to work collaboratively; to express their ideas, to have choice; to be challenged and to have fun while learning. The study collected and analysed varied sources of data. Arts ways of thinking, analysing and presenting informed my collection, analysis and dissemination of findings.

The analysis of data in the first stages of the study identified the importance of the relational, embodied and expressive aspects of dance. From this initial stage, I arrived at a perspective I term 'socio-kin/aesthetic'. This perspective was used to assist in the organization and interpretation of findings. Ultimately this perspective has evolved into three pedagogic principles, which form the basis of my teaching framework.

My teaching framework is a further objective and professional product of this study. My challenge was to design a framework that would be of use to generalist teachers; the ones most likely to be tasked with teaching dance. The framework had to include strategies that are somewhat familiar to teachers, as a starting point for dance teaching. If the best way to learn how to teach dance is to start doing it (Buck, 2003) then step by step strategies, which are open-ended but scaffolded, to support students collaborative idea development were needed.

In some ways, this framework is also a creative product, emerging as it does from my teaching practice in which the pedagogy itself and the dances made, themselves become artworks; a sort of teaching/learning performance. In this model of pedagogy, the boundaries between the lesson phases are blurred, with creative and performative elements diffused throughout. Therefore the rationale for the learning and the outcome is for students to engage in artful practice; to emphasise process rather than product; and the making and doing of dance.

## **Glossary**

A glossary of some terms used in a particular way in this thesis.

### **Creative dance**

Creative dance refers to the use of dance elements and choreographic devices to create dance, usually in a classroom setting. A creative approach sets up learning structures or scaffolds for student dance making, using games, tasks and activities, based on the elements of dance such as time, space and dynamics.

### **Dance making**

Dance making rather than choreographing is used to denote an emphasis on the process. The term dance making deconstructs the idea of choreographing, exposing its constructedness. Making also refers to a non-elitist approach to Dance education, disavowing the high art terminology of choreography for the more prosaic but possible term dance making.

### **Embodied learning**

Where knowledge is stored in the body, as in learning a list of facts using a movement mnemonic, where a movement is chosen to represent each idea. Or where a concept is learnt in the body first before it is learnt using text or teacher exposition, such as learning about force and magnetism using dance.

### **Improvisation**

Improvisation is spontaneous movement in response to a stimulus. It may appear to be free-form, but the dancer almost always creates movement according to: a structure or rule, where certain decisions are set i.e. mirror your partner, or move while connected to your partner; or an image is embodied by the dancer such as moving in water or moving as water.

### **Relational pedagogy**

Refers to the relationships, which are at the heart of pedagogy and also to the use of interactive and collaborative teaching strategies and approaches that build relationships and enable collaborative creativity.

### **Shared vocabulary**

When movements, steps, gestures are generated through group games tasks and activities; a shared vocabulary of movements are built that the whole class can draw on for later use in dance making.

### **Capitalisation of Dance and the Arts in this thesis.**

- When dance is associated with the concept of education, it is capitalised.
- Dance is written in lower case when referring to dance in general.
- The Arts is always capitalised. The Arts is a subject in the Australian Curriculum.

## Table of contents

Statement of access.....	i
Statement of sources.....	ii
Statement on the contribution of others.....	iii
Declaration of ethics.....	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Abstract.....	vi
Glossary.....	viii
Capitalisation of Dance and the Arts in this thesis.....	viii
Table of contents.....	ix
Image credits.....	xiii
Introduction.....	1
Warm-up - IMMERSE.....	2
Exploration -.....	2
GATHER.....	2
Technique -.....	3
SIFT.....	3
Improvisations - SORT.....	3
Work in Progress -.....	3
CONSTRUCT.....	3
Reflecting -.....	4
STAND BACK–LOOK FORWARD.....	4
Finale -.....	5
RESOLVE.....	5
Warm-up - IMMERSE.....	6
Chapter 1 - Moving from the beginning.....	7
Exploration - GATHER.....	16
Chapter 2 – the literature review.....	18
Introduction.....	18
Rationale for selection of literature.....	20
Children and Dance.....	22
The start of my journey – recognising student perspective.....	22
The embodied experience – sense of self.....	23
Freedom to move - risky business.....	23
Making Dance Together.....	24
All in it together.....	25
Body thinking.....	26
Teachers and dance.....	27
Introduction.....	27
The body in the classroom – uncertainty and risky spaces.....	28
Not just for experts – teacher as connoisseurs, teacher as learner.....	28
I’m no expert – all in this together.....	29
You have to start somewhere – everyday creativity.....	31
Teaching in Dance.....	32
Introduction.....	33
Socio – A class act.....	34
The body at the centre – always moving.....	34
The creative process.....	36
Getting it together – helping to make ‘sense’.....	37
Gathering Ideas.....	39
Body.....	39
The social.....	41
Expressive.....	42
Implications - pedagogy.....	43

Conclusion.....	43
Technique - SIFT.....	45
Chapter 3 - .....	47
Methodology.....	47
Research practices .....	49
Discovering .....	49
Rationalising .....	50
Questioning .....	52
Planning.....	56
Conceptualising.....	57
The case study approach.....	59
Arts informed research.....	62
Connoisseurship .....	64
Narrative.....	65
Materiality .....	66
Research techniques .....	67
Observing.....	67
Documenting.....	69
Talking .....	70
Interacting .....	70
Remembering.....	71
Research Materials .....	72
Settings.....	72
Participants.....	77
Research procedures and challenges .....	80
Interpretation.....	80
Ethics .....	81
Access, ethics and informed consent .....	81
Validity.....	83
Limitations and challenges.....	84
Publication Details.....	86
Improvisations - SORT.....	88
Introduction .....	89
Curriculum Change .....	89
Arts Education in North Queensland .....	90
Contribution of Dance to Learning .....	90
Dance within the Arts Curriculum .....	90
Research Questions .....	91
Methodology .....	91
Participants and Context .....	92
Data Analysis .....	93
Findings - Teachers .....	94
Site A–Claire.....	94
Site A - Claire.....	96
Site B–Kate .....	98
Site B–Kate .....	98
Findings - Students.....	99
Subjective.....	100
Intrinsic .....	100
Instrumental.....	100
Discussion .....	102
How do Students Respond to Dance in the Classroom?.....	103
What are the Impacts on Teachers of Implementing Dance in the Classroom? .....	104
Conclusion.....	105
Chapter 5 - Making Movement, Making Meaning: Dance in the Primary School Classroom .	107
Introduction .....	107

Background .....	108
Research Design .....	109
Tools for Analysis .....	110
Data Analysis .....	112
Findings .....	113
Limitations and Possibilities .....	116
Chapter 6 - Dance in the Primary School Classroom: Making It Happen .....	119
Introduction .....	119
Dance in Education .....	120
The Contribution of Dance to Learning .....	121
Dance: Making It Happen .....	122
Teachers' Lack of Confidence .....	122
Teachers' Misunderstanding of the Meaning of Dance .....	124
Teachers Concern about Management Issues .....	129
Where to from Here? .....	132
Work in Progress – CONSTRUCT .....	134
Chapter 7 - Everyday Pedagogy for Dance Education .....	135
Introduction .....	135
Background .....	136
Performativity and Creativity .....	136
Pedagogy in Dance .....	137
School improvement and explicit teaching .....	138
The explicit teaching model .....	138
Methodology .....	140
Making connections .....	142
A fast paced familiar introduction .....	143
A way of making connection to students' prior learning .....	145
An explicit statement of expectations and intent .....	146
A Familiar Sequence for Student/Teacher Actions .....	147
Reflection or consolidation of learning .....	149
Discussion .....	149
Conclusion .....	152
Chapter 8 - .....	154
Showing What We Can Do: Assessment of Primary School Dance .....	154
Introduction .....	154
Methodology .....	155
Background .....	157
Sociocultural .....	161
Kinaesthetic .....	166
The Imaginative .....	170
Conclusion .....	172
Chapter 9 - Dancing toward each other: Dance in the primary school classroom .....	175
Introduction .....	175
Methodology .....	177
Research Questions .....	177
Background .....	179
Impacts of Neo Liberal Agendas .....	179
Impacts of Technology .....	180
Outsourcing Dance .....	181
Learning in Dance .....	182
Socio-cultural – Connecting to each other .....	182
Embodied – connecting to the physical .....	184
Creative – connecting to the expressive .....	186
Findings .....	187
Socio-cultural .....	188
Embodied .....	191

Expressive .....	192
Conclusion.....	196
Reflecting – STAND BACK .....	198
Chapter 10 - Trust and Witnessing: Lessons for dance education/Professional development in community .....	199
Introduction .....	199
Professional development – Arts Education .....	200
Dance Education in the Curriculum .....	201
Methodological Approach.....	203
Research informed by Practice.....	204
Dancing as Research .....	204
Trust and Witnessing.....	209
Reflecting – LOOK FORWARD .....	217
Chapter 11 - Towards a pedagogic framework for teaching dance .....	219
Dance in the Curriculum .....	219
How is dance taught? .....	219
What theories inform this framework?.....	221
Relational learning .....	221
Embodied learning .....	225
Creative learning .....	227
What is pedagogy? .....	231
Pedagogic frameworks .....	232
Designing a framework .....	233
Transformational pedagogies .....	234
The Productive Pedagogies .....	234
Age-appropriate pedagogies.....	235
Inspirational pedagogies.....	237
8 ways Indigenous Education Framework .....	239
Pragmatic frameworks.....	241
Common Framework .....	241
Multi-literacies .....	243
Design Thinking.....	243
Tools for Thinking .....	245
The design of the Dance <i>AnyWAY</i> framework.....	246
Figure 26 Themes as represented in word cloud.....	247
Finale - RESOLVE.....	248
Chapter 12 - Dance any way – a pedagogic framework.....	249
References .....	300
Appendices .....	331
Appendix 1 Sample of Teaching Reflection.....	331

### List of figures

Figure 1 Socio-kin-aesthetic perspective.....	57
Figure 2 Methodological influences .....	62
Figure 3 The neighborhood of Dance education .....	72
Figure 4 Publication details .....	87
Figure 5 Collaborative dance making.....	96
Figure 6 Teacher student interaction .....	97
Figure 7 Solving a movement problem .....	102
Figure 8 Explicit teaching Lesson Outline (Source: Trinity Beach State School, 2014) .....	140
Figure 9 Explicit teaching sequence and dance teaching sequence.....	151
Figure 10 Developing relationships and trust in dance .....	206

Figure 11 Choice in collaborative activities. ....	223
Figure 12 Shifting the balance – using student ideas. ....	224
Figure 13 activities to encourage sharing and collaboration ....	224
Figure 14 Non-verbal strategies. ....	226
Figure 15 A story of embodied learning.....	226
Figure 16 Learning by doing. ....	227
Figure 17 balancing the tensions of creative teaching in dance ....	229
Figure 18 Formative assessment opportunities in dance. ....	230
Figure 19 Teacher as co-learner ....	231
Figure 20 Reflection in action in a dance class. ....	233
Figure 21 Reflective questions based on pedagogic principles. ....	236
Figure 22 Teaching creatively in dance.....	239
Figure 23 Three symbols for a pedagogic framework.....	241
Figure 24 A continua of task type for a dance activity.....	242
Figure 25 Lesson phases.....	245
Figure 26 Themes as represented in word cloud. ....	247

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Page	
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11	Peta Weaver

## Introduction

*O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,  
How can we know the dancer from the dance? — William Butler Yeats*

This thesis by publication represents both a body of work and my research journey. The papers documented the ‘dance’ of my thinking along the way and the evolving and sharpening of the research focus. The subject of my thesis is Dance education, so I have envisioned the process of creating and forming it as akin to choreography (Janesick, 2000) with each stage of the writing sharing similarities with the stages of making dance, therefore I have named each stage of the study using the terminology of dance making. In addition, each chapter has particular relevance to either the knowledge or the practice of Dance education, and to one or other of the research questions:

- How do students and teachers experience dance in the classroom?
- What types of learning activities take place, and what pedagogic approaches contribute to student engagement and learning?

Literature review, methodology and discussion chapters are included in the thesis, but in a different form. Literature has been reviewed during the period of the study and included in published papers, but I have returned to the literature at the end of the study to include more recent publications and to reconnect the literature to findings of my research. Methodology has been similarly included in the chapters as appropriate, but also in the thesis as a chapter intended to chart my emergent methodology and the ongoing interrogation and interpretation of data. Findings and discussion, which unfolded during the research process and were presented in published papers, are included as chapters. The published papers do not appear exactly as they do in print. For the purposes of readability, I have edited the background, literature and methodology sections of the papers to remove redundancies. Due to curriculum changes during the period of the study, I have made changes to terminology to reduce inconsistency.

This thesis contributes to knowledge by collecting evidence of how dance is experienced in the classroom by teachers and students. It contributes to practice through the design of a pedagogic framework for teaching dance in primary school classrooms. It is important because information about the actual practice of dance in classrooms and the experience of students and teachers is limited. Because of this, the papers were intended to document the experiences of students and teachers and the researcher’s own journey in Dance education, so that it makes sense to readers in a way that is “more or less ‘useful, liberating, fulfilling and rewarding’” (Crotty 1998, p.48).

The framework will give teachers the tools to more critically and purposefully evaluate material and human teaching resources and design engaging, empowering and compelling learning experiences. It is based on learning that is relational, embodied and expressive. Teachers should be able to use the pedagogy from ‘where they are at’ and fit it into their setting and school day. The progression of the thesis is described below.

The sections are divided as follows:

- The stage of dance making that informed the chapters in the section. This is presented in bold lettering.
- The process of both dance and research that directed the chapters. This is presented in upper case.
- The chapter titles in the section
- An introduction to the section
- The chapters

The following describes the thesis sections using these divisions.

### **Warm-up - IMMERSE**

#### **Chapter 1 - Always moving - an auto-ethnographic beginning**

The dancer always warms-up before starting a class or beginning to choreograph. The warm-up might consist of a series of exercises, a walking meditation, or a scan of the body and its possibilities. Chapter 1 is an auto-ethnographic introduction to my research journey, purpose and perspective. It is the warm-up for what is to follow. I warm-up by asking the question “what was happening then?” to inform my answer to the research question “what is happening now?” By immersion in the memories of being a student, dancer, teacher, educator and community artist I come to position myself as a researcher, by making explicit my deep connections to dance and Dance education.

### **Exploration - GATHER**

#### **Chapter 2 – the literature review.**

After warming up, the dancer begins to explore by gathering ideas, movements, gestures, pathways, from experience, past work, dance history, observation and more. A literature review is also a means of gathering ideas from the research that has gone before.

In this literature review, I gather and look closely, at ideas about Dance education found in the literature through the lens of my research and teaching experience.

## **Technique - SIFT**

### **Chapter 3 - Many ways to dance – methodology.**

In choreographing a dance we choose not only a form of representation, but also the way we want the world to be conceived (Janesick, 2000). A researcher, like a dancer, selects the techniques, forms and styles appropriate to the meaning they want to communicate, using theory and method as filters to sift through the data. A case study methodology was chosen in order to gather a diversity of voices and bodies, in this particular case of Dance education.

## **Improvisations - SORT**

### **Chapter 4 - Dancing around the edges.**

### **Chapter 5 - Making movement - making meaning**

### **Chapter 6 - Dance in the classroom: making it happen**

Improvisation is “an essential precondition of genuine creativity, an essential aspect of dance within arts curriculum” (Bresler, 2004, p.127). The process of improvisation is a process of exploration, inquiry, physically playing with ideas, sorting through the movement material, developing and juxtaposing ideas and allowing themes to emerge. Research is a similar process. Research sorts through data, using intuition and experience as guides and theory as a counterweight.

**Chapter 4 - Dancing around the edges.** In Chapter 5, data collected from interviews with two teachers and observations of 61 children in three classes were analysed to understand more about the experience of dance from the students’ and teachers’ perspectives; in particular the struggles and the rewards for teachers as they let down their defences to become more engaged with dance.

**Chapter 5 - Making movement - making meaning.** The paper, “Making Movement - Making Meaning: Dance in the Primary School Classroom” used multi-modal data collected from 61 students and 2 teachers to explore children’s meaning making methods in the dance classroom.

**Chapter 6 - Dance in the classroom: making it happen.** In the dance classroom, the teacher can become a co-creator of dance with children; becoming part of the process of meaning making, or at least actively participating in the energy of that process. In Chapter 6, I drew from this understanding and the literature to propose strategies to help teachers overcome the barriers that prevent them implementing dance in their classrooms.

## **Work in Progress - CONSTRUCT**

### **Chapter 7 - Everyday pedagogy for dance education.**

### **Chapter 8 - Showing what we can do - Assessment in dance.**

## **Chapter 9 - Dancing towards each other**

When the artist presents works in progress, it is a documentation of their creative process and product. Work in progress presentations often invite feedback from audience and peers, discussions of the process of dance making, and the improvisational strategies used. The illusion of the finished product is reduced or dissolved and the audience are positioned as collaborators, allowed to see the work involved in the progress of the dance; the rough edges and the not-yet-answered questions. For the teacher, the work is always in progress as they deal with the constant work of planning, implementing and teaching - ideally in collaboration with colleagues as they construct themselves as teachers.

**Chapter 7 - Everyday pedagogy for dance education.** In Chapter 7, a model of teaching, prescribed for use in the region during the period of the research, was compared with a lesson structure and pedagogy I have been using in Dance education. The aim was to help teachers understand the logic and structure of the active, collaborative and imaginative approach of creative dance pedagogy, using a structure and language understandable to generalist classroom teachers.

**Chapter 8 - Showing what we can do - Assessment in dance.** In Chapter 8, some issues related to assessing dance in the classroom are unpacked and strategies and approaches outlined for their resolution.

**Chapter 9 - Dancing towards each other.** In Chapter 9, I critically reflect on the impacts on Dance education from standardising and performative agendas. These agendas tend to lead to the domination of instructive pedagogies; a reduction in hands-on learning and a further disconnect between mind and body. Active, relational and creative pedagogy of dance is offered as an alternative.

## **Reflecting - STAND BACK–LOOK FORWARD**

**Chapter 10 - Trust and Witnessing – lessons for Dance Education**

**Chapter 11 – Structuring learning for Dance Education?**

Making art is an iterative process involving reflection and continual development. As the research progressed and understandings developed and emerged, I had the opportunity to reflect on past experiences and toward the future.

**Chapter 10 - Trust and Witnessing – lessons for Dance Education.** In Chapter 10 I reflect on the personal professional development opportunity of attending the Dance Exchange Summer School in Washington, USA, and the lessons of this participatory community dance event for Dance education in schools.

**Chapter 11 – Structuring learning for Dance Education?** In chapter 11, I reflect on pedagogic frameworks I have used in the past and some I have recently discovered, to inform my own framework. This chapter is illustrated with implications for the classroom by way of specific examples of teaching strategies and approaches, informed or inspired by each of the frameworks outlined.

**Finale - RESOLVE**

**Chapter 12 - Dance *ANY*way – a pedagogic framework.**

In this thesis, the finale is the pedagogic framework I have designed. My intention was to create something that would be both aspirational and pragmatic; part framework, part toolkit and part ideas file.

## Warm-up - IMMERSE

### Chapter 1 - Moving from the beginning

The dancer starts slowly, body memory returns, easing into joints, bones, muscles, skin, recalling through moving, immersing in one movement, which then leads to others.

Finding their ground, weight, flow, energy, asking questions:

What if? What is happening here? How does it feel?

My first chapter is my warm-up. Warming up the space for what is to follow, immersing in my stories of being a: *mover*; student; *dancer*; teacher; educator.



## Chapter 1 - Moving from the beginning

### All ways moving

*They come dancing down the aisle in a dancing moving world of their own, parent following with the trolley. Calling out “watch out for the lady” or “walk normally”.*

*A child spontaneously dancing, exploring their moving body, coming down the aisle of the supermarket, or climbing over furniture in a waiting room and being told to “sit up straight, sit properly”*

*I feel like saying, “don’t listen, keep dancing, keep it going”*

*I know those kids, I meet them in classrooms all the time, trying to keep still, not always succeeding and every now and then they give up trying, maybe just for the heck of it.*

*What about in school? Now that the ‘sit down, shut up, do your test’ crowd, are back in charge, every batch of kids being constrained by the chair, the desk, the forward-facing classroom, even more being kept still by teachers, in classrooms where the most important thing they have to learn is to follow instructions.*

*I have been in that class, a dance class where you can get in trouble for doing all sorts of things.*

For moving too much

*Or for not moving when you are supposed to*

*For laughing too much*

*Or for sulking*

***I’ve seen them itching to move, or just not being able to contain it, and then making the grouchy face or just refusing to cooperate, if their enthusiasm to move overreaches itself***

*Then memories – I was that child who couldn’t keep still*

*A lot of the time I felt like I was behind a gauze looking in on the world, being supersocially shy and not knowing how to relate. So I would ‘draw a dance’ as both a barrier and a bridge to everyone on the other side. I couldn’t keep still. Even in supposed stillness, I was always moving inside my head, marking the movement.*





*I was always ‘balletying’, if there is such a word, or imitating a dancer on an American TV show or sitting in front of the tube with one, or both, legs wrapped around my neck in a contorted position, I must have found it comfortable, or I was dreaming*

## **Making movement - making sense**

*Dancing helped with the awkwardness among groups of people, especially during those standing around times, when there were farewells to be made after visiting, dancing helped there.*

*But everyone else thought I was actually writing in the air, maybe even writing about them.*

*“She’s writing something bad, maybe writing something bad about you!”*

*I knew it had happened, but never recognised or knew or remembered what I was doing. . .*

*Relatively recently I started doing it again, during a period of anxiety . . . boom, I got it . . . turns out back then I hadn’t been writing at all, but tracing a complicated series of permutations of the figure 8 on my air blackboard. So what, I was dancing, and that always felt safe.*

## **Moving to learn - or just needing to move**

### **Getting to do ‘real’ dancing**

*I was so skinny the doctor advised mum to take me to ballet classes “to build me up”*

*It wasn’t that I needed movement to learn, but needed movement to make sense of the world.*

*Maybe if I had been a solid, athletic kid, I would have ended up playing netball or swimming.*

*‘Whew’ a very close call!*

*My first ballet class wasn’t the usual pink ‘leotarded, eisteddfod dreaming’ illusion of most ‘girls’. My teacher wasn’t the aging ballet mistress of a suburban ballet school. It was a little more overwhelming, scary even.*



*She was an emigre dancer with a background in the merged with the sensibility of Isadora Duncan.*

*Our classes were detailed, she had high expectations, wanted a certain classical style. But then I became absorbed by it. . . Dreaming of Swan Lake, ballerinas twirling*

*Everybody else had something they 'did'. I did ballet.*

*Later as teenagers, we became a small amateur dance company, performing in community venues. We danced to the classics and Dave Brubeck wearing crazy costume sized wigs. Mostly we had a ball, BUT, we just hoped that our friends wouldn't see us with her. She, with her crazy, fake furs, leg warmers, mad hairdo, constantly air-kissing and swanning around, but after classes, we (her company) would sit with our teacher talking dance, art, life, expression, history, endlessly making connections across these worlds . . . there was something about that energy, that crazy European creativity, I grabbed on to it.*

## **Dance - not just steps**

**From an early age, I knew there was more to dance than just learning steps.** *It is both intellectual and emotional; an investigation and a release; strongly connected to emotions. To the senses it is passionate and pleasurable and powerful.*

*Strongly connected to the intellect, my more rational side. Both are important in the engagement I have with dance, the joy and even thrill. My/our relationship with our teacher was not typical of the time . . . recognising us as both individuals and as a team. Definitely not the sausage machine idea of education . . . feed them in and churn them out.*

## **Being a teacher**

*My first dance teaching experience wasn't anything to write home about. I did a cover for my own teacher's class, when I was older and in the last year of school.*

*I had absolutely nothing to go on, except what I'd seen her do, and to pretty much try to be her.*

*And isn't it said about teachers - they teach the way they have been taught. I did my apprenticeship before I knew about the 'Dance education' heritage. And maybe I kept doing that for a long time; a durational performance, a long gestation.*

*During that long time, down the track somewhat I made my pilgrimage to the birthplace (as I saw it then) of Dance education, to sit at the feet of the pioneers.*

*They were the real deal . . . delivering the heritage of Rudolf Laban and educational dance. I was really in the thick of it. At the same time the UK was abuzz with dance, with dance performances and dance classes. I felt connected to a whole history of modern dance; dance that could be deconstructed and re-constructed, observed, analysed and notated.*

*And it turned out creative dance was definitely not the same thing as 'interpretive dance'*

*That meme.*

*The post-modern influence was everywhere for me then, the everyday, the pedestrian was available as material for dance. Anyone could dance and anything could be called a dance.*

*That challenge, the rethinking/remaking of dance is vindicated now when I dance with children.*

The investigation and reparation of the body and movement became part of the working process of dancers using somatic practices such as Feldenkrais



## **Dance - body thinking**

*Ideokinesis, body-mind centring and more. The fact of the 'thinking body' was now a thing. Learning more about yourself from the inside became just as much an intellectual exercise as learning about yourself from the outside.*

*End of the body-mind split*

Maybe . . .

*It had to be good for teaching; an opportunity for kids to connect to the world and other bodies.*



**What does it take for teachers to start teaching dance, if they have never seen anything but the local ballet concert or reality television versions of dance. Without some experience of seeing/knowing what it might look like, no experience of it, will they find it difficult to change their view?**

*Maybe the best way would be to stop thinking of dance in the Eurocentric and idealised way we do . . .*

Maybe

I kept that idealism going for a while, I was still the expert, definitely knew more than the 'ordinary' teacher, the students. Having a vision of what the end product would look like was a burden. For a while I was a post-modern purist snob; an elitist really, looking down on the community artists 'prancing about' with lanterns and without technique. But I had to change . . .

## **Dancing across borders**

*It was dancing in the community that taught me not to be so precious about dance.*

*Taught me to love the small dance, the ordinary dance, the dance conversation, the exuberant dance of a small child,*

*the richness of dance handed on.*

*I didn't really know much about teaching dance from a community dance perspective but I got the importance of inviting rather than instructing, welcoming all ways of moving and movers, making a safe space for expression,*



*developing a relationship with your class or participants, enabling people to tell their stories and finally to support the small steps as well as the big leaps.*

*Not teaching the content, but teaching the people in front of you*

*Working with pre-service teachers hammered home that message*

*that education is an exchange; an interchange.*

*Not a lecture but a conversation.*

*Respect for the learner.*

*Every time I teach a class,*

I get to think of that.



## Respect for the learner

*When you are a 'researcher' or even a researcher in training, you get to do the research dance, and sometimes to enjoy it.*

*A great joy, serendipitous bonus of research was the opportunity to take myself to conferences, institutes and summer schools around the world, where dance and research are the same thing.*

*Dance conferences are the bomb for that. The DACI (dance and the child international conferences) are the primo. I used to go to such events, and only ever go to the practical workshops. At that time all I cared about was the teaching, the dancing, doing the workshops, learning from the practitioners, gurus like Anne Green Gilbert and the rest.*



## Dance as research

*I missed all those research gurus the first time around, but then.*

Then the talking became fascinating. I put the pieces together, eventually.

I started off thinking dance was a smart thing, back then, but somehow not getting that it wasn't just about perfect dancing or about a certain type of dancing or dancer.

**NOW the connection has been made - research is dance - dance is research.**

## **Foundation for Community Dance Summer School**

*Intergenerational dance, dance and age, all ages, all types of bodies, dancing the heroine's journey, dancing that opened up the spine, the attention, deepened empathy and built my understanding of relationships. The simplest ideas once opened up seemed amazing. Not copying a movement but translating it into every abled body.*



## **Dance Exchange Summer Institute**

*Witnessing, asking the questions: What is dance? Who can dance?  
Where can dance take place?*

*Feeling like a proper dancer again, the oldest participant - but*

*still dancing, feeling the pain and the joy and the journey, choreographing, performing, the thrill and the fear and knowing, trusting.*

## **Impulz Tanz – Vienna**

The importance of inclusive practice - the value of copying as a tool - the idea of translating and shared pedagogy.

Building the social from the ground up, the value of the expressive as opposed to the functional.

Teaching with generosity and openness to the learner, all sizes, shapes, abilities and ages.

Making it joyous and supportive and valuable for every body.

*Through that whole time I had the chance to learn from the eccentrics, the pioneers, the radicals, the groundbreakers.*



*New teachers, new post-modernists who were trying to break down the rules of what dance was, what teaching was, and what the process of dance and choreography was. I got to see it from the perspective of a student. What lessons worked, what made sense.*



*In the end I packed an enormous suitcase of ideas, plans, strategies, movement material,*

*But now I've had to unpack it in a somewhat more systematic way,*

*And not just grabbing what I needed, when I needed it; the thing that was most useful then and there.*

*There were the bibles - the dance teaching texts - that I just kept going back and back to, but always with the nagging thought that there was something missing.*

*What was missing was those texts were written in a different culture, in a different time, in a different place, and I was in Australia, in a regional area, teaching kids who had different life experiences, different stories to tell, dances to dance.*



*I had to assemble my own tool kit, develop my own method.*

*I had to find my own way to teach. And this is where that little lesson I learned way, way, back, came back to me; that I'm not teaching dance, I'm teaching kids. And that's the kids who are in front of me. And what can I use to make sense for them?*

*After all that unpacking – of the suitcase—I had to lay the whole thing out, and step my way through it in a funny choreography, to put together something that was important. And then I had to repack it to suit the now. SO*



*I decided to dance ANYway*

*Dance ANYway – even if there is no support – the kids are the support. You have to look for other teachers who get it, join with them.*

*Dance ANYway – even if it is hard to find a space – make a space*

*Dance ANYway – even if the definition of what dance is, wants to limit dance to mere technical skills – ask the question, crack open the definition, dance anyway even if you are going to fail, to make mistakes*

*Dance ANYway – dance in your body – share, reflect  
translate*

*Dance ANYway – find your own way to move - make your own choices*

*Dance ANYway – dance your own dance – tell your own story*

## ***Dance ANYway***

## Exploration - GATHER

### Chapter 2 – the literature review

#### Introduction

Exploration is about gathering ideas, movements, gestures, pathways.

It is about developing ideas, transferring one idea into a new part of the body or a new context.

Mixing matching and re-mixing.

Seeing how far an idea can take you, not sure where it will end.

Remembering where the body has been.

The dance and dancers that have gone before . . .

Is there any new material? Is anything original?

Perhaps there isn't in this day of the remix. The research journey and the re-search and re-view is an opportunity for a different perspective.

The literature review is also a summary of the knowledge gained through the research and re-search of the literature, during the period of the study. The poem at the beginning reflects the state of mind of the novice researcher, entering the field for the first time.



## THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

### *Or just the journey*

One I did many times, here in the tropical farming country, my home

Struggling along through the jungle, then the foothills, not sure what all this growth was; poisonous or useful, familiar or strange, gathering seeds as I went.

Knowing nothing,

Feeling the weight of everyone or anyone who has been before, feeling the need to leave some things behind, to lighten my load, throw away some of the old, so I could take on the new.

There is a path upwards, if you can find your way through the undergrowth

From up there, YOU look down with superiority  
Doubting our credibility?

*We say*

*"Isn't it enough to just know something, from experience?"*

*You say*

*"Where's the proof, the certainty, show us the **DATA**"*

*You at the top of the hill, look down on us*

*Say*

*"See if you can work it out, draw your own map, or follow these we prepared earlier"*

At the beginning you can't take your first step until you see the path, but once you find it, you get tempted to look back, each time seeing more of what the landscape was and is.

The old growth as well as the new growth

The invasive species

The clear, ordered and manicured farmland, and the messy possibilities at the edges of systems.

I'm able to see what has remained, what has lasted, and the new and exciting elements in the system that come into view, new ways of navigating and managing the landscape that respects what was already there, disrupting the domination of mechanistic achievement driven progress and proposing a more harmonious way of standing lightly on the earth.

## Chapter 2 – the literature review

### Introduction

A literature review is considered a foundational element in the research process. In qualitative research, especially where the process is emergent or inductive, the literature search may be conducted at different stages of the study; including the final stages in order to help make sense of the data and theories generated from the data (Creswell, 2002). This could also take account of changing and emerging scholarship in the field, as well as a researcher's emerging understanding of the implications of particular areas of scholarship.

The literature review in a professional doctorate shares some characteristics of the practice based thesis, particularly the framing of “the practice-derived problem” not just “the gap in knowledge . . . more typically associated with scholarly writing” (San-Miguel & Nelson, 2007, p.75). This review aims to do both by connecting theory and practice. The review privileges knowledge drawn from the literature; but where appropriate incorporates reflections from research or my own teaching practice. In this chapter I use the term “the researcher” to refer to the generic researcher role, but use the first person pronoun when referring to my own experience; so as to make explicit my intention of connecting the literature and my experience, to better tackle the real world problem that drove the research (San-Miguel & Nelson, 2007).

Of particular relevance to this study is the literature on creativity (Blamires & Peterson, 2014; Chappell, 2007a; Craft, 2003:2008; Craft, Cremin, Hay & Clack, 2014; Denmead, 2011; Glaveneau, 2011; Moran, John-Steiner & Sawyer, 2003; Redlich & Lewis, 2015; Sowden, Clements, Wright & Pascoe, 2014); embodied pedagogy (Anttila, 2015; Kentel & Dobson, 2007; Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2015; Nielsen, 2015; Somerville & Green, 2011; Sunday, 2015) relational pedagogy (Fraser, Price & Aitken, 2007; Hopper, 2012), and culturally responsive and inclusive Dance education (Ashley, 2010; Cheesman, 2016; Melchior, 2011:2016; Zitomer, 2016). The new materialisms call attention to what ‘matters’, resisting the binary divisions and the body-mind split by flattening hierarchies, and privileging relations and interaction, which therefore has implications for Dance education and for this literature review (Atkinson & Scott, 2014; Hickey-Moody, Palmer & Sayers, 2016; Mclure, 2013; Somerville, 2016).

The literature written in response to neo-liberal agendas in education (Burnard, 2015; Burnard, & White, 2008; Caldwell, 2010; Hardy & Boyle, 2011; Polesel, Rice & Dulfer, 2013; Thompson & Harbaugh, 2013) revealed the impact of high-stakes, test-driven accountability regarding Arts education and creative teaching and learning (Ewing, 2013; Garvis & Pendegast, 2010).

It is in a sense truly a re-view. At the end of the research project I took stock, taking account of where I have been, and also the changes that have taken place during the research journey. The literature selected for review is the literature that has been most significant in shaping and re-shaping my methodological approach and theoretical perspective.

This review was driven and informed by my research questions, which at the end of the research process was distilled to two:

- How do children and teachers experience dance in the classroom?
- Which pedagogic framework would best support teachers to implement dance in their classrooms?

This literature review is divided into the following sections:

- Children and Dance
- Teachers and Dance
- Teaching in Dance
- Gathering Ideas.

The first three sections are further structured according to my socio-kin-aesthetic theoretical perspective. In relation to dance, a socio-cultural perspective acknowledges and respects the differing experiences and cultural capital each child brings to the dance classroom and the relationships established through dancing together. An embodied perspective questions the taken-for-granted assumption that the mind plays the most central role in knowing, perceiving and reasoning (Bresler, 2004; Davidson, 2007; Powell, 2007) and expands the idea of the community of learners (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Vygotsky, 1979) to include the physical as well as the conceptual and affective aspects. An imaginative perspective values the expansion of a child's perceptive and expressive capabilities (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000; Eisner, 1998; Green, 1995) through imaginative inquiry, in which children and young people can engage in 'opportunity thinking' (Fraser et al, 2006) and artful behaviour (Blatt-Gross, 2013). Kemmis et al (2013), discuss the practices formed in the 'intersubjective spaces' of the semantic, material and social. In dance the spaces are literally felt, when dancers physically relate and create ideas together.

In 'Children and Dance' I considered the question of how children experience dance, kinaesthetically, collaboratively, and expressively, and selected research that used narrative, arts-based or participatory approaches to gather the views and responses of children to dance, and in particular to dance making (Anttila, 2003, 2007; Atkinson & Scott, 2014; 2011; Bond & Stinson, 2000, 2007; Leonard, 2014; Nielsen, 2009, 2012; Sansom, 2009, 2011; Stinson, 1997). I was not searching for proof of the benefit of dance, by collecting hard data or positivist confirmation that dance participation would raise test scores, but rather searching for

convincing portrayals of children's engagement and children's views from real classrooms (Bond, 1994; Deans, 2011; Nilges, 2004; Park, 2011). It is here that new materialism is relevant, because it calls attention to the way that embodied data in particular, as part of the research entanglement, resist representation, going beyond the dictums of hard data and demands for evidence-based practice (Somerville, 2008, 2016). Embodied data are more complex, ephemeral, in the moment, and therefore rich with possibility (Manders & Chilton, 2013).

I considered the question of 'Teachers' Experience of Dance', by analysing research into teacher attitudes, and from classroom-based research, to find evidence of responses to the physical, collaborative and creative aspects of learning in dance (Buck, 2005; Deans, 2011; Fraser, Henderson, Price, Bevege, Gilbert, et al., 2007; Gross, 2011; Holmes & Dougherty, 2010; Russell-Bowie, 2012; Snook, 2012). Because of the limited number of studies of teachers' experience in dance, I further considered the broader literature in Arts education, and pedagogy in general (Alter, Hays, & O'Hara, 2009; Collins, 2016; Garvis, 2012; Garvis & Prendegast, 2012; Klopper & Powers, 2011; Lemon, Garvis & Klopper, 2015; Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008). My recent reading is a reminder to rethink the relative importance of teaching and learning, by positioning the teacher participants and myself as co-learners in dance (Harris, 2013; Morgan, Pendergast, Brown & Heck, 2014). Studies of dance pedagogy and pedagogic contexts have provided a picture of the enabling events and experiences by which specialist and generalist teachers develop their practise (Chappell, 2007a; Keun & Hunt, 2006; Nilges, 2004).

'Teaching in Dance' includes an examination of the impact of neo-liberal agendas on education that have further limited the place of dance in schools. I unpack pedagogic frameworks for dance and approaches to pedagogy that aim to transform the learning encounter and, in particular, the embodied, relational and expressive context of teaching and learning (Antilla, 2007; Holland & O'Connor, 2004; Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2015; Meiners & Garrett, 2015; Melchior, 2016; Morgan, Pendergast, Brown & Heck, 2014; Nielsen, 2012; Sansom, 2009; Sunday, 2015).

Finally, I gather ideas that will help me to design a framework for teaching dance that embraces relational, embodied and creative teaching and learning.

### **Rationale for selection of literature**

In my experience of teaching dance, I have observed the importance children place on using their bodies and collaborating with their peers to express their own movement ideas. To put this experience into a wider context, I was inspired by studies that were convincing due to their verisimilitude or lifelikeness (Bruner, 1990; Polkinghorne 1988, 1989), rather than from rules

(of analysis). Research in education is generally dominated by a preference for collecting solid knowledge and hard data (Eisner, 1997). Whereas this may not be a preferred methodology in Arts education, which involves open-ended processes and invites diversity of responses, in contrast to other academic subjects which focus on pre-determined outcomes and correct answers (Eisner, 1994; Gardner, 1990; Wilkinson et al., 1992). This has implications for my research, where the aim is not to prove but to understand. Key research in Dance education that informed my broader understanding of student experience in dance came from the United Kingdom, United States, Finland, New Zealand, and Australia. Although student experience was not the focus of all studies, they did however include descriptive accounts of learning encounters that helped to put my own experience and my own research problems and questions into perspective.

In the United States, a strong emphasis on student engagement (Minton, 2007; Stinson, 1997) is complemented by research that seeks to map the cognitive processes involved in collaborative dance making (Giguere 2011; Nesbitt, 2013). In Finland, the 'life of the child', and their embodied expressions is a central concern of dance scholars and practitioners (Antilla, 2007). Prolonged engagement in settings and the use of multi-modal collections of data, add detail and verisimilitude to research (Neilsen, 2012).

In New Zealand (NZ), the knowledge of dance scholars is based in their own teaching practice. This embodied experience lends authenticity to their descriptions of learning encounters in dance (Ashley, 2010; Buck, 2003; Cheesman, 2016; Melchior, 2016; Sansom, 2011; Snook, 2012). There is a deep commitment among NZ dance scholars to inclusive practice and an honouring of the nation's diversity (Ashley, 2010) as well as each child's learning journey (Sansom, 2009).

In Australia, teacher and student views of the dance experience or of preferred dance styles or pedagogies have been collected using case studies of whole school dance programs or teacher's professional development (Donovan, 2007; Stevens, 2010). Research into teacher or student attitudes to dance or to the Arts in general has the key aim of promoting the value and place of dance in the curriculum, or challenging the 'taken for granted' assumptions about how dance should be taught in schools (Gard, 2003; Holmes & Dougherty, 2010).

In Australia, the clearest picture of what engagement in dance might look like for children comes from early childhood settings (Bond, 1994; Bond & Deans, 1997; Deans; 2011). More recent literature, influenced by place-based, environmental and creativity studies, point the way to more relational and embodied pedagogies and aim for an inclusive and democratic

interpretation of dance (Holland & O'Connor, 2004; Denmead, 2011; Meiners & Garrett, 2015; Sunday, 2015; Morgan, Pendergast, Brown & Heck, 2014; Somerville & Green, 2011).

### **Children and Dance**

In this section, I begin by reviewing the literature that introduced me to the student perspective. This is followed by an exploration of the literature that deepened my understanding of the embodied, collaborative and expressive nature of student experience. Where relevant this section is illustrated with examples of my practice and research data, in the form of anecdotes and vignettes.

#### **The start of my journey – recognising student perspective**

At the beginning of my research journey I was trying to put my own experiences, and my early data collection into perspective. Literature from the United States (Green, 2001; Minton, 2007; Stinson; 1997; Stinson & Bond, 2000, 2007), gave voice to children and young people, and their stories resonated with what I had seen in my own teaching. The 1997 study by Stinson took a radical stance, by focusing on student experience. She took seriously the controversial idea that learning at school could be pleasurable through meaningful experiences such as dance. Her study revealed that fun could have many meanings, and it was more likely to occur when students had “choice, freedom, a sense of control, and an emphasis on intrinsic motivation” (Stinson, 1997, p.64). In an earlier study, I found that it was the subjective and intrinsic values of dance, particularly its difference to the static and disembodied learning elsewhere in the curriculum, which drew students into dance, thus benefitting from its instrumental values (Torzillo, 2009). Talk of fun, joy and pleasure, forced me to question my sometimes over-serious mode of teaching, and brought to mind the moments in teaching when fun, laughter and silliness would break out in contrast to the seriousness of most school learning.

My intuition and personal experience suggested that student choice, empowerment and engagement in physical activity were at the heart of their enjoyment of dance. The literature suggested something immediate and subjective, relevant to the life worlds of students (Trotman, 2005). Dance gives students a chance to escape the bounds of the everyday and to ‘be somebody else’ (Gard, 2003). Children also value the opportunity to move, to be physically active and to learn by doing. Children and young people have spoken of their engaging and absorbing experiences with dance (Gardner et al, 2008; Sparkes, 2007; Stinson, 1997; Wellard, Pickard & Bailey, 2007), and the fact that it is a different way of learning, compared with the rest of the curriculum (Anttila, 2012; Minton, 2007; Nilges, 2004).

Teachers see the point of learning as a combination of learning outcomes, such as skills, knowledge and understandings, including social and personal learning. When children in New

Zealand were asked about assessment standards, their answers were typified by conversations about experience and the point of learning (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014). Children saw the point of learning as more personal and valued the experience above all. It might be that “children’s predilection for spontaneous artful behaviours allude to the possibility that they are likely interested in the act of art as much as they are interested in its products” (Blatt-Gross, 2013, p. 9).

### **The embodied experience – sense of self**

Two papers from the US added greatly to this developing picture of learning in dance (Bond & Stinson, 2000, 2007). Stinson and Bond’s meta-analysis, or re-examination of data, collected from over 600 children and young people – using their own previous studies and those of other researchers – revealed the extent of children’s enthusiastic committed and vivid engagement with dance. Heightened experiences in dance made possible states of flow in which the distinction between work and pleasure disappeared. For many children and young people dance induced states beyond the physical or everyday, where they could escape restrictions. The authors acknowledged that such a rich picture could “make no claims to having discovered the whole truth . . . which might then be generalised to every young dancer” (Bond & Stinson, 2000, p. 54). However, the rich description of dance through the words of the young people themselves has relevance for my own study, which aims to collect images of what is possible (Shulman, 1987) in Dance education.

In my research I saw evidence of the same interest in ideas like fun and work, references to the heightened experiences of dance, and the degree to which it is different to the spaces, activities and relationships in a regular classroom (Torzillo, 2009). American dance scholars have shown a great commitment to understanding student engagement in dance by capturing student perspectives (Green, 2001; Heath, 2001; Minton, 2007; Stinson, 1997; Sturge-Sparkes, 2007). Minton (2007), in particular, brought attention to the student viewpoint. The voices of young people confirm that dance making involves critical thinking and is valued because it represents their own creativity (Cone, 2009; Minton 2007). Dance can be a site for physicality, challenge and joy. For children, the physical and collaborative nature of dance is often its most important aspect (Anttila, 2015).

### **Freedom to move - risky business**

Despite all the positive and affirming evidence, dance, especially more open-ended and creative styles of dance, might be destabilising. Although some children engage with dance, others show resistance because “it disrupts a classroom culture that they have excelled in” (Atkinson & Scott, 2014, p.85). These children are more comfortable in a passive classroom culture that may

include tasks such as writing while sitting at desks, completing work on time and remaining still and quiet.

During my study, I observed student resistance when a teacher attempted to control the ‘choreography’ of the classroom by stopping and starting the action to reinforce behavioural expectations. At each of these pauses, she would direct students to sit on a set of choir stands in the room, insisting on absolute adherence to ‘no touch rules’ and no fidgeting before movement could start again. On other occasions, teachers accompanying their classes to my dance lesson seemed uncomfortable with the freedom of the dance classroom culture, apologising for their students’ behaviour or reminding them that they were being assessed in dance, thus conflating ‘good’ behaviour with success in the subject.

The freedom of dance can also be unsettling for children “used to being constantly instructed” and “to pedagogies where knowledge is structured and embodiment is restrained” (Anttila, 2015, p.86). In my experience, this can lead to children losing control, or becoming anxious and withdrawn or disruptive due to embarrassment, unless the teacher supports them with activities that are fast paced, energetic, clearly structured and that do not single out individuals. “Learning to move in a coherent and integrated manner in relation to others focusing on the task at hand, and with your own movement possibilities, is a huge leap – a practice of freedom” (Anttila, 2015, p.86).

### **Making Dance Together**

A New Zealand study demonstrated the importance of the relational context, showing how children’s learning and idea development were enhanced by relationships with teachers, peers and artistic materials (Fraser et al, 2007). Students might not have the skills for collaboration, but when “they are encouraged to explore movement concepts through structured improvisation, creative problem solving, sharing, responding and reflecting”, they take ownership of their learning and “shared meanings are constructed” (Melchior, 2011, p. 132).

The opportunity for children to “manifest their embodiment in connection with the social and physical world” (Anttila, 2010, p. 16) is more likely to be found within a creative and open-ended approach, rather than a commercial dance package or ‘one-size fits all’ technological application. Choice remains important and is a key aspect of collaboration (Cone, 2009), although not all group projects in schools are collaborative. Collaborative projects are long-term, voluntary, trusting, negotiated, and jointly chosen (Moran, John-Steiner & Sawyer, 2003). I found that children responded positively to being able to choose their own groups in every research setting. However, with younger or more inexperienced children, and where the teacher

had established a supportive classroom environment, teachers sometimes selected themes for dance making and organised the composition of groups in consultation with children.

Ownership was evident in data collected from kindergarten children during a dance residency in the United States. The children referred to shapes they made as ‘my shapes’ and those of their peers, ‘their shapes’, “claiming their agency in making and acknowledging their and their student peers’ choice” (Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2015, p. 348). “Agency, however, does not necessarily mean there is no interrelationship with others in the process of learning to create dance or making choices selecting and refining ideas for dance” (Sansom, 2009, p. 169). The development of shared movement vocabulary and the emergence of group movement identity seems to be a key characteristic of collaborative creativity (Bond, 1994; Chappell, 2008).

Bond’s study of the “shared embodiment” of non-verbal children with deaf-blindness showed that in moments of unison, or in mirroring or following activities, “the concept of bodily idiosyncrasy was normalised as intrinsic to the art form, becoming a component of group style” (1994, p. 414). At a summer school workshop I attended in the United Kingdom with the Foundation in Community Dance, the presenter, Celia McFarlane, used the term ‘translation’ as more inclusive than the term ‘copying’, with the idea being that each dancer translates the movement idea according to their body’s ability (Celia McFarlane, pers comm, July, 2012). Copying becomes more inclusive when thought of as translation and sharing. This helped me to view the dance making and movement vocabulary of my own students in a different light. They would often use and re-use movements from the warm-up we had shared, or signature movements and vocabulary from their life-worlds, including popular culture, martial arts or gymnastics. In the process these movements were transformed, becoming their own to be remixed, varied and recombined to suit their purposes. It was empowering, especially for students less confident in their own creative abilities, and a starting point for exploration into dance making (Melchior, 2016). This approach does not attempt to create community by burying difference, such as, for example, learning a social dance with its distinctive gendered ways of moving and relating (Gard, 2003).

### **All in it together**

In a creative dance class, the impacts are varied and cater more for diversity (Amans 2008; Cheesman, 2014; Melchior, 2011). Individuals experience dance differently and therefore there are many unique achievements and breakthroughs. In my experience, making it clear from the beginning that all ideas are accepted opens up a space for difference. In creative dance, there is no standard of technical or stylistic refinement to be reached.

In a recent performance at the end of a dance project with 8-year-olds, the whole cohort, of 120 students, including children with disabilities, performed for parents. Seeing the confident performance of children who were otherwise marginalised in physical education, it occurred to me that I had not consciously differentiated instruction or delivery, but the premise of the creative process itself was inclusive. The creative activities used had “a low floor and a high ceiling” and were “open-ended enough that all [could] participate” with room “to be creative” (Brownlie, Feniak & Schnellert, 2006, p.21). Teachers therefore have a greater freedom to explore the nature of relationships in teaching and learning if there is less pressure to deliver a standardised outcome. There was a sense of achievement and joy (Bond 2009) discovered by the group, when they worked collaboratively on a creative process, and this was displayed for the parents. The dance finished with a spontaneous circular finale of unison and canon movements as a whole cohort. Glaveneau (2014) calls this, the ‘we’ paradigm; a very apt basis for a pedagogy committed to sharing and collaboration.

### **Body thinking**

Problem solving and cognition in dance is embodied in that it occurs through the physical as well as the cognitive. When children drive the process, they can show great persistence in the ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975) of art making. Lindahl (2015) reports on a project with 6-7-year-old students that emerged from within the rich topic of ‘dinosaurs’. A question arose “regarding how dinosaurs moved and if they could dance, what that would look like?” (Lindahl, 2015, p.6). The children in Lindahl’s study created a dance by drawing the movements. The detailed narrative of the children’s idea development of a dance and its notation shows the constant interplay between moving, talking, writing and notating. The problem solving was collaborative, building to increasing complexity and what appeared to be enjoyment of the common exploration. When children talked about what they had learned after the event, they talked about their process; what strategies they used and their learning. “They also talk[ed] about the body, as they [had] explored the possibilities and boundaries of it” (Lindahl, 2015, p.11).

In a Finnish study (Nielsen, 2015), children drew and described what they enjoyed or looked forward to in dance classes, such as moving in new or strange ways and moving together. The observations of them in the dance classes revealed that when performing the movements they highlighted, they were intense and focused and the movements evidently meaningful. “In dance, when the sensuous/somatic dimension is in focus, human beings’ consciousness of sensing their own bodies and understanding and relating to each other at an embodied level are developed” (Nielsen, 2015, p.125).

The Arts, and specifically dance, may challenge the dominant discourse of classrooms where literacy and numeracy are the favoured forms of knowledge (Fraser et al., 2007). Of particular relevance is a project that explored the use of non-verbal communication in dance classrooms as part of a larger study into the development of children's ideas through the Arts. Children would dance, or physically show their responses to the dances of peers. They readily took up this idea, even extending it further to include 'feed forward' of ideas for future dance making. This allowed them to focus on developing understandings through the body, as opposed to the focus on verbal ways of knowing that predominate elsewhere in the curriculum (Fraser, Henderson, Price, Aitken, Cheesman et al., 2009).

This paper encouraged me to use non-verbal processes of making and responding to dance, and to reflect on lessons I had taught without speaking. A teacher had asked me to focus on inhibiting one of the senses for a lesson with 5-year-old children during 'disability week'. With no time to teach a formal sign language, I began the lesson using gesture and body language and somehow we continued this way through the whole 30-minute lesson. I remembered it as a highly successful lesson with a very active, noisy and sometimes aggressive pre-school class, taking them into a rare, meditative space. In another setting, encouraging older students (11 year-olds) to collaboratively choreograph without speaking, produced a very productive session, privileging knowing through the body, rather than verbally. As a result there was less disagreement and an opportunity for students to literally establish their own space in the creative process.

### **Teachers and dance**

In this section I begin by giving describing the current state of Dance education and the implications for teachers of the nature of creative learning in dance. I then explore the issues for generalist teachers planning to introduce dance in the classroom. The literature and my experience document the risky nature of this enterprise, because it is more physical, less controlled and more student-centred. Conversely, the literature reveals the opportunities and benefits available to teachers through dance, to develop more inclusive and relational pedagogies and to become co-learners with their students.

### **Introduction**

In Australian primary schools, the generalist teacher has to teach across all key learning areas, including the Arts (Lemon & Garvis, 2013). The literature review revealed that little is known about classroom practise when they teach the Arts (Klopper & Powers, 2011). However, their views about Arts education are well documented, with studies revealing the systemic and personal pressures on teachers to avoid teaching the Arts. The systemic pressures include

crowded timetables, literacy and numeracy targets, and lack of support from principals and administration, and the personal factors include limited training, experience and lack of professional support (Alter, Hays & O’Hara, 2009; Boyd, 1988; Garvis, 2008:2010; Gibson, 2003; Jacobs, 2008; Russell-Bowie, 2012). Recent literature confirms that not much has changed (Chapman, Wright, & Pascoe, 2016; Collins, 2016).

Dance has a low profile; its tenuous position in the primary school operational curriculum echoed in the absence of Dance education literature (Gibson & Anderson, 2008; Holmes & Dougherty, 2010). In many schools the performing arts lessons, if taught by specialists, (or in Queensland classroom music specialists), are thought of predominantly as a break for teachers, providing them with precious pupil-free time (Mason, 2015; Roulston, 2004). The role of the Arts in general is defined within a ‘production orientation’ (Bresler, 2004) – it is used to create performance events for consumption, thus satisfying some of the social purposes of schooling, without impinging on the formal curricula goals (Hall & Thompson, 2007).

### **The body in the classroom – uncertainty and risky spaces**

At the heart of the reluctance to teach dance however, is the teacher’s own relationship to dance. Fear of the class getting out of hand may be an issue as dance involves moving bodies, which in schools is “typically regarded as disruptive” (Bresler, 2004, p.127).

Teachers’ lack of confidence is compounded by concern with the behavioural implications of moving bodies. Dance presumes a change in the accepted ‘choreography’ of the classroom (Bresler, 2004), and is therefore a challenge to the ‘accepted’ order of things: quiet and still students and prescribed interactions. There is limited time available for the Arts and pressure to have lesson plans in place so that a dance unit of work can be completed and used for assessment within the allocated time (Queensland Studies Authority [QSA], 2011). Teaching dance as a set of steps fits neatly into the requirement for an assessable outcome. In line with the more teacher directed explicit teaching approaches that currently predominate (Hardy, 2015b), this approach to teaching dance can be used as, “a management strategy, more than a pedagogical technique” (Fraser, et al., 2007, p. 16). Renner’s (2015) thesis investigated teachers’ attitudes to teaching dance in New Zealand. Renner (2015) found that teachers who felt competent in managing classrooms were generally more inclined to feel comfortable teaching dance. This was possibly due to feeling they had control over behaviour; one of the most feared aspects of dance teaching (Buck, 2003; Russell-Bowie, 2012).

### **Not just for experts – teacher as connoisseurs, teacher as learner**

In my experience, when teachers get to experience dance making first-hand, they often express surprise at what is actually involved. While many are keen to take these ideas back to their classrooms, they are equally sure that their principals would not allow it, due the urgency of literacy and numeracy targets (Polesol, Rice & Dulfer, 2014).

The thought of teaching dance could inspire fear or excitement, depending on the teacher's experience and meanings of dance. Student teachers in Canada were surveyed before and after a series of creative dance workshops; initially they expressed a need for resources, practical ideas and exposure (MacDonald, Stodel & Farres, 2001), to alleviate their physical concerns, lack of practical ideas and lack of understanding of creative dance. Following the workshops the changes in confidence and interest in teaching dance were attributed to the ideas they gathered for integrating dance into the curriculum, and the comfort they felt in the sessions. When face-to-face professional development is not an option, then teachers might best be supported with simple and practical ideas and achievable goals expressed in the language of the teaching tools and models they are accustomed to.

### **I'm no expert – all in this together**

Other studies have advocated the use of specialists in dance (Alter, Hays & O'Hara, 2009; Ardzejewska, McMaugh & Coutts, 2010). As I started to expand my own understanding of what was happening in dance learning, it became clear that the “discourse of the expert” can be both “enabling and constraining” (McArdle, 2008, p. 11). Boyd (1998) makes the following observations:

It may entrench the perception of the Arts as being 'different' and encourage the classroom teacher to opt out totally. What happens to the classroom teacher who is competent at teaching the Arts? Is this part of their teaching taken away from them? Also, where is the specialist to teach? Is there money to equip facilities for arts teaching in small schools? How are remote schools to teach the Arts? The 'specialist' teacher begs more questions, than it answers. (p.8)

My observations in one teacher's classroom confirmed that having a teacher colleague act as mentor, guide or co-teacher, 'someone like us' (Snook, 2012), is a respectful way to support teachers who are teaching dance for the first time. It is also more likely to result in the continuation of the learning once the specialist leaves. It seems that students and teachers prefer dance within their normal classroom environment, a classroom “where everyone is accepted, a classroom where dance was ‘not for experts’, but for people like themselves” (Buck 2003, p. 287). Without teachers' commitment and support, Dance education will be a one-off-event, not a sustainable and ongoing part of the curriculum (Snook, 2012).

I have been teaching units of dance in the same school for five years; the learning always connected to cross-curricula rich concepts or inquiry questions. Snook (2012) proposes that integration of dance into the curriculum is the key to the sustainability of Dance education in New Zealand schools. In Australia the situation is similar, the integration of the dance lessons into the curriculum is a key factor in convincing the principal to continue to fund my employment as a visiting specialist.

The insistence on dance as an integrative context for learning was an important enabler of initial employment, as well as a reason for its continuation. This in turn is a factor in its success and so on. The downside is that ‘business as usual’ continues for Dance education. Teachers do not need to teach dance because I do this job, yet by attending the classes and participating they become involved. The teachers of the classes engaged with dance in different ways, as noted in my reflections on dance sessions. This suggests that the best type of ongoing relationships with teachers would build on these different engagements and on their interests and needs (Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2015). This is an area worthy of further research; the formation of a research partnership with schools has the potential to benefit both parties (Leonard, Hellenbrand & McShane-Hellenbrand, 2014; Snook & Buck, 2014). Teachers (both generalists and specialists) need ongoing support after professional development to continue to innovate and hone skills. Greater “development of collaborative networks that encourage the development of communities of practice in art education is needed” (Twigg & Garvis, 2010, p.201).

The importance of collaboration and respect became evident in the study of an artist in schools project in the United Kingdom. Teachers in the project deferred to the artists who conducted arts projects in their primary school. The learning was framed as an apprenticeship in arts skills, rather than as a critical artistic inquiry. The teachers were at the margins of this project, which was placed outside the curriculum, therefore “there was no structural way in which their own teaching could have benefited from the pedagogic approaches adopted by the artist” (Hall & Thomson, 2007, p.324). Artists-in-residence programs and partnerships may be a strategic way to defuse critiques of the education system as lacking creativity and being overly focused on academics (Wright & Pascoe, 2014), but fail to develop the confidence and skills of the generalist teachers so that they continue the projects after the artists leave. Incorporating opportunities for personal development through creative and enjoyable arts activities, help children “to fit more comfortably into the school day and into the curriculum”, but do not question systemic patterns of exclusion (Hall & Thompson, 2007, p. 324), or create a permanent place for the Arts in the core curriculum.

Dance teaching “requires various kinds of energy including, but not limited to intellectual, physical, spiritual, creative, and emotional energy” (Andrzejewski, 2009, p.20), a fact often

included in commentary or feedback from teachers, following dance classes. Convincing teachers that they could do this themselves usually elicits protestations that they don't have the teaching repertoire, the experience of drawing the ideas together into a performance, or the energy. The problem here could be that they only see the energy that goes into a three week project, not what it would be like if dance was a regular part of the program, for example, a weekly class for at least an hour, over one year.

If teachers get involved in dance, there can be great rewards, including the positive benefits of exercise and creative activities (Bergmann, 1995; Clements, Redlich & Lewis, 2015; Gilbert, 2005; Lobo & Winsler, 2006; Sowden, Clements, Redlich & Lewis, 2015), and the chance to work with students in a different and creative way (Atkinson & Scott, 2014; Cone, 2007).

### **You have to start somewhere – everyday creativity**

Teachers have been found to lack confidence resulting from their own limited or negative experiences of dance, feelings of inadequacy as movers or dancers, and performative views of dance (Power & Klopper, 2012; Rolfe, 2001; Russell-Bowie, 2012). After further research I became aware that lack of confidence may not be eased by a current curriculum emphasis on dance content, such as the elements of dance (Buck, 2003: 2006; Gard, 2003). Faced with yet another curriculum document to navigate generalist teachers may well look for the “strong support of assessment tools, rubrics, checklists and work samples” (ACARA 2012, p. 34) as a solution that puts the emphasis on assessment as the point of learning. Conversely they may resort to using technology in the form of videos of choreographed dancers that their students copy and learn (The Song Room, 2016). According to Buck, the meaning of dance begins inside the classroom, in “negotiated classroom relationships and not singularly in the curriculum, the children, the teacher, or the dance” (2003, p.324). The thought of teaching more content and assessing students on performance outcomes might deter teachers, but if they have the opportunity to experience dance making and the thinking involved, they come to understand that students are learning through dance (Buck, 2003), and maybe that teaching ‘dance thinking’ is different and more manageable than teaching steps.

My own study confirms the findings of research, that with support, teachers will find ways to develop their practice based on their own experiences and situations (Buck, 2003; Power, 2014). A teacher, who was actively present in classes I taught to his students, selected and modified a strategy, based on a dance warm-up exercise I had used. In this exercise students took turns to present a movement or gesture, which was then reflected back by the whole class. The next time I visited his class I noted the ease and confidence with which students offered movement ideas to the group, and the supportive acceptance of the group to the offered ideas. This simple and

ritualistic exercise (Atkinson & Robson, 2012) had become part of his teaching practice and was used to develop his supportive classroom climate and encourage his students to take creative risks.

Other teachers who were required to teach dance as part of whole school curriculum plans, found ways to teach that fitted with their own 'standards' of classroom behaviours, creative expression and values. At one primary school the 'arts gaps' had been identified in a history unit based on colonial Australia. The Year 7 teachers chose a 'bush dance' series of lessons to suit the thematic structure of the unit (Nayler, 2011). I interviewed the teacher who had led that process. It transpired that she had enjoyed teaching the dance steps but had struggled with the creative part of the unit in which students created their own 'bush dance'. The teachers' performative views of dance came from her experience of learning dance techniques in her youth. It is possible that these views about 'good dance' were communicated to her students "children who struggled with creating their own dance" (in the teacher's opinion) because "they wanted it to be perfect"; to recreate their own version of the specific dance they had been taught. Hopper notes that "it is this form of dance teaching", informed by behaviourism and a production orientation, "that has discouraged all but the most musical and coordinated from learning to dance" (2005, p.5) by reducing dance to the learning of a set of steps. Nevertheless the teacher involved was pleased with the participation and efforts of students and was keen to repeat the exercise the following year, and buoyed by prior knowledge and experience with the confidence to encourage a more open-ended approach to student creativity.

A teacher participant in my study based her teaching of dance on her understanding of the dance elements, but drew her inspiration from her own students, and their prior learning and interests. The children became absorbed in a movement exploration using an image of moving in a bubble of personal space. Later they created partner dances using simple contrasts of sudden or sustained movement developed through mirroring. These pared-back structured improvisational tasks gave them plenty of choice and metaphoric room to move, and was sufficient evidence of their understanding of movement and dance making. My research findings aligned with a study documenting the 'micro' Arts education achievements of teachers (Power, 2015), who despite their protestations, were actually embedding the Arts into their teaching in small but significant ways, and thus gaining confidence and building their practical knowledge base (Power, 2014).

### **Teaching in Dance**

In this section I contend with the varied approaches to Dance education. I take as a starting point that the primary purpose of dance in the classroom setting is dance making. The literature has helped to reframe my approach to pedagogy. It points to a more inclusive, distributed and somewhat unpredictable pedagogy, which is process rather than product driven.

## Introduction

The fundamental aim of creative dance in the Australian context is based on the work of the early dance pioneers who themselves drew from the European tradition of modern liberal Dance education and the movement analysis of Rudolf Laban (North, 1976; Preston-Dunlop, 1963; Smith-Autard, 1994). Creative dance has a focus on an individual child's creativity, carefully guided by the teacher; it is to an extent "grounded in liberal individualism where high value is placed on individuality and being able to think outside of societal norms" (Chappell, 2007a, p. 42). Dance education in Australia has had different meanings in the curriculum, in the literature, among practitioners, and in the classroom. However, to date, because of its origins, it is firmly placed within a progressive, liberal, child-centred educational approach (Ashley, 2010).

In Australia, as in the UK, dance educators endeavoured to divorce dance from a "romantic ideology of self-expression" in an effort to justify "dance as art in the curriculum"; this tended to limit discussion of "the personal and social aspects of creativity" (Chappell, 2007b, p.44). The clearest depiction of these aspects came from research in the United States (Bresler, 2004; Green, 2001, 2002; Hanna, 1998; Stinson, 1997) and later from Finland and New Zealand (Anttila, 2003; Buck, 2003). Critical writing on Dance education from Australia includes that of Gard (2003), who questioned the 'taken for granted' assumptions of the creative dance approach based on the elements of dance, instead advocating an approach based on critical inquiry and meaning making from the student perspective. More recently, elitist and divisive assumptions about dance and who should dance have been challenged. A more inclusive and socially just interpretation of The Australian National Curriculum, more relevant to the social and cultural conditions of a pluralist society, has been proposed (Meiners, 2014).

Ashley (2010) in New Zealand, and Nesbit (2013) in the United States, questioned the cultural assumptions of movement analysis using the elements of dance. Teachers may be concerned with teaching a particular element or elements specified in curriculum outcomes. However, an insistence on this as the focus of learning may stifle the enthusiasm of students who are more interested in the meaning-making process, physical fun, and collaboration (Ashley, 2010). The words of the students in my study echo findings from New Zealand, noting that children "seldom used [a] formalist lens" when talking about their artworks, rather they talked about the process and the narrative told (Price, 2007, p. 233).

Dance, with its liminal position in the timetabled school world, resists the continued restrictions of predetermined criteria, of what it means to learn and to know. Meanwhile education systems, "actively resist[ed] the breakdown of their authority" by "unyielding emphasis on fixed answers that can be measured by standardised tests" (Sunday, 2015, p.235). According to Viera, "the

importance of embodiment in perceiving, knowing and meaning-making poses a challenge to the current focus, in Brazil and maybe elsewhere, on intellectual knowledge in Dance education for young people” (2015, p.92). The focus could be shifted, by giving priority to the dancing and to children’s own understanding of, and reflection on, dance.

### **Socio – A class act**

The contribution of somatic practice to Dance education (Green, 2002; Ross, 2000) has been a shift away from an emphasis on the curriculum to an emphasis on the dance and the dancer, and the diverse contexts and meanings of dance (Buck, 2003). A different conceptualisation of dance as a shared space, with shared understandings and movement vocabularies, could counteract a culturally elitist privileged individualism (Meiners, 2014). It makes sense that when Arts education positions children as artists it uses a “fundamentally collaborative and improvisational” pedagogy, where “the rigid division between teacher and student is somewhat relaxed, creating an environment where teachers and students jointly construct the improvisational flow of the classroom as they make art together (Sawyer, 2011, p.15).

The more that learners choose their own ways of constructing meaning and knowledge, the less teachers can restrict the learning outcome (Cone, 2009), or need to. The diverse ways that children have negotiated the complicated process of collaboration demonstrate the importance of each child’s learning journey (Giguere, 2012; Sansom, 2012) and each class’s learning journey. In the making of a class dance, or the development of a shared movement vocabulary, the individuals become greater than the sum of their parts.

### **The body at the centre – always moving**

During the early stages of my research I was introduced to the ‘grande idée’ of embodiment (Bresler, 2004) - the primacy of the body and its role in knowing and learning (Lakoff & Mark Johnson, 1999). According to Sheets-Johnstone, movement “forms the I that moves before the I that moves forms movement” (2011, p.119). New materialist concerns bring to light the complexity of the body as a site for learning and assessment (Hickey-Moody, Palmer & Sayers, 2016). It is impossible to watch or see every micro-moment of bodily expression in a dance class, or in dance making, such as the moment when an idea first emerges or when ideas are varied, developed and resolved. The different realisation of space in a dance class, compared with a regular classroom, becomes an entanglement of bodies, spaces, relationships and embodied dialogues. So much is going on at once, when groups of children are spread out through the space, physically engaged in dance making. One way to assess children’s artful dance behaviours (Blatt-Gross, 2013) is by documenting students’ engagement in the activity (Warburton, Reedy, & Ng, 2014).

A project in the United States investigated children's engagement in a community dance setting. The researchers developed a practical measurement instrument to capture three key elements of relational engagement during parent-child dance sessions: activity; interest; and mimicry, and then observed the changes in these behaviours over time (Warburton, Reedy, & Ng, 2014). The measurement instrument was simplified so that it was practical, guiding teachers to look for particular types of engagement during particular moments in the lesson. The approach is suitable for adaption to the primary school class setting, because the approach is process-oriented. "Small steps and sudden leaps are celebrated in equal measure" (Warburton, Reedy, & Ng, 2014, p.3). This is an inclusive approach using open-ended and inclusive instruction and assessment that becomes part of the ebb and flow of teaching and learning (Warburton 2002).

Such a tool might help teachers to be more appreciative of the 'small steps' or micro-achievements of their students. In my experience a process, rather than product-oriented approach, provides more room for children to develop their own understandings and relationships with dance. . Shifting the perspective to the process, and slowing down the expectation, might allow teachers to appreciate subtle learning outcomes such as spontaneity; concentration; physical alertness, responsibility; physically relating, observation and attention (Lord, 2001). Positive feedback about improvements or achievements, combined with encouragement to go further is a mixture of formative assessment and pep talk. Students might find it difficult to engage in movement creation, but they should be commended for their efforts, not condemned for being imperfect.

The experience of working in this different way can produce new ways of relating to students', 'lines of flight' perhaps (Atkinson & Scott, 2014). Teachers also have knowledge of their own students and of how to establish and build relationships in their class, as they are connoisseurs within that space. What Wien (2015) called a 'good enough' theory of curriculum, a set of starting points or references, might be a place to begin negotiating the tensions of creative teaching (Chappell, 2007b) in order to find a workable and contextual version of dance pedagogy (Ashley, 2010).

Studies of pre-service education students revealed that a reluctance to teach dance is influenced by gendered and divisive meanings of who should dance or what constitutes dance (Hays, Alter and O'Hara, 2009). Most of the generalist teachers in an Australian study believed that a major contributing factor in the neglect of dance was the fact that "male students found dance unappealing . . . because teachers believed that the male students did not respond to dance instruction, they avoided teaching dance and this meant practice in the subject area was often limited" (Hays, Alter & O'Hara, 2009, p.16).

However, the broader literature suggests a more complex picture. In South Australia, Year 4 students (9-year-olds) participated in focus groups to elicit their “ideas and feelings towards dance as a school subject” (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010, p.103). Teachers were interviewed to ascertain “teaching background and experience with dance, views of creative dance, and ideas about possible strategies for an increase in its implementation” (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010, p.103). There were clear differences between dance and non-dance teachers’ views. The latter were more likely to make assumptions about how students would respond to dance according to gender. The male teachers in the school preferred to teach social dance, as it was more structured. They were also adamant that boys would not want to participate in dance. This was in clear contrast to the students’ view. Holmes and Dougherty (2010) noted:

There was a disparity between teacher assumption and student comment in relation to student gender and dance. Despite an assumption by some teachers about boys reacting negatively to dance, none of the students interviewed were completely opposed to experiences in creative dance, regardless of their gender. It appears that teacher gender is an issue in regards to teaching dance, with females more likely to teach it than males who, if they teach dance, are more likely to teach social dance than creative. (p. 109)

Similar results were found in Finland, where students expressed their preference for dance where you ‘get to’ choose your dance partners, choose your movements and make your own dance (Anttila, Rowe & Østern, 2012). Likewise, a group of students in my own study told their teacher prior to my classes that they did not want to take part in dance lessons, because they didn’t want to do bush dance (an Australian colonial social dance) again. Their views changed after they discovered they would be creating their own dance in a more contemporary style. Dance might not be what every student wants or needs (Green, 2001). This viewpoint might however be dependent on the type of dance available. Gard (2003) described an alternative approach that invited students to use dance as critical inquiry, led by student perspectives and inquiry questions relevant to their lives.

### **The creative process**

There is always the possibility that any dance program could result in imitative or conventional products conforming to a particular or acceptable aesthetic. As Ashley argues, “the creative process itself can be looked on as a generic socio-cultural convention, the purpose of which is to produce ‘individual’ dance vocabulary” (2010, p.63). The ‘discourse’ of ‘the aesthetic’ is historically associated with the production of objects, and dominated by reverence for those artists or artworks deemed privileged (Tavin, 2007). The “self referential legitimation of the

aesthetic” delivers an elitist Arts education with teachers acting as high art promoters (Tavin, 2007, p.41).

Newer literature argues that a creative process is “a social interstice”, a ‘convivial’ activity that “subsequently serves as a location where hierarchical characteristics of social production are levelled” (Sunday, 2015, p.235). Child culture might find its way into arts learning anyway, even if only as resistance to teacher imposed tasks, themes or styles. Sunday observed two children involved in drawing together, who resisted the teacher-directed curriculum with its expectation of pre-determined finished products. They were observed in a “hermeneutic circle of interaction of their own design, where production and consumption merged together” (2015, p. 237). During my research, I observed similar merging, with children bringing their own movements, narratives, aesthetic into movement conversations and dance making, in which the process and the relationship, seemed just as important as the dance itself. Anttila (2015) described a year-long project involving a whole school where through embodied dialogue and shared performance, dance had the power to be transformative on different levels, individually, for groups, classes and even across the whole school.

### **Getting it together – helping to make ‘sense’**

Dance can infiltrate into the school, without a formal or consistent dance program in place if teachers integrate dance across the curriculum. Instead of waiting for dance to be included in the core curriculum, teachers could begin by connecting dance to other subjects such as literacy. This might provide a model “of how effectively to utilise and understand the powerful complexities of dance as literacy” (Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2016, p. 342). Many teachers commonly use poetic speaking or readers’ theatre as a literacy strategy, or to create presentations for school display or competition (Bresler, 2004). In an American dance residency, kindergarten children were invited to create movements to represent the words and ideas they had been exploring in class. Dance can push children into new directions with language, honing in on particular and even “sophisticated language arts skills” (Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2016, p. 340). Through a mix of talking, dancing, drawing and writing, rich questions were explored (Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2016), very relevant in this age of multimodal literacies (Chapman, 2015). It is more important than ever to give teachers practical models for integrating the arts across the curriculum. Embodied curriculum could be not just multi-modal but fluid and inter-relational using dance as a form of trans-mediation (Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2016). The authors further note:

Even without funding and experience with dance, a teacher can explore movement through the use of gesture. Using a poem, text or song that relates to curricular content,

similar to the movement choir discussed in the opening vignette, teachers can work with students to create movement as accompaniment first, and eventually focus on dance in more integrative ways. These activities can delve into richer literacy skills in terms of enquiry and communication so that gestures and movement can abstract meaning from a text, not just replicate it. (Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2016, p.353)

When generalist teachers train to become specialists, they struggle with “connecting subject matter knowledge to pedagogical knowledge” (Costes-Onishi & Caleon, 2016, p. 21); they need ideas and examples of student centred teaching strategies in dance as much as content knowledge (Costes-Onishi & Caleon, 2016). This is noted even with teachers who were originally trained as music specialists, when having to teach other areas of dance and drama (Torzillo, 2012). Whereas whole group teaching predominates in classroom music teaching (Fraser et al., 2009), more flexible groupings such as pairs and small groups are relevant student centred approaches for dance and drama.

In a New Zealand study a teacher participant helped to design a pedagogical cycle of “ask, use, pattern and reflect”, for the co-constructing of dance with children. Another used her existing classroom ‘buzz groups’ to structure the learning. Both teachers used strategies they were familiar with, or structures already established as a starting point, rather than the curriculum (Buck, 2003, p.320). Professional development materials or training could focus on reconciling methods familiar to teachers from “previous teacher training practices to new knowledge and eventually . . . to . . . innovative classroom practices” (Costes-Onishi & Caleon, 2016, p. 22), such as “authentic learning, scaffolding and inquiry-based learning” (Twigg and Garvis, 2010, p. 200) or well-known cooperative strategies like think-pair-share-square, brainstorming and expert groups (Torzillo, 2015).

Research from the UK (Chappell, 2007a) has a strong focus on creative pedagogies. Student and teacher experiences of dance were explored in multiple sites in the United Kingdom, prompting the lead researcher to warn that creative dance is not necessarily creative “by default of the activities therein” (Chappell 2007a, p.28). The expert teachers observed in one study continually balanced approaches along spectra from teacher directed to student centred (Chappell 2007b). In contrast my early career definition of ‘good’ dance pedagogy, (student centred and cooperative, as opposed to transmission teaching) is an unhelpful binary (Adam, 2016). In creative dance, “a balance between structure and improvisation”, allows for teaching to be “more emergent, participatory, and improvisational” (Burnard & Dragovic 2014, p.340). In dance, scaffolding childrens’ understanding of arts language as “an instinctive knowledge tool rather than an academic one” (Thwaites & Round, 2012, p. 117), invites students to

develop their own relationship with the language by using it as a real object of analysis (Thwaites & Round, 2012).

Creative dance is not necessarily a 'free-for-all' compared with skills based dance. In my experience the understanding of dance held by students in pre-service Arts education subjects is often based on something they call 'interpretive dance'. , This generates the idea that dance is impossible to assess, because there can be no right or wrong answers in improvised dance. It removes the impositions of a teacher determined end-product, but fails to acknowledge the cultural heritages and potential of dance to make meaning, and thus the learning that takes place in the continual movements of dance between children and teacher (Sunday, 2015).

### **Gathering Ideas**

From the literature I have gathered important ideas, strategies and approaches to help me refine my own pedagogic framework based on the social, physical and expressive nature of Dance education, its place in schooling, and how to overcome issues of implementation.

### **Body**

Two strands of thinking about dance seemed evident as I reviewed my early writing and literature searches: a focus on the products of learning and dance, or a focus on the hard to define experiential aspect: the student experience. There was much written about the benefits of dance to social and emotional learning, critical thinking and creativity and embodied knowledge (Dimondstein, 1985; Hackney, 1998; Hanna, 2008; Koff, 2000; Ross, 2000; Seitz, 2005). Dance was said to contribute to learning in multiple ways, such as developing skills and understanding of non-verbal language and contributing to cross-curricula learning by "bringing new understanding to bear" on content (Koff, 2000, p.29).

From philosophy came the idea that movement was the basis of thought, thus confirming the importance of the body and dance in learning (Lakoff, & Johnson, 1999; Sheets-Johnstone, 2011), and from neuroscience came the evidence that dance appears to foster observational learning, and therefore has implications for cognition and cross-curricula learning (Grafton & Cross, 2008; Hanna, 2015). Gardner brokered a rethinking of intelligence, to include other modes including physical, visual and spatial, strengthening the case for dancing as a form of bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence (Gardner, 2000). Sietz (2005) argued that dance therefore has a place in education to improve and build students' learning. In dance, students "become adept in the art of creating and choosing, not just memorising and following" (Hong, 2000, p.5).

### ***Implications - body***

The literature, and my research documents, demonstrate the enjoyment and engagement of children in collaborative, physical and expressive problem solving (Bond & Stinson, 2000; Giguere, 2011; Leonard & McShane-Hellenbrand, 2012; Minton, 2007) but they include the warning that the ‘striated’ spaces of school classrooms (Atkinson & Scott, 2014) have accustomed children to learning while holding on to something, the traditional “chair, desk, pen, paper and books” (Anttila, 2015, p. 81) or the more contemporary mouse or hand-held device (Kentel & Dobson, 2007), and therefore they learn by being still.

However, children need to move to learn; a form of learning that engages the whole child, the mind, heart and body (Ainley, Banks, & Fleming, 2002; Kentel & Dobson, 2007; Leonard, Hall & Herro 2015; Somerville & Green 2011). A return to the ‘real’ in education is being called for, and finding expression in the establishment of ‘Forest Schools’, Nature Play organisations, Education for Sustainability and Mindfulness training, whose founders share similar concerns to those of arts educators (Thwaites, 2011). Environmental and place-based educators reject the mediated stillness of many classrooms today along with the advocates of nature play, in favour of a return to embodied learning in outdoor settings (Somerville & Green, 2011; Somerville, 2013).

Dance is a physical activity and a risky business for teachers used to the general stasis of 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools (Thwaites, 2011). Yet there is a need for dance, because “with increasing physical passivity, active, embodied pedagogies are desperately needed” (Anttila, 2015, p.86). Changing the pedagogy changes the relationship between teacher and student, and different issues have to be confronted such as children talking to one another rather than to the teacher (Windschitl, 2002). Teachers will need tools to manage the different physicality. Strategies and tasks for whole class, pairs and small groups, delivered with the same fast pace used in literacy and numeracy sessions, could move learners around in the space. Activities should be a mix of ritual and variety, offering choice, challenge and a sense of control (Stinson, 1997).

Some students will need support to move from the order and regulation of the classroom to the noisy, messy ‘chaos’ of a creative dance lesson (Rank, 2011). A more structured approach is sometimes preferable, for example when a beginning dance teacher in a challenging elementary school setting arrived at a more structured pedagogy by using a drum to signal the order of the lesson and better support students’ learning needs (Park, 2011). According to Fitzgerald (2013) however:

The pleasure that the process generates has its own ways of managing the energy. As part of the process, the teacher becomes more ready to ‘read’ the room, to co-construct

the process and to develop the students' ideas, recognising and supporting their immersion in the artistic experience. (p.9)

The research demonstrated that children will more easily engage in movement if there is minimal teacher exposition or frontloading of content, while the dance itself is a way of moving tensions or energies around the space.

### **The social**

In schools where the predominant pedagogical approach tends to individuation, in response to the agendas of standardised testing, teachers might be cautious about cooperative learning. In a UK project 'expert specialist' dance teachers were seen to encourage and support children to devise ways to collaborate. They used leadership and cooperative models with different dynamics such as "complementary, integrative, controversial and inclusive leadership" (Chappell, 2008, p.10). The expert teachers' focus was on dance making, not on establishing rules and expectations or reinforcing existing behavioural issues. The idea that creativity is supported if children are allowed to negotiate roles and behaviours within groups, and have choice of who they work with, is noted in the studies of Giguere (2013). It is also identified as one of the key factors that lead to children's engagement in dance (Anttila, 2015; Cone, 2009; Minton, 2007; Sansom, 2009).

A student centred dance classroom will allow, fun, silliness and humour that is inclusive and shared (Arnold, 2008; Buck, 2011). My research journal and teacher notes from past projects included mention of laughing, shared playful responses to humorous dances, and gestures used in shared dance deconstructions with children. Videos of dance classes I observed show smiling and laughing children in small groups and in whole class activities. According to Buck, "play, humour, gesture and physicality [are] important pedagogical tools" (2011, p.9). In my experience of teaching dance the use of humour in dance lessons reduced apprehension and created a sense of 'us' (Park, 2011).

### ***Implications - Social***

The social nature of dance is widely supported by the literature. A collaborative pedagogy would better support teachers who are concerned that they are not dancers, and therefore worry that they don't have sufficient content knowledge of dance to assume the 'expert' position they are used to. Buck argues that how dance is taught is equally if not more important than content knowledge and urges teachers to develop their knowing about dance through 'doing'. Buck (2009) further notes:

Doing it, making the mistakes, reflecting and learning what works for you, is more important than learning more content knowledge. Arguably, such experiences would be stair-cased or gradually built through diverse classroom teaching experiences . . . ‘the doing’ is crucial for developing ‘the knowing’. (p.4)

Dance literature has departed from an emphasis on the self to an emphasis on communal and collaborative creativity (Anttila, 2015; Kentel & Dobson, 2007; Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2015, Nielsen, 2015). This is highly adaptable to the classroom, as it relies on the type of cooperative, social, and task-based learning that is familiar to teachers. Unfortunately in recent times any pedagogy categorised as constructive has been dismissed in the Australian context as problematic and not evidence based (Masters, 2014).

### **Expressive**

New conceptualisations of creativity include ‘small c’ creativity and ‘possibility thinking’ where problem finding and ‘what if?’ questions are as important as creative solutions (Craft, 2003:2008; Craft, Cremin, Hay & Clack, 2014; Chappell, 2008; Glaveneau, 2011; Moran, John-Steiner & Sawyer, 2003).

Chappell raises questions about the conceptualisation of creativity as marketable, individualised, and focused on innovation (2008). A more human conceptualisation of creativity would be characterised by “creative co-construction” (Craft, 2005). This is regarded as a relational, creative practise of developing dance ideas that are shared collaboratively, thus further encouraging individual creativity where knowledge is ‘distributed’ and anchored in social practice (Tanggard, 2012).

### ***Implications - Expressive***

The benefits of Dance education are diverse, and go beyond simplistic and generalised notions such as confidence and cooperation. Some conceptualisations of creativity, expressed in curriculum documents, are in thrall to the audit culture, a culture that seeks to quantify and reduce the curriculum to what is considered economically useful, disregarding in the process the needs and interests of students (Thwaites, 2011).

Much artistic response to the current situation of globalised flows of products and information is informed by relational aesthetics (Adams & Owens, 2015). In relational art the main use of the art object is the establishment of encounters, becoming “incidental to the practice of cultural production” (Sunday, 2015, p.235). This aligns with children’s “predilection for spontaneous artful behaviours”, and the “possibility that they are likely interested in the act of art as much as

they are interested in its products (Blatt-gross, 2013, p.9). Relations are central to democratic art making and Arts education (Adams & Owens, 2015; Chappell, 2008).

### **Implications - pedagogy**

The potential benefits of dance include “concentration, focus, self-discipline, working hard to achieve a goal, being your own teacher, being fully alive and present, problem solving, making connections, seeing relationships, collaboration” (Stinson 2010, p.142). The emphasis is of course on potential.

A recent paper from New Zealand, discussed the use of the Arts and physical education to teach across the curriculum in a primary school (Buck & Snook, 2016). It transpired that the teacher employed as an arts educator was still beholden to a production orientation (Bresler, 1993) where the meanings of teaching and learning were based on the creation of a product, leading to division between those who were supposedly talented and those who were not. In contrast, the physical education teacher created a respectful and student centred learning environment in which students worked independently and with others to problem solve and cooperate. “The focus was on the students and structuring activities that were relevant” (Buck & Snook, 2016, p.59) positioning the students as capable, creative problem solvers, an approach that is thought to be the natural domain of the Arts (Buck, & Snook, 2016). It seems that content knowledge matters less than a teacher’s willingness to explore more collaborative, embodied and student centred teaching methods, with more emphasis on student engagement and participation, and less on curriculum outcomes (Buck, 2003; Gard, 2003; Melchior, 2011).

### **Conclusion**

Emerging research paradigms challenge existing assumptions about the purpose of Arts education and the inherent value of movement, free play, and relational learning (Kentel & Dobson; Anttila, 2015; Sunday, 2015). If art is reconceptualised as cultural production, not bound to a ‘rhetoric of effects’, it will not need to justify its presence in terms of what it can offer to schools, individuals and the economy (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). Dance in particular, could have a role to play in returning the body to learning, regardless of whether it can make a stronger claim than any other ‘art form’ to the precious classroom time. The new and different will always be risky business. Dance is an opportunity to learn in the body, one that comes wrapped in an enjoyable, collaborative and creative package. Dance is more than just steps, and it is not just about the dance, or improving test scores, but it is about what is going on for the the experience of children during that dance and the dance making (Schiller & Meiners, 2003). The opportunity to work in the expressive realm, in a physical way, using your

body and mind and emotions, together with others, is powerful and has the potential to be transformative (Anttila, 2015).

## Technique - SIFT

### Chapter 3 - Methodology

What technique to use? Or any.

The medium is the message - the medium is the body.

The technique, the form, has to be in line with your message, your view of the body, of dance, of what dance is and who can dance. So it is in research, the methods chosen represent views, stories, beliefs about knowledge and knowing and being. The poem deals with some of the research questions that emerged in the process of thinking through method, as one way to process the questions and choices that surfaced. The chapter also documents the emergent nature of a research project that took place over time.



I

travelled

in

metaphors

In THIS RESEARCH JOURNEY

*dancing through it.*

Finding my feet – feeling my way.

standing my ground

2

moving with the

tide

ONE STEP FORWARD

THEN TWO STEPS BACK.

into

questions, questions and more questions.

*From the remembered past-to the lived now-and then to some  
imagined future*

*But "always in relation".*

Through fluidity, change, uncertainty, proliferation;

I made ontological claims 2 myself.

Looking for a "point of constancy" in the study of experience.

Hoping to reveal <sup>images of the possible</sup>, in my stories and their stories,

down corridors



into rooms

houses

through →

houses

Telling stories

entwining [tales] and TESTING OUT THEORIES AND TANGENTS;

till the moment came to stoP and write

### **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

*Finding my feet – feeling my way*

*Standing my ground – moving with the tide*

My methodology is qualitative; it stems from my research interest, and the nature of my study. A qualitative methodology is appropriate for exploring the qualities of an educational experience (Eisner, 1991) and the contextual and socially constructed meanings attached to teaching and learning practices. Qualitative research does not predict, prove or quantify the future, but rather seeks to understand a setting and an experience from the participants' viewpoint (Patton, 1990). The purview of qualitative research is not to generalise, but to “understand situations in their uniqueness” (Patton, 1990, p.1). Its remit is the particular rather than the universal, making it a suitable methodological choice to investigate a rare and little researched area of the primary school curriculum in Australia. According to Stake, the interest in a case is related to both “its uniqueness and its commonality” (2008, p.1). Stake's viewpoint is relevant to research into Dance education in the primary school, as it shares commonality with Arts education in schools, and yet it is also a rare, and therefore unique, area of investigation. My purpose is to reveal the experience of Dance education from the perspectives of both students and teachers and to use this information to design a pedagogic framework for teaching dance.

Reality, in qualitative research is not “the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research” (Merriam, 2002, p.3). The multiple sources of data in this case study reflect “multiple constructions and interpretations of reality” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.544), proliferation (Lather, 2006) rather than monism (Eisner, 1991). This ensures that the different aspects of a phenomenon can be understood through the use of different perspectives (Patton, 1990). The research was

shaped and sharpened by the presence of multiplicity and change as it progressed over time; a moving presence, almost a dance.

The data in this research were collected as a case study and disseminated through story, with an emphasis on embodied knowledge and embodied ways of knowing. The object of this inquiry is the specific case of Dance education that is taught as ‘creative practice with children positioned as artists involved in making and responding to Dance, not merely the learning of a specific repertoire or style or the acquisition of practical skills. The project draws on naturalistic traditions of educational research, which recognise that “meaning arises out of social situations and is handled through interpretive processes” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013, p. 219). In a qualitative case study, “data collection and analysis overlap and the research design is responsive to participants’ stories and observations” (Bresler, 2008, p. 269). Meaning in this context is not just “socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world” (Merriam, 2002, p.3), but also physically constructed through dance.

This chapter is organised according to the sequence of events within the research process. The process started with a real-life issue that needed to be addressed, a problem and a question (Crotty, 1998). Therefore the chapter will start with the problem, then the research purpose and the research questions. These are grouped together as research practices of discovering; rationalising; questioning; planning and conceptualising, in line with arts-informed research (Leavy, 2015). The ontological and epistemological perspectives that framed the research and guided the research design are elaborated on within the section, ‘Conceptualising’. Details of the various research techniques of data collection are defined and discussed in relation to how and why they are used in the study. Details of the research materials, including research sites and participants, are outlined. Finally, questions of procedure and challenges are considered including interpretation, validity, ethics and the limitations of the study.

## Research practices

### Discovering

*“I am grateful to those who are keepers of the groove. The babies and the grandmas who hang on to it and help us remember when we forget that any kind of dancing is better than no dancing at all”*

—Linda Barry

At the beginning of a research process, a discovery is made that ignites a researcher’s curiosity or concern (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). The impetus for this study was my discovery of the emerging popularity of outsourced social dance programs in schools in Far North Queensland. I had been involved in the early days of dance implementation in Queensland, during which a well-resourced Curriculum Guide (Department of Education, Queensland, 1992) and then the P-10 Outcomes Syllabus (Queensland Studies Authority [QSA], 2016a) were introduced. When I returned to teach in the primary school as a dance specialist, the ‘Essential Learnings’ curriculum (QSA, 2016b) had been implemented, but there was rarely any dance happening except in the Health and Physical Education (HPE) program. It was then that I observed the emerging popularity of outsourced social dance programs in schools in Far North Queensland (Catholic Education Services, 2010).

This was the impetus for my study. This reductionist approach to the implementation of dance seemed to have raised the profile of, or at least established a precedent for Dance education in primary schools, but had reduced it to a movement skills or fitness program, at the cost of the rich learning possible when dance is taught as Art (Dimondstein, 1985).

Anecdotal evidence suggested, that whether dance was taught within the Physical Education program or by classroom teachers, the situation was much the same (Stevens, 2010; Dunkin 2004). Although many teachers favoured constructivist approaches to teaching in other curriculum areas, when it came

to dance, the predominant model was a recreative one, where students are taught the steps of a social or cultural dance (Ballard, 1990).

In my research and work I observed how dance could command the attention of young people, and how their engagement with it led them to learn more about dance, thinking, creativity, and each other (Torzillo, 2011). As a teacher in primary schools, I had observed students being creative with movement and finding ways to innovate, even within the limited creative context of a folk dance or ballroom dance class. I had also been impressed with the importance they placed on the opportunity to learn physically and to collaborate with their peers to express their own movement ideas in dance. A review of relevant literature revealed that there was a need for a more in-depth study of the impact of arts programs, including dance, within the context of Australian schools (Gibson & Anderson, 2008, p.103). Although dance was one of the most popular hobbies and recreational activities for young people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009), it remained a shadowy figure at best within the big picture of Arts education in the primary schools (Dunkin, 2004, Garvis, & Pendergast, 2010).

### **Rationalising**

*There is no use trying, said Alice. One can't believe impossible things. I daresay you haven't had much practice, said the Queen. When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.*

*– Lewis Carroll*

Recent developments, including the introduction of prescriptive explicit teaching methods, high stakes national testing and the exponential demands for 'performativity' (Lingard; 2010), seem to have further constricted opportunities for Arts education (Ewing, 2012) and therefore dance, in primary school classrooms (Garvis & Pendegast, 2010). Despite this, a few teachers have managed to transcend these barriers and find ways to introduce Creative dance in their classrooms. The rationale for this research developed

from this apparent contradiction, and drew me to employ diverse research methods and a methodology that would best represent that diversity, and therefore achieve the research aim.

I was motivated to research the practices of the few teachers who used Creative dance in class. I wondered about their values, dispositions and personal connections to dance or Dance education; to another strand of the arts; or to creative life in general. I was also interested in the responses of children and young people to the learning experiences these teachers provided for them. In my experience as a teacher, I had found that dance is a medium with a strong attraction for many children and young people, and this was supported by research (Stinson, 1997; Bond & Stinson, 2000, 2007; Gard, 2003).

Arts education in the primary school is by and large the responsibility of the classroom teacher (Garvis & Pendegast, 2010) and in Queensland primary schools in particular, of the music specialist. Practical, “on-the-ground” observations of actual classroom practice in dance were required to inform my research. This included the type of tasks in which students were engaging; what meanings of dance predominated, and how teachers managed and delivered the learning (Eisner, 2002).

In Australia, research into classroom practice of Arts education is taking place, albeit in modest and minimal ways, although teachers themselves are loath to take credit (Powers, 2014). There is a need for more stories to be told about the actual experience of the arts and dance, to provide evidence of the powerful learning that takes place when children have the opportunity to engage in collaborative, embodied creative meaning making (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010; Lemon, Garvis, & Klopper, 2014).

This research deals with a real issue: the potential for, and the actuality of, Dance education in the primary school. In my experience, teachers express

interest in teaching dance immediately following a professional development workshop, but few put this into practice once they return to the classroom. Recent research provides encouragement for teachers by arguing that expertise in dance is not as important as an understanding of relational pedagogy (Fraser, Price & Aitken, 2007; Boyd, 2006). This view informs the research and shifts attention to the enactment of dance to generalist classroom teachers and music teachers, not specialists or highly trained artists in residence. Snook (2013) noted that in light of the impending implementation of the Arts curriculum a sustainable model for Dance education would be needed.

My aim is to investigate the situation and create an interpretation that will prove useful (Stinson, 1997). The contextual and socially constructed meanings attached to teaching and learning practices are complex (Merriam, 1998). I have used my data to shed light on the practice and beliefs of teachers in relation to Dance education in North Queensland primary schools with the aim of adding to the picture of classroom practice in arts and Dance education, and in particular of student engagement and teacher response.

By observing and talking to teachers and students as they engaged in dance making, and by documenting my own teaching journey, I made links between theory and practice. I used these links to increase understanding of dance and to construct a pedagogical framework for teaching dance in the primary school classroom.

### **Questioning**

Many of my later works are full of questions more than answers but I find it extremely exciting to be able to come nearer to the question to which I am pretty sure there are no answers. But just to be able to ask the questions I find very exciting.

*Jiri Kylian, 1991*

I began this study with an interest in observing and documenting the views and practices of one generalist classroom teacher and two classroom music teachers in Dance education. Furthermore, I was interested in how children respond to dance in the classroom, which for many of them was a new experience (Piscitelli et al, 2004). My purpose, through case-study, was to examine the teaching of three people with different backgrounds, teaching styles and beliefs about teachers and learners, with the aim of revealing the relationship between their beliefs and teaching in dance. I wrote in my researcher's journal:

I heard from a friend that she was teaching dance as part of her program as an Arts specialist. This position had originally been a music specialist position, begun in the 90's as a Queensland wide initiative. After the implementation of the Queensland Essential Learnings Key learning area the Arts were introduced, some teachers in these specialist positions had been asked or instructed to include the other performing arts subjects of music and dance in their programs. At this time I had recently taught a Professional Development workshop in dance for primary school teachers, and two teachers who were attending for the second year in a row expressed interest in being part of a research project. I felt like an environmental scientist who had just discovered that a species thought to be extinct had been re-discovered.

The original research questions were:

- How do teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, beliefs about learning and beliefs about Dance education shape the learning experience for children in Dance education?
- How do children respond to Dance education in their classroom?
- How does a teacher utilise curricula and design learning so it provides opportunities for creative dance making?

However, the case-studies research did not go as planned; this study of dance attracted uncertainty. This was somewhat ironic, given that the arts themselves require a toleration of ambiguity and the exploration of uncertainty, outside of “prescriptive rules and procedures” (Eisner, 2002, p.10). When one participant left to take up a job and another ‘dropped off the radar’, I was forced to adapt, go back to the beginning and ask what was important. I thought at first to focus on the remaining teacher participant and how she mediated the competing tensions and agendas within Arts education and her position in the school, to teach dance.

As I collected the data in this study and became part of the ‘landscape’, new questions kept coming, as the research progressed the purpose and the ‘puzzle’ changed (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this context, questions seemed more important than answers. The journey takes over once the actual research starts. "When you are preparing for a journey, you own the journey. Once you've started the journey, the journey owns you" (Shope 2006, p. 165). I began to question the emphasis on the teacher - after all, there was only one of her and almost ninety students. How students were experiencing dance became much more interesting to me. Research questions may be “transformed along the way by the process of continual reflection” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.154) through the experience of the affective event of relational dance (Springgay & Rotas, 2015). I needed to reflect this ‘experience’ by collecting my stories and stories from other contexts, other teachers and other children. This research is aimed at understanding the stories of participants in relation to dance. Stories also reflect beliefs and assumptions about experiences. Because the participants are at different places in the story of dance implementation, story is an appropriate way to reflect this diversity, and the diverse ways that people have come to dance and engaged with dance in the classroom. According to Patton (1990), methodological appropriateness is the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. As the researcher, I moved

between my story and the participants' stories, like a dance (Maple & Edwards, 2020, p.3). The research design was influenced by my "shifting and changing interests and subjectivities" (Atencio, 2006, p.119) as the research progressed and I took opportunities to include other voices and my own voice in the construction of a more detailed but complex picture, aiming to include as many stories as I could to encompass the relatively limited landscape of dance (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Just as a choreographer at the beginning of the creative process does not know what material will be the most important or how the dance will evolve, the narrative researcher does not know which stories or events will constitute "webs of significance" (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). In dance composition based on an improvisational or open form, as much contemporary dance is, the process is as important as the final product, "which by definition is in constant flux" (Carter, 2000, p. 81). Also unknown is how the audience, like the reader of a narrative, will view this product. "What the audience views is an instance of one of the many possible realizations of the idea" (Carter, 2000, p. 81). In research as in dance it is important to remain flexible, open to possibilities of change or of differing interpretations. Research into teaching and learning in the Arts also needs to take account of this ambiguity and the constructivist notion, that reality is changing whether the observer wishes it or not (Hippis, 1993), as there are always multiple realities and perspectives involved. One starts with a preference, however the focus should emerge from the setting (Bogden & Biklen, p. 64). The research questions settle after a time, and what is important, remains. My key questions became:

- How do children and teachers experience dance in the classroom?
- Which pedagogic framework would best support teachers to implement dance in their classrooms?

These questions explore the experiences and understandings of dance from the student and teacher perspective. I have used the results of this study to develop

a pedagogic framework to best support generalist classroom teachers and music teachers to implement effective and engaging dance in their classrooms.

### **Planning**

*“Optimist: Someone who figures that taking a step backward after taking a step forward is not a disaster; it's a cha-cha.”*

— *Robert Brault*

This study was five years in the making, encompassing different stages and developments in research, presenting at conferences and publishing.

Therefore I was inevitably involved in the act of becoming as researcher (Irwin, Springgay, Leggo & Gouzouasis, 2008). The decision to stay open to this process determined my methodology would be emergent as I adapted to new information, new participants, new theoretical debates and “the personal and financial need to depart from the research journey” (McKenzie & Ling, 2009, p.52). Emergent methodologies are the “logical conclusion to paradigm shifts, major developments in theory, and new conceptions of knowledge and the knowledge building process” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.xi).

Methodological recipes will not necessarily take the researcher to the hoped for findings and conclusions, because “knowledge is on the move, it escapes the knower, and when captured and frozen it ceases to reflect the complexities of life” (Guttorm, Löytönen, Anttila and Valkeemäk, 2015, p.419). Time has therefore shaped my study as I refined my methodological approach and my understanding evolved in response to these shifts, developments and new conceptions (Jakubik, 2011). Time has also revealed the usefulness of a socio-kin aesthetic perspective (Torzillo, 2013), in guiding my understanding and informing my pedagogical approach.

Each classroom and teaching/learning situation is unique and complex; therefore controlling all the variables for the purpose of an empirical or quantitative study would be impossible. A “real dance classroom” is a dynamic situation (Stinson, 1997, p.5) and so quantifying that complexity in

order to generalize or prove would be equally impossible. The aim is to build a picture that may “generate thoughtful questioning and reflection on the part of the reader” (Stinson, 1997 p.52). The chain of evidence is rather a map of evidence, seen in the layering of stories, anecdotes and researcher reflection, and also a means of triangulation (Stake, 1995) or rather crystallization (Janesick, 2000). It is hoped that the reader may be able to imagine themselves in a similar scene, encouraging them to begin teaching dance and achieve some its goals of in the classroom.

### Conceptualising

*“I decided I should make the structure as visible as the dancing.”*

— Trisha Brown

I viewed the data through a lens shaped by my experiences up to and during the research study. Interpretation always takes place from a perspective (Patton, 1990). My particular subjectivity “determines what variables and concepts are most important and how the findings will be interpreted” (Patton, 1990, p. 86). Therefore it could be classified as "orientational qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 1990, p. 86), because it is based on an explicit theoretical perspective. Figure 1 illustrates this combination of three: embodied, socio-cultural and imaginative. I term this ‘socio-kin-aesthetic’. Shown in Figure 1

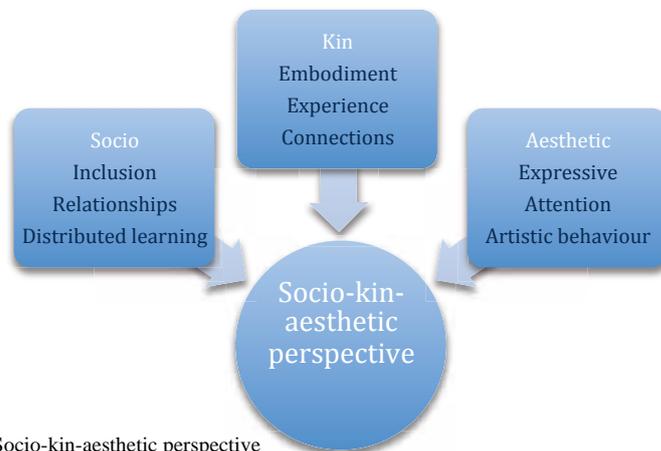


Figure 1 Socio-kin-aesthetic perspective

In relation to dance, a socio-cultural perspective acknowledges and respects the differing experiences and cultural capital each child brings to the dance classroom. Relationships are central to this perspective as is the idea that learning is constructed through interaction with the environment, materials and processes, which is fundamental to creative Arts education and to creative learning (Fraser et al, 2007). Therefore spoken and danced interactions between children are described and valued (Giguere, 2011). In the making of a class dance, or the development of a shared movement vocabulary, the interaction becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

An embodied perspective questions the taken-for-granted assumption about what counts as knowing and therefore what is deemed a worthwhile part of the curriculum (Powell, 2007; Bresler, 2004; Davidson, 2007). Curricula are not neutral, and in regard to the body, carry implicit as well as explicit messages about the legitimacy of the body/mind connection and of Dance education. The “instrumental choreography” of schools and classrooms determines how, where and with whom students should move (Bresler, 2004, p. 127). Bresler noted the importance of the social aspect of dance which, while “personal . . . has a tremendous capacity to connect with others” (2004, p.128). The embodied perspective seeks to make connections between body and mind and values the learning and experience acquired through the body (Bresler, 2004). Therefore the ‘feeling of what happens’ (Damasio, 1999) through the body is considered important in evaluating the dance experience.

An imaginative perspective values Arts education as an opportunity to work in the expressive realm in a school system devoted to the functional (Eisner, 1998; Green, 1995; Bannon & Sanderson, 2000). Through imaginative inquiry in dance, children and young people have the opportunity to engage in ‘opportunity thinking’ and to pay attention (Fraser et al., 2009, p. 11). The expansion of perception enables imaginative creation through “learning to look, observe and transform . . . awareness” (Bresler, 1996, p.30). If art is a behaviour rather than a product then children could have the opportunity to

engage in artful behaviours and artful relationships through dance (Blatt-Gross, 2013). Therefore video, spoken and written data that documents children's and teachers' creative and artful interactions is not evaluated according to external standards of 'quality' or 'expertise' or 'finesse' of the finished product.

This perspective emphasises the important role of the body, cognition and perception in "creating the community of learners within which understandings are developed" (Bresler, 2004, p. 128). Therefore I considered diverse views (teacher, students, researcher) and diverse sources, including the embodied. Kemmis et al, talk about the practices formed in the 'intersubjective spaces' of the semantic, material and social (2013). In dance the spaces are literally felt, when dancers physically relate and create ideas together. The case study methodology draws on strands within arts inspired research: narrative; connoisseurship, and materiality, which influence my collection of data, my understanding of the participants in the study and what count as knowledge and knowing.

### **The case study approach**

As a researcher I was drawn to case study because of a particular interest in the case of creative Dance education in primary school classrooms in Queensland Australia. According to Stake case study is not a methodological choice; it is used because it is the case that is of interest (Stake, 2008). Nonetheless, whether methodology or not, case study, because of its emphasis on the subject of the research inquiry rather than the process of the inquiry itself, allows the researcher to select methods of data collection and sources of data particular to the context and nature of the subject. A case study benefits from having multiple sources of evidence (Stake, p.8) and is therefore an appropriate design for the study of a "complex social phenomena" (Yin, 2013, p.4) such as that of a dance classroom. I chose case study to contain the diverse forms of data I collected to build a rich picture of Dance education in

classrooms. This data includes stories of my own practice and the practice of other teachers; and the engagement and responses of students (Yin, 2013).

In case study data is collected in real life situations where phenomenon and context are entangled (Yin, 2013). In dance the phenomena include multi-modes of action and communication. Different types of data provided different types of evidence of this complexity and the impact of dance on children and teachers. The observation of dance classes and video and photograph records are accorded legitimacy in this study (Nielsen, 2009) in line with an epistemology that values bodily knowledge (Bresler, 2004; Lakoff & Johnson 1999). Multiple sources and modes provided rich evidence for interpretation as well as contributing to the triangulation of data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013).

Methodology is not simply a neutral functional tool or method. Researchers have to acknowledge their assumptions “about the nature of reality and the nature of knowing and knowledge” (Lapan & Marais, 2004, p. 5). In a classroom there are as many versions of reality as there are actors and these can change from day to day, depending what else is happening for the teacher in the ‘professional knowledge landscape’ (Clandinin, Connelly & Craig, 1995) or for the children in their lives. The narrative methodology chosen embraces this uncertainty and multiplicity (Nielsen, 2006; Maple & Edwards, 2010).

Case study is based on constructivism and the view that reality is socially and contextually constructed (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). This study recognizes constructivism as both a methodological approach, involving the ‘constructedness’ of reality and knowledge (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011) and an integral aspect of the teaching of dance in education (Buck, 2003). A case study should provide a “vicarious experience” that “can contribute to the social construction of knowledge that in a cumulative sense, builds general, if not necessarily generalizable knowledge” (Patton 2002, p. 583).

Within my single case study a number of units of analysis are ‘embedded’ (Yin, 2006) a very apt methodological framework for my purpose. The decision to investigate other settings, use other units of analysis is not done in order to predict through replication (Yin, 2006) but to build a richer picture of the experience of dance and therefore to design a more flexible and open-ended pedagogic framework. According to Stake, case studies can be motivated by intrinsic interest in ‘the case’ alternatively the case might be instrumental to a further goal (Stake, p.8). While the impetus for this study is my intrinsic and deep interest in Dance education, the investigation of the case is instrumental to my goal of designing a pedagogic framework.

The five years of the research coincided with a period of significant developments and change in Arts education and education generally. In Queensland Australia, extreme shifts of policy and approaches to education have brought into sharp relief the problems and the wicked problems (Adam, 2016) of the purpose and nature of education. The complexity of the learning situation often requires the researcher to begin interpretation during data collection, in order to inform the next stage (Yin, 2006). The “virtue of the case study method is the ability to redefine the case” as it proceeds (p.5). This more fluid and emergent approach to research is in line with the “real business of case study”, which is “particularisation, not generalisation” (Stake, p.8).

Within this case, I used the analogy of a neighborhood, for the various settings or contexts of the research. The stories, images, data were found in the various houses in the neighborhood of Dance education, that I visited and dwelt in for a time. As or moved from one to the next, I carried my experiences and observations with me; bringing forth comparisons, shining a light on similarities and inducing ‘ah ha moments’. As I journeyed I read more, wrote more and the stories and images and data began to coalesce, to shift, revealing new understandings and confirming earlier propositions or intuitions. Assertions and propositions are drawn from “some hidden mix of personal

experience, scholarship, the assertions of other researchers” (Stake, p.12) that in this case developed over time.

### **Arts informed research**

I have enriched this case study with infusions of other approaches and methods (see Figure 2). This study does not fit neatly under the category of Arts Based research, since the product of the research, will not be an artwork or arts performance. However it is informed by Arts practices and Arts ways of thinking (Ewing & Hughes, 2008). Connoisseurship and narrative are important ways of working; processes that informed and guided my thinking and interactions. As a professional doctoral student, thesis by publication enabled me to continue to work in the field and submit papers that sought to answer my research questions and to keep abreast of changes in the educational landscape. New materialism in particular has given me much to think about in the last stages of my thesis; a challenge that put my convictions under pressure, and fine-tuned my thoughts and pedagogical understanding (Springgay & Rotas, 2015; Hickey-Moody, Palmer & Esther Sayers, 2016).

The methodological influences are summarized in Figure 2

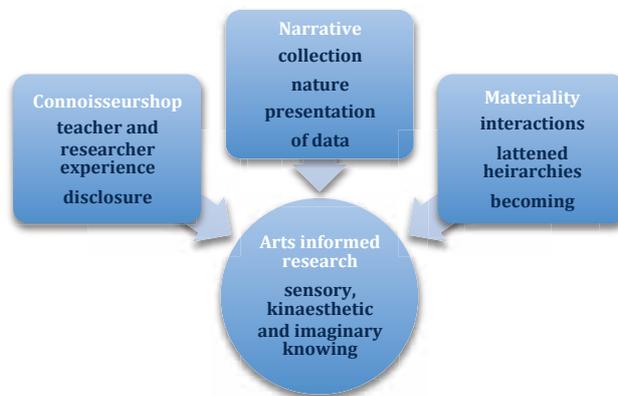


Figure 2 Methodological influences

Arts experiences involve “open-ended learning and unique, personal responses in contrast to other academic subjects which focus on outcomes and correct answers” (Andrews, 2008, p.3). This has implications for my research, where the aim is not to prove but to understand. Important aspects of arts based research relevant to this thesis are the emphasis on self-awareness, the communication of that awareness and the value placed on preverbal and multiple ways of knowing, including sensory, kinaesthetic and imaginary (Leavy, 2015). Key features of arts informed research are:

- the presence of ambiguity or openness
- the use of expressive and/or contextualised language
- the promotion of empathy or engagement with the audience/reader/viewer
- the presence of an aesthetic form or forms in: data collection; analysis; representation; dissemination of the research findings. (Ewing & Hughes, 2008, p.514)

Ambiguity or openness comes with the territory in Qualitative research in dance, especially in a context as complex as a classroom. Dance does not present hard data that is amenable to being sliced, weighed and counted. This researcher’s perspective values the knowledge gained through the body, as against the prevailing ethos in education in which, “We have ... concretized our view of what it means to know” (Eisner, 1997, p. 7). Arts education and arts informed research present knowledge as a process; a process where diverse viewpoints are invited, and “depth of field” prized (Eisner, 1997, p. 9). Arts making, as defined in the Australian curriculum, is iterative, where “Learning through making is interrelated with and dependent on responding” (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2016a, par5). Similarly arts based research eschews the linear instead, seeking meaning through circular or rhyzomatic processes often involving artistic forms such as poetry, map making and collage (Hunter, Lusardi, Zucker,

Jacelon & Chandler, 2002). The expressive nature of dance described in this study also uses other expressive forms, such as poetry, or uses the words of participants in a heightened way, similar to the ‘essence descriptions’ used by Bond and Stinson in their meta-analysis of Dance education data from around the world (2000). The words used by children throughout this study to describe or explain their dance, are characterized by an energetic innocence and liveliness, taking the reader directly into their enjoyment, engagement, puzzlement or concerns. Hopefully this will invite an empathetic understanding to complement my theoretical analysis. I have used poetry as a preface to three chapters: Methodology, Literature Review and Pedagogic Framework.

### **Connoisseurship**

My experience in dance suggests the relevance of the educational connoisseurship method, which like appreciation of the arts, is an informed and perceptive ability to “yield what is not obvious” (Barone & Eisner, 1997, p.100). As a researcher with many years working in Dance education, this is an advantage. At the same time, I needed to suspend my ‘aesthetic’ preferences or personal tastes for certain styles of dance or music in order to appreciate what dance is and may become for the participants.

Connoisseurship also applies to the teacher participants ‘on the ground’ knowledge of their own students and of classroom dynamics, an experience that needs to be respected (Buck, 2003).

Connoisseurship must be balanced with criticism or the ‘art’ of disclosure. This enables the generation of themes and the location of the general in the particular (Barone & Eisner, 1997). In that sense, the study is also heuristic, through its “immersion in active experience” (Gray, 2013, p.33) and use of autobiographical data and self-inquiry (Gray, 2013). I aim to balance the subjectivity of this approach, even though it may be seen as ‘virtuous’ for making a “distinctive contribution” (Peshkin, 1988, p.18) by using theory to

“help explicate what has become visible” (Barone and Eisner, 1997, p.100). I will examine my personal practical knowledge from my “past experience . . . present mind and body, and . . . future plans and actions” (Connelly and Clandinin 1988, p. 25). Sansom uses the Latin word ‘currere’, to describe a process of “regressive and progressive recollection and retrospective reflection” (2015, p.23) and to use both this recollection of the past and a vision of the future to more fully engage with the present (Sansom, 2015).

### **Narrative**

In this case study, based as it is on my stories of teaching dance in classrooms, the task “is to make sense of what [I] know” (Goodson and Walker, 1991, p.107). Story informs the collection of data, the nature of the data collected and the presentation of data (Marais & Lapan, 2010, p.105). As a qualitative research method, “narrative inquiry serves the researcher who wishes to understand a phenomenon or an experience rather than to formulate a logical or scientific explanation” (Kramp, 2004, p.104). Narrative inquiry is a partnership, an interaction “between the researcher and participant, over time, in a place or series of places” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000, p.20). Through stories participants are able to describe reality as they saw it and therefore reveal the reasons for their actions. Through telling stories about creative processes, arts-based methods “can reveal tacit knowledge and make knowledge and meaning construction visible” (Black, 2011, p.68). One of the advantages of this approach is the “close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.545).

The possibility of the original multiple embedded case study dissolved and it was obvious that “other events, actions, happenings” would have to be “woven into the stories that are retold” (Trahar 2009, p.3). I needed to include stories of people who have taught ‘little bits’ of dance as well as my stories of teaching dance over a long time in many contexts. It remains true that dance in

the classroom (especially dance which is in line with the intent of the syllabus) is rare indeed, meaning that all stories would be important in creating this collaged landscape of the possibilities of Dance education.

As part of the narrative composition, I include my own autoethnographic reflections of teaching and learning in dance with the intention of creating connections between theory and research. Critiques of auto-ethnography are based on its ‘inward focus’, inability to escape the ‘familiar, [and] basis in the experiential not analytic (Delamont, 2007). According to Bruner, narrative inquiry can help us understand reasons for our actions, which are motivated by beliefs, desires, theories, and values (1986, 1990). The “auto-ethnographic stories I offer are not models or solutions . . . but are stories that highlight the tensions” (Clandinin, 1993, p. 14), in order to further my own “pedagogical understanding” (Ewing & Hughes, 2008 p.518) and therefore make a contribution that may prove useful.

### **Materiality**

The material turn in research, particularly in arts related research, draws attention to arts practice and Arts education as events that should be understood as affect, not reducible just to “function, form, and technique” (Springgay & Rotas, 2015, p.25). Affect becomes important, because knowing, feeling and doing are interconnected in the learning encounter (Gannon, 2016). Dance as a form of communication privileges the body and the senses rather than language and the written word (Frazer et al., 2007). Materiality also exists in the virtual beyond abstraction (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013). In this research, I observed the ease with which children accept improvisational prompts such as becoming or moving through invisible materials. I value their reactions and movements as research evidence; showing the work of thinking and feeling that happens in the dance making process. The materials of dance are the children, the space, the teacher, the dance, the emotion, movements, spaces, time, dynamics, relationships and

form/structure. Children might struggle to describe their dance experience, therefore combining written words, moving and still images is used in this study in an attempt to make visible the intra-personal and intra-personal experience of dance.

## **Research techniques**

### **Observing**

*“Do stuff. Be clenched, curious . . . Pay attention. It's all about paying attention . . . It connects you with others. It makes you eager”*

— *Susan Sontag*

Observation was an important means of gathering data in this study and although my role as an observer changed in the various settings, it could never be defined as distanced or neutral. In arts informed research “professional and personal boundaries are often blurred and inform each other” (Ewing, 2010, p.137). As a researcher investigating my own practice as an insider I am able to access “embedded knowledge that emerges from experience“ (Evered & Louis in Andrews, 2008, p.6).

Naturalistic observation is ideal for investigating the experience of dance because it can reveal “social processes as well as individual activity” (Robson, 2014, p.125). A view of creativity as a distributed process is also served by observation because “the implicit narrative structure” (Robson, 2014, p.125) makes it possible to look at individual and collective instances and processes of creativity in their everyday behaviour. In the dance class, children’s freedom to move, opens up the possibility of observing their actions, interactions and movement qualities through the use of multi modal data (Nielsen, 2015) such as film, photo and drawings. The elements of dance, as used in the current Australian curriculum, derived originally from the work of Rudolf Laban and provide a language for reading dance (ACARA, 2016b). But ultimately what stands out, what I notice, is more than can be

encompassed by the elements of space, weight, time and force and their many combinations.

Prolonged engagement at two sites enabled me to blend a little into the background or setting, in as much as a researcher can. A characteristic of all forms of qualitative research is that “the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. Since understanding is the goal of this research, it uses the human instrument, “which is able to be immediately responsive” (Merriam, 2002, p.5). I observed students as they engaged in warm-ups and movement games, improvisation and dance making, in rehearsal and performance. The gradual layering of observations and the palimpsest (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002) created by old and new stories, their stories and my stories, continues to reveal relationships and juxtapositions.

A researcher over time may become an insider through familiarity in the complex context of the classroom (Buck & Snook, 2016), where the distanced observer stance is impossible. My stance as participant observer/researcher at one site absolved me from responsibility for teaching or managing the classroom, and meant I could observe and reflect as well as interact when the situation called for it. I seemed to have become a learning adviser to students and teacher, mainly by listening and occasionally asking ‘what if’ questions, and perhaps, therefore a ‘broker[s]’ and ‘translator[s]’ of knowledge” (Sriprakash & Mukhopadhyay, 2015, p.1). During classroom observations I would engage in conversations with students as they were making dance if it seemed they needed it. Observing becomes a reflective and interactive process (Berg, 2004). There is a kind of collective journey here: my journey as a researcher, the teacher in discovering how to develop and grow this teaching and learning process in dance, and the children in their understanding, creativity and enjoyment of dance.

In the specialist teacher role, my position was both insider and outsider or perhaps an in-between (Milligan, 2016). Dance was on the edge or outside

the regular classroom regime, a place where the space and relationships of bodies in that space had to be negotiated. Nevertheless, anecdotally I was told by parents I met outside the school that their children took it for granted that I “was their dance teacher”, even though students at the school might only get one opportunity to take part in creative dance sessions in their primary schooling. I did return every year, teaching different year groups, and so students were used to seeing me around the school, and teachers used to seeing dance happening in the library or undercover areas or classrooms. Still I was an outsider, because the dance classroom, although it still had rules, operated differently. Therefore the focus of my observation was on what students were doing, how they were engaged in that activity and how teachers responded to it.

### **Documenting**

*“Dance first. Think later. It's the natural order.”*

— *Samuel Beckett*

Ethical approval to use video and photo documentation at Site A was an opportunity to examine in detail the ‘significant’ moments after the fact, adding to the richness of the description and my understanding of what took place (Nielsen, 2012). It would have been difficult to identify what was significant in the moment, while watching a whole class during a 25-30 minute lesson. The creative dance class can sometimes appear to be a “riot” of confusion of noise movement action and interaction (Buck, 2003, p.301). Being able to watch and re watch, enabled me to see rich detail of children’s ‘embodied dialogues’ (Anttila, 2015), engagement, attention and movement qualities (Nielsen 2012; Warburton, Reedy and Ng, 2014).

The documentation of my teaching plans, reflections, musings, diary entries and choreographic notes assisted me in recollecting my past teaching stories, in order to filter them through the lens of theory, research and current experience. (Sample of teaching reflection included in Appendix 1)

## **Talking**

*“The time has come to walrus said to talk of many things” — Lewis Carroll*

There were many varieties of talk in this study, some intentional and some opportunistic. When I was an observer of another teacher’s classroom, I held research interviews with the teacher before and after each research stage; to take place as soon as possible before and after the event, or as close to the action as possible (Frazer et al, 2007). Therefore, in the early stages of the research, I put more emphasis on formal interviews. In the later stages of the research, in my role as a dance specialist, this became increasingly difficult as teachers struggled with the pressures imposed on them by the demands of testing and assessment requirements, and also because my classes took place in their pupil-free time. I recognized and took more opportunities of unplanned moments, the post lesson de-briefs and corridor and lunchroom talks. As I have learned and relearned since data collection began, time is a precious and contested resource in schools. Therefore, being in class so much was a privilege as was the teacher’s willing participation. Thanks to the teacher, students and of course the principal of the school, I was able to become a bit like ‘part of the scenery’, even when dance sometimes became a contested zone. My common experiences as a teacher, including as a relief teacher, “provided a point of entry” (Gaztambide-Fernández, Cairns, Kawashima, Menna & VanderDussen, 2011, p.15-16). I was familiar with the culture of the staff room, so was able to engage other teachers in conversations that alluded to the place of the Arts in the school, and the impacts of systemic changes on the nature of teachers’ work.

## **Interacting**

*“The interface between things is where the most interesting events take place.*

*These are often the most valuable, diverse and productive elements in the system” — David Holmgren*

My conversations with children also evolved. The semi-structured focus group discussions held with self-selected groups of between five and seven, from three classes at Site A were continued in a less structured form at Site B, and these gave way to the more Participatory methods in a later iteration at the same site, in which I drew on the research methods used in a New Zealand study (Whyte, Fraser, Aitken, & Price, 2013). I began the group sessions, with an informal meet and greet, followed by a guided reflection. I played music to them from our earlier dance classes. I didn't ask them for specific responses, but thought aloud about the dance classes we had together, asking them to see the dancing in their head; like a movie. After the reflection I brought out cards with words generated from earlier focus group interviews and class discussions at Site A and this site, as well as a few that I typically used during lessons. Individuals selected a card or cards that were significant for them and could choose to briefly say why they had chosen that word. This led to conversations among students about the words and the concepts and elements in an attempt to compare, contrast and categorise the words. This led to a mind-mapping exercise in which students organized the words and attempted to make connections between them. The discussions during the mind-mapping were also audiotaped.

### **Remembering**

I have also used my own reflections, gleaned from recollections, class notes, lesson plans and diary entries, to re-consider my own practise as a teacher and learner in light of the research and theory. Often an earlier event or critical incident in a class is brought to mind while writing papers or reading yet again across the data, yielding new insights. This process of remembering is auto-ethnographic in that it is both a mode of representation and a mode of inquiry (Richardson, 1994). I begin my thesis with a self-story (Polkinghorne, 1995), not in order to wallow in my own experience, but to mine that experience for critical incidents and understandings; using my personal practical knowledge

to explore the past in order to better understand the present (Clandinin, Connelly & Craig, 1995)

## Research Materials

### Settings

The settings for the study were diverse, so to make sense of this diversity I use the analogy of houses in a community rather than settings or sites. I thought about it as a sojourn into a community, where I dwelt in each house for a time and collected data from the residents. I learned something in each house about Dance education and how teachers and students experience it. Further, I learned about the kinds of pedagogies that enable rich, collaborative, embodied learning to take place in Dance education. I came upon each of these houses or samples by accident or happenstance and as in most arts-based research, these samples were of convenience, i.e. “idiosyncratic sites that are most often intuitively selected rather than randomly identified or otherwise rule-governed” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2013, p.8). Figure 3 shows each of the houses/settings and lists the type of data collected at each one.

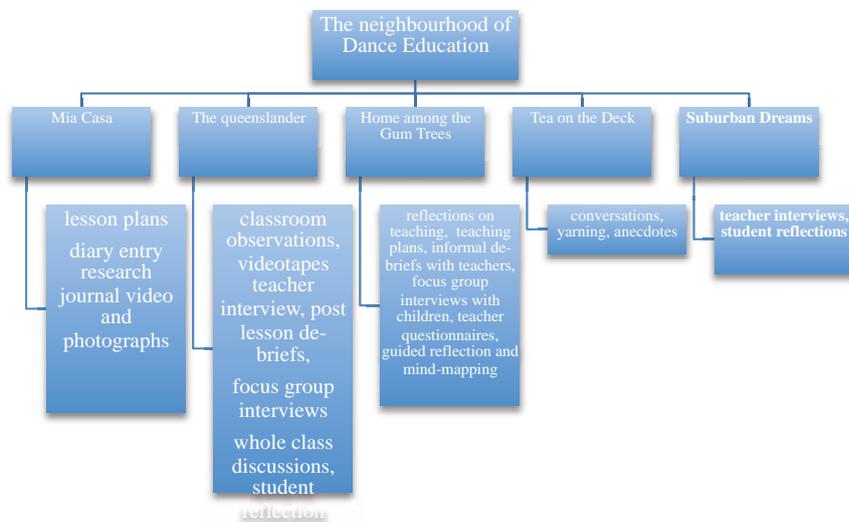


Figure 3 The neighborhood of Dance education

Each of the houses is elaborated below.

### ***House 1- Mia Casa***

House 1 is my house, where I lived my experiences as student, dancer, and teacher. I stayed in this house over some decades, accruing experiences that I am now recollecting in memories, diaries planning notes, photographs and video. The time in this house started in the sixties and continued to the present day. My own stories of teaching dance in Queensland schools were collected during three extended contracts as a replacement music teacher. In all three situations I was able to plan and teach a dance program instead of music. As a tertiary educator in a teacher education program, provider of professional development and specialist Arts education I had the opportunity to hear stories about the teaching of dance and observe the reaction of children and teachers. Self-reflexive experience can be understood as one of the primary instruments of auto-ethnographic research (Spry, 2001).

### ***House 2 - The Queenslander***

House 2 was a school in a rural town, two hours drive from the regional city where I now live and work. In this setting I collected data from: classroom observations, videotaping of classes, teacher interview, post lesson de-briefs, focus group interviews with students, whole class discussions, student reflection including drawings and text.

The town where the school is located has a feeling of being on the edge, the edge between the tropical coast and rainforest bordering it and the savannah that continues into the west. In response to the poor performance of Queensland schools in the initial round of National testing (Lingard, 2010), the school had implemented a school wide pedagogic framework based on an explicit teaching model, in order to address literacy and numeracy deficits (Ford, 2013). The management and staff at the school appeared to have

embraced this school-wide focus and cast all three message systems of schooling, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (Bernstein, 2004) in the explicit mold.

The curriculum at the time of the study was comprised of ‘units of work’ written by the Department of Education and Training. These were units in which every detail of every lesson, including all texts, links, stimulus materials were prescribed. Instruction was delivered using a particular linear model, with named stages (Mills & McGregor, 2016).

A consequence of this was standardized classroom management practices, which were occasionally at odds with the relative freedom of the dance class. Moments of tension around classroom management and teacher demands sometimes disrupted the class and student engagement. These moments highlighted the teacher’s concerns about the status of the arts. It also brought into sharp relief the teacher’s position, in which she felt she was operating in a borrowed space, on borrowed time, with borrowed participants (Davidson, 2004, p, 210). Alongside the important work of the school, which was located in the academic stream, the school had an active music program. The choir and band performed regularly at school and community events conforming to “a production orientation” (Bresler, 1993). The classroom teachers were expected to teach the visual and media arts. Two classroom teachers I met taught a drama unit, during the study. The teaching was very conventional and teacher directed, with no opportunity for children to engage in the process of the drama or to actually create any themselves.

A few children were involved in cultural dance groups outside school, some children took ballet or modern dance lessons at a private studio and some of the boys had begun experimenting with break-dancing and hip-hop by watching video clips and getting together with friends to try out moves. However most children had not had a dance lesson let alone a creative dance

lesson in the classroom. Data was collected in three classes (Year 3, Year 5 and Year 7) with approximately 27 children in each class.

### *House 3 - Home among the Gum Trees*

This was a government primary school in a suburb of a major coastal city. In this school I collected data from: my own reflections on teaching, my teaching plans, informal de-briefs with teachers, focus group interviews with children, teacher questionnaires and guided reflection and mind-mapping with children.

I taught dance lessons to Year 4 and Year 6 students as part of cross-curricula units in English, Science and History. The school is somewhat unusual among the regions primary schools, as it has an active creative arts program. A teacher at the school, who is an arts advocate and arts organiser, initiated this program and then drew in other interested teachers. In this school the Arts classroom teachers usually taught subjects of Visual Arts and Media with the assistance of their more experienced peers. Drama was taught by a team from a local Youth performing arts company. Dance is sometimes also taught as part of Health and Physical Education. Children at each year level have the opportunity to take part in Creative Arts lessons and units in at least two artforms each year.

Places at the school are prized, and parents have been known to move into the school's catchment area in order to qualify for enrolment. Advertisements for properties in the area often add a note about the school as an inducement to prospective buyers. As the focus on literacy and numeracy has taken hold, teachers have to become innovative to keep dance in the curriculum. They do this by scheduling dance to take place when the classes do rotations of non-core subjects (at the time of data collection this meant Science, History and the Arts).

A few students in most classes take or have taken dance tuition outside school, including some boys. Despite having experienced improvisation games and

activities as part of school based or after school drama club, the majority of the children had no experience with improvisation in dance, including those with outside school experiences. I was not aiming to collect comparative data in this study; hence the dance background of the students was not collected in a pre-test or questionnaire at the beginning of the study.

#### ***House 4 - Tea on the Deck***

House 4 is the house of a teacher colleague. In this setting I recorded my observations and anecdotes and insights from shared conversations on teaching practice. The two of us had worked together in arts advocacy and then in the same school, she in Music and Visual Arts and myself in drama. We met again when she was involved as a tutor and organizer of primary Arts education professional development programs, and I was employed to run workshops in dance. Soon after she was employed as a teacher of performing arts (including Dance, Drama and Music) at a private primary school, we became neighbours. The conversation about dance, Arts education and teaching in general, took the form of a ‘yarn’ what McKenna and Woods describe as an ‘artful practice’ (2012, p.78). The conversation becomes a metaphoric yarn that “weaves the fabric of the researcher’s understanding” of their collective and individual ‘life worlds’ (McKenna & Woods , 2012, p.77).

#### ***House 5 - Suburban Dreams***

At this school I collected data in the form of teacher interviews and transcriptions of student reflection. A teacher at this school was the sole respondent to a request on an Arts education Network web site, for participants willing to take part in the research project. Delays in gaining approval from the University ethics committee meant that the dance unit this teacher was implementing was already over by the time the paperwork was in place. I was still keen to talk to the teacher and students about the dance unit, and explore the teacher and student response to dance and their experiences. She agreed to be interviewed, although approval was not granted to interview

students. I was also able to look at her planning and student post unit written reflections.

In this school, at this time, all teachers of a particular grade level were expected to design yearly plans for teaching and learning across all learning areas. It was usual in that school as in many that in each year of Primary School, children would experience one of the five artforms (Dance, Drama, Media, Music and Visual Arts). Therefore teachers 'looked for the gaps' in their planning to find an instrumental purpose for inclusion of the arts (Nayler, 2011). In this instance they chose to do a unit on Bush dancing' to 'fit' the colonial Australia history unit. Without seeing the actual dance, or talking to students, I can only have a very partial understanding of student engagement or learning or any detail of the pedagogic interactions that took place. I can only surmise based on the teacher's description of critical moments in these lessons, and from my own experience, what the interaction might have looked like. Equally the description of the teachers' pedagogic decisions can be looked at through the lens of experience and the interrogation of my own teaching for this thesis. Moments in her testimony reminded me of critical incidents from my own teaching and led me to think about alternate pedagogic decisions, ones that would lead to more productive outcomes.

### **Participants**

In total, seven teachers took part in this study. All of the teachers had been generalist classroom primary school teachers. At the time of the study, two were employed as arts specialists and, although originally trained in music, were also teaching dance and drama across a number of year levels.

Eighty two children took part in this study at 2 different sites (House 1 and House 3). Some of the children had experience of dance outside school, but limited or no experience of dance in a classroom setting, in particular of creating their own dance as part of a lesson. The teacher in House 1 was a

purposive sample, having self-identified as being interested in Dance education by attending workshops and following up with questions, discussion and or email to confirm their interest. The teachers in House 3 were all generalist classroom teachers, two were involved in arts advocacy, both had a personal interest in Visual Art; one was pursuing a Visual Arts Certificate IV and the other was a leader in Arts education advocacy and training in the region. Therefore they had credibility for the purpose of this investigation, where I was interested in how they taught dance or how they responded to the teaching of dance in their classrooms. It is important to select information-rich cases for study (Patton 1990).

#### Teacher A - Embedding dance, more than scratching the surface

Claire (pseudonym) was a classroom teacher in House 2, who had some training in and a love of music. She became a music teacher following a recruitment and training program in Queensland (Roulston, 1998). At the time of the study, she had been teaching music at the school for years. The previous year the principal informed her that she would also have to teach the other two performing arts of dance and drama. She made an effort to utilise the Arts curriculum in her music lessons, incorporating such learning experiences as student created 'soundscapes' and 'graphic notations' (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2015), so she was perhaps more receptive to the prospect of student devised dance.

I first met Claire when she was a participant in a dance workshop as part of a professional development day in the arts curriculum. After that she had implemented a dance unit, based on an Assessment Bank Task published by the Queensland Studies Authority (2015). The following year we met again, when she came to the dance workshop at the once a year multi-art professional development Day. At the time I was beginning to formulate a research question, based on the research problem. She was able to recount her experience, which was to be pleasantly surprised with what children created in

dance, despite initial struggles. Claire was keen to help with the research, offering her support for the case study to be based at her school.

Claire maintained a strong belief in the value of Arts education, particularly for students who have different learning styles and intelligences. For her the Arts were an opportunity for some students, who don't have success in the core curriculum, to achieve, and to enjoy learning.

Semi-structured interviews with her were conducted before and after data collection. During the period of data collection, informal conversations often took place after or between classes in the form of a de-brief.

### ***Teacher B - Just who I am***

An ongoing conversation took place over a period of a year at House 3, the home of Kate (pseudonym). These conversations took place while she was a teacher of music, dance and drama at a private primary school, later while she was employed as school based teacher relief, and finally as a teacher educator. In all three settings her modus operandi, was to use embodied arts based practices to engage students in deep learning.

Kate's approach to Arts education is driven by social constructivist beliefs. She aimed to create an environment where children can engage in artful behaviour (Blatt-Gross, 2013). She based her teaching of dance on the elements of movement as derived from the work of Rudolf Laban, but maintained a commitment to the needs and interests of her students in order to open up inclusive opportunities for imaginative expression. Kate is an advocate for the value of Arts education, in particular of value of 'the real'. Her teaching practice is intentional and refined, and could be characterized as 'slow education', which is about process and how children learn not just on continual assessment (Harland, 2016).

AT House 3 I have taught for and with 3 teachers in repeated projects. All three were strong advocates for Arts education, and cross-curricula learning.

Despite system policies that mandated separate teaching of each National Curriculum subject. Teacher feedback was received from two other teachers at this school.

### ***Teacher C***

Loretta (pseudonym) was a classroom teacher at a large primary school. She was the only respondent to a call for participants that went to the mailing list of the Primary School Arts Education Network in the region. I interviewed her on two occasions. At those times she expressed the belief that integrating the arts into the curriculum might be more difficult from then on, because the school would be teaching subjects independently in the following year, due to the implementation of the National Curriculum and because of the demands of the mandatory allocated times for literacy and numeracy (Queensland Studies Authority, 2011).

## **Research procedures and challenges**

### **Interpretation**

*“Human beings used to be molecules which could do many, many different sorts of dances, or decline to dance at all --as they pleased.”*

— *Kurt Vonnegut*

Each data source is one piece of the research “puzzle,”(Clandinin, Huber, Menon, Murphy & Swanson, 2015) with each piece contributing to an understanding of the whole phenomenon. This convergence adds strength to the findings as the various pieces are joined together to promote a greater understanding of the case. The data therefore is “ the material for telling a story . . . to vivify interpretation” rather than to support or prove a theory or proposition (Lather, 1991, p. 91). Throughout the sequence of data collection, analysis was always taking place. Reading across the data from the early stages revealed themes and categories that were used as inspiration for subsequent stages of the project (Tynan, Stewart, Adlington, Littledyke, & Swinsburg, 2008). Data from one activity or event was often used as a cue for

interview or discussion questions or as a way of focusing observations in a “sequence” (Sturge-Sparkes, 2007, p.82). Ultimately, the intent was to take a narrative approach and stay close to the original words and context of the words and then to use this data in a descriptive way to construct rich vignettes of Dance education practice (Yin, 2006).

Written data comprising teacher reflective survey responses, student written reflections, transcriptions of interviews and conversations, researchers journal and auto-ethnographic texts (diaries, lesson notes and plans) were read and re-read to identify themes and relationships or contradictions between them. I used word-cloud software to identify the most used words, and highlighted text, using colours to identify codes (sample included in Appendix 2). I then re-sorted and collected data from different sources according to the emergent categories (Saldana, 2012). I looked for evidence of thinking about the embodied, social and expressive experiences of teachers and students as well as for the unexpected or surprising. I labeled all video clips and photographs and returned to notable moments to write more detailed descriptions of children’s interactions. Photographs were taken of mind-maps and children’s written and drawn reflections on dance learning to identify links to their interview data and my observations. I aimed for a process similar to Andrew’s ‘integrated inquiry’ a method that looks for thematic relationships among data from multiple data sources (2008). According to Greene, “Learning also is a process of effecting new connections in experience, of thematizing, problematizing, and imposing diverse patterns on the inchoateness of things” (Greene, 1978, p.3). (Samples of photo interpretation included in Appendix 3)

## **Ethics**

### **Access, ethics and informed consent**

Ethical guidelines of James Cook University were adhered to in all stages of the research. Consent was obtained for the particular research procedure at

each of the sites, whether; video recording, focus group interviews, individual interviews, written reflections or observation of classes, from teachers, school principals, parents and children. Care was taken in classes where video recordings were made, not to take images of children whose parents had not given consent. (Samples of informed consent and information sheets provided in Appendix 4).

Consent for interviews with each teacher was obtained from the teacher and the school principal where relevant. Where the participants were children, consent was obtained from the principal, teachers, parents and children who elected to be interviewed or observed. Teachers, parents and children were reminded of their rights to participate or withdraw at all times, and researchers were sensitive to children's implicit consent or dissent to participate (as expressed by gesture, action or verbally) throughout. At no time were camcorders taken into areas regarded as private or confidential, or where children's personal care was being attended.

The commitment to an ethical process does not end once the procedural process is complete. Ethical questions are also implicated in a researcher's perspective and in the research design. The process is not just about gathering data, deducing themes and answering questions within the scope of one's ethics approval. In my understanding, it is about respect for the teachers 'on-the-ground' knowledge, which may be different to a researcher's academic knowledge. (Buck, 2003; Bresler, 1993). There has been an increasing emphasis on children's rights in research, which since 2000 has more and more positioned children as researchers of their own worlds (Hammersley, 2015). In Narrative Inquiry, the participants have stories to tell, and it therefore has a "practical, ethical focus on moral responsibility" (Hart, 2002, p.153). Narrative inquirers "are not scientists seeking laws that govern our behaviour, but storytellers seeking meanings that may help us to cope with our circumstances" (Bochner, 2001 cited in Hart, 2002, p.153).

## Validity

In qualitative research, validity considerations have been reframed as determining the trustworthiness of the research, the ability of an inquirer to persuade an audience are worthy of their attention (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). Traditional conventions of generalization and replicability do not necessarily apply when the aim is not to seek “universal rules” but to “understand human events, within context, in such a way as to leave room for reflection” (Hart, 2002, p.147). Genres of research that rely on “the experiential, the embodied, and the emotive qualities of human experience that contribute to the narrative quality of life“(Hart, 2002, p.150) engage with issues of validity in different ways. Narrative tells what it means as well as what happened (Kramp, 2004). Therefore in this study, validity is a question of authenticity and linked to the interaction of knowledge between researcher and participants (Hart, 2002).

The aim is to convey the experiences and events with ‘verisimilitude’, rather than “verification or proof of truth” (Kramp, 2004, p.108). Thick descriptions in case study “provide opportunity for vicarious experience” in order that the reader might make “naturalistic generalisations” (Stake 1995, p. 87). The view of knowledge in this research is not singular. Therefore, there can be no one objective understanding of truth or reality; only, as Crotty would suggest, interpretations that may be more or less “useful, liberating, fulfilling and rewarding” (1998, p. 48).

The newer forms of validity have shaped the qualitative researcher’s understanding of partiality, bringing “ethical and epistemological criteria together via practices of engagement and self-reflexivity” (Hart, 2002 182). Our epistemology, how we define knowledge and knowing is bound up with the interaction between researcher and participants resulting in a more fluid and dynamic view of validity (Hart, 2002). Therefore validity in this research is contextual; the aim is not to prove or generalize but to arrive at an

understanding of the dynamic and relational nature of Dance education, and thus to devise a pedagogic approach that is flexible and open, based on questions rather than answers, so that teachers can apply it to their own situations. No matter the quantity of data, or the length of the study, any conclusions or interpretations can only ever be partial (Stinson, 2010).

### **Limitations and challenges**

This study is limited, in that it cannot claim to have collected data samples that are representative of the experience of children and teachers in dance in Australia, let alone in one region of one state. Difficulties in gaining access and restrictions on teachers' time limited possibilities for a more iterative action research approach and more rigorous member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The study would also have been strengthened through a partnership or research collaboration, so that the data could be analysed through other researchers' eyes and perspectives although supervisors gave their perspectives as well to compensate. Nevertheless, the layering of data and the focus on narrative and embodied expressions, can reveal 'images of the possible' (Shulman, 1987) for Dance education in the primary school.

Further research is warranted to include other sites or settings where dance is being taught and to investigate in more detail, the benefits or limitations of teaching by generalist teachers as opposed to private providers or arts specialists. At the present time in the region where this research was conducted, there has been a systemic move away from integrated or cross-curricula approaches. Future developments may moderate this approach and therefore open up the possibilities of establishing suitable curricula and pedagogic frameworks for learning across the curriculum.

I look forward to broadening my research parameters to uncover embodied learning and teaching across the curriculum and to investigate the opportunities to infiltrate the body into the core curriculum subjects and to

broaden the scope of the current STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths] initiatives to include the Arts and become STEAM (Sochacka, Guyotte & Walther, 2016).

*“Dance for yourself. If someone understands, good If not, no matter. Go right on doing what interests you, and do it until it stops interesting you.”*

— [Louis Horst](#)

### Publication Details

The following table shows the publication details of papers included as Chapters within the thesis.

	Publication details	Purpose
4	Torzillo, M. (2012) Dancing around the edges, <i>The International Journal of Arts Education</i> , 7(1), pp.25-36	To explore the experience of two teachers and their students in primary school Dance education.
5	Torzillo, M. (2014) Making movement, Making meaning: Dance in the primary school classroom, <i>The International Journal of Arts Education</i> , Volume 8, Issue 4, December 2014, pp.1-11	. To use multi-modal data collected in primary school classrooms, to understand the ways that students learn in dance.
6	Torzillo, M. (2013) Dance in the primary school classroom: making it happen, <i>The International Journal of Learning: Annual Review</i> , Volume 20, 2013, pp.135-147	To discuss the factors that discourage teachers from implementing dance, and propose some practical strategies to address this
7	Torzillo, M. (2015) Everyday pedagogy for dance education, <i>The International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum</i> , Volume 22, Issue 4, pp.51-66	To compare an explicit teaching model and a creative dance teaching approach to identify commonalities, so that generalist teachers can understand the structure and phases of a dance lesson.
8	Torzillo, M & R. Sorin. (2016). Showing What We Can Do: Assessment of Primary School Dance. <i>The International Journal of Assessment and Evaluation</i> . 23 (4): pp.29-42. doi:10.18848/2327-7920/CGP/v23i04/29-42.	To consider the views and responses of children and young people to assessment in dance, in order to arrive at some practical strategies for more authentic and inclusive assessment practices for Dance education.

9	Torzillo, M & R. Sorin. (in press) Dancing toward each other. <i>The Arts Collection</i>	To identify the pedagogic principles for teaching dance in primary school classrooms, based on a socio-kin/aesthetic perspective.
9	Torzillo, M (2015) Trust and witnessing, lessons for Dance education, <i>Learning Landscapes</i> , Vol. 9, No. 1, Autumn 2015, pp. 249-265	To reflect on a professional development experience in a community dance organisation, to identify implications for dance pedagogy in the primary school.

Figure 4 Publication details

## **Improvisations - SORT**

Chapter 4 - Dancing around the Edges: Dance in the Primary School

Chapter 5 - Making Movement, Making Meaning: Dance in the Primary School Classroom

Chapter 6 - Dance in the Primary School Classroom: Making It Happen

At the beginning of a research project, a researcher undertakes a process that is akin to dance improvisation, involving: an organizing framework; the generation and exploration of themes and images and problem finding (Stevens, Malloch, McKechnie & Steven, 2003). In qualitative research the quest to understand involves similar processes, and even from the beginning of data collection or engagement in a site or setting, a framework starts to take shape; themes and images emerge; and problems and questions abound. We look for what reminds us, as well as for what surprises or confounds.



## Chapter 4 - Dancing around the Edges: Dance in the Primary School

*The paper, 'Dancing around the edges' was published in The International Journal of Arts Education, in 2012.*

### **Introduction**

In this chapter I explore teachers' and students' experiences of dance in two Queensland primary schools. In these two schools, classroom music teachers taught dance, despite limited experience of dance apart from some professional development sessions.

The two teachers drew upon their experiences of dance as a creative process gained during professional development days, and their practice was strengthened by the encouragement and validation of a critical friend or mentor. Students found expression through dance to be pleasurable and fulfilling. They commended its collaborative nature; the element of choice; and the relative freedom creating dance gave them "to be" in their bodies. Findings suggest that rather than learning more content, dance professional development for teachers should be hands-on experiences of creating dance in a collaborative setting. Such experiences can help build a better understanding of effective pedagogy.

### **Curriculum Change**

This chapter was written at a time of educational change in Australia, including the introduction of a national curriculum and national standards for teachers. These changes and others, put more pressure on teachers and constrained the available time for subjects other than the core curriculum. An emphasis on "performativity" and discourses of target-setting, league-tables, performance related pay, competency standards, achievement and regulation encouraged teachers to avoid creativity and risk and "play it safe" (White & Smerdon, 2008, pp. 90–91).

## **Arts Education in North Queensland**

In Queensland, Dance education is part of the Arts curriculum, encompassing five subjects (Dance, Drama, Media, Music and Visual Arts). What information there is about the actual situation of Dance education in Queensland primary schools, suggests, that the 'ways' of teaching it may not have changed in recent years (Klopper & Power, 2011) and that teacher directed and methods and skills based content borrowed from the Health and Physical Education curriculum, predominate.

### **Contribution of Dance to Learning**

There is strong evidence that creative dance contributes to children's cognition, creativity concentration and perception (Antilla, 2007; Buck, 2003; Chappell, 2007a; Deans, 2011; Grafton & Cross, 2008; Stinson, 1997), and their ability to work cooperatively (Bresler, 2004; Minton, 2007). The Arts, and specifically dance, may challenge the dominant discourse of classrooms where literacy and numeracy are the favoured forms of knowledge (Fraser, et al., 2007). Furthermore, in collaborative dance making, the mind and body are connected (Giguere, 2011). In an education system that emphasizes testing and formal curriculum, dance might therefore offer an opportunity for physically active, collaborative and creative problem solving.

### **Dance within the Arts Curriculum**

Although part of mandatory Primary Arts curricula in Queensland, Australia, dance still has a low profile and is rarely taught in schools as part of the regular classroom program (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010). In recent times, in North Queensland at least, the teaching of dance is increasingly the job of the Music specialist. There is therefore a need for research to uncover the work of both non-specialists and Music specialists who teach dance in their classrooms. A few teachers have managed to find ways to introduce dance in their classrooms, often with little or no experience or support. I was interested

in the practice of this small group of teachers. I wanted to highlight images of what is possible for teachers in their classrooms and to explore the factors that enable, rather than impede, the teaching of 'creative' dance.

### **Research Questions**

This chapter describes a case study of Dance education in two Queensland primary schools. The research questions that frame this chapter are:

- How do students respond to Dance education in their classroom?
- What are the impacts on teachers of implementing dance in the classroom?

### **Methodology**

This chapter interrogates data from a case study of Dance education in two sites. In Site A, participant observation of dance lessons with three classes were undertaken over two terms and teacher interview, video recording of dance lessons, student reflections and focus groups were used to produce a thick description of the context. In reflective writing and drawing, students responded to questions about dance, such as: "what is dance"; "how is learning in dance different to learning in other subjects" and "what have you learned"? In focus groups students responded to these questions again and engaged in a discussion based on themes raised in their written reflections.

The use of participant observation in Site A enabled me to examine and describe the dance classes in a way that more closely represented "the situation as experienced by the participants" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, pp. 2–3). Returning weekly meant that students became more used to me being in the classroom, and I hoped I became to some extent part of the complexity of the context, operating more as an insider, aiming to follow "the natural stream of everyday life" (Adler & Adler, 1994, p. 378).

In Site B, in-depth interviews and analysis of planning documents were used to understand learning in dance from the teacher's perspective. In addition informal reflective interviews took place while observing video recording of

dance classes and presentations, in order to understand student response. In Site B the interviews with the teacher took place over the course of two terms, providing an insight into the complex nature of her position as arts educator and to explore her developing understanding of teaching and learning in Dance.

A researcher's journal was kept throughout to document my responses to the complex nature of both contexts, and to help me make sense of the teachers' pedagogical and curriculum decisions. In both studies the video recording of dance classes and my observations of teaching and learning were an important source of data. This use of video documentation was a useful source of data in Site A because some students found written and spoken expression more difficult than physical expression and in Site B, because I had limited opportunity to talk to students directly.

### **Participants and Context**

Both teachers in the study are former generalist classroom teachers who had an interest in or background in the arts but no formal training as arts specialists. The teacher from Site A Claire (pseudonym) took on the role of Music teacher during a recruitment drive in the late 1990s and undertook training in the Kodaly method. *The* teacher from Site B, Kate (pseudonym) had an interest in varied artforms (visual arts, singing, Drama) for recreation and was a member of an Acapella choir during the time of the study. This interest led her into a series of different teacher roles and eventually to the position of arts teacher at the Site B school.

The participants at site A were the teacher (Claire) and three classes, one each of Grade 4, 6 and 7. Two years ago the principal of the school informed her that since the arts were a key learning area, she would from now on need to include drama and dance in her yearly programs, as the visual arts and media subjects were being covered by the classroom teachers. As a classroom Music teacher she had taught all students from Grades 3–7 for a timetabled hour

(2x30 minute lesson) a week. They now do Music once a week and drama or dance for the second session. A Drama unit is taught for the first two terms, and dance for the second two.

The participants at Site B were the teacher (Kate) and a Grade 4 class. They had completed a dance unit, comprising a one-hour lesson, once a week for a Term. Kate also taught other subjects of the Arts across the school, as arranged with the classroom teacher, to ensure that all five subjects were to be covered. Most teachers requested that the specialist teach dance or Music, as these were the subjects in which they felt less confident. During the time of the interviews the teacher was implementing dance units across three grades in the school.

Site A is a public school in a farming community about one hour from a major regional city on the coast and therefore extra curricula arts opportunities are limited. Students at the school have had limited or no experience of dance in a classroom setting, although the year 7 students had done one unit of dance the previous year.

Site B is a private school in an inner suburb of a major regional coastal city. Although a high proportion of students at this school have participated in or do participate in arts activity outside school, such as dance or music classes, they have had limited experience with the creative process that is part of school dance.

### **Data Analysis**

Data was inductively analysed to allow themes or patterns to emerge rather than be imposed (Creswell, 2002). By reading across the data I was able to recognize similarities and themes among the diverse views and diverse sources. These views include those of the teacher, students and researcher. The views expressed by students through dance, are also important, in order to stay true to a theoretical perspective, which values a broad definition of

knowing (Bresler, 2004). I have used the research of Minton (2007) and Giguere (2011), to help me frame my interpretation of students' interactions and actions in creative dance classes. Data collection and analysis were also guided by established propositions about the nature of learning in dance and the value of creative dance in education (Dimondstein, 1985; Hanna, 2008).

Ultimately the intent was to try to stay close to the original words and context of the words and to use this data in a descriptive way to construct rich vignettes of Dance education practice (Yin, 2006).

### **Findings - Teachers**

In the interview and conversations with teachers and from observations and video recording, two strong themes emerged that I term the 'struggle' and the 'payoff'. The 'struggle' encompasses the real and perceived status of the arts within the school as well as lack of support. The teachers struggled with the energy and commitment required to teach dance; the difficulty of learning new content and pedagogy related to dance on the run; and issues of classroom management. The 'payoff' is what makes it worth it in the end, such as: seeing the students' enjoyment of dance; the positive effects on self-concept and attitudes; feeling of achievement; and the recognition of a belief in the value of the arts as a learning area.

#### **Site A–Claire**

##### ***The Struggle***

Dance teaching was a new experience for the teacher, as it was for the students.

At first it was hard I said to the kids (I was honest with them) I told them, "This is new to me too, I don't know anything about dance, you probably know more than me, so we can learn together. You will learn from me and I can learn from you"

Nonetheless she expressed dissatisfaction with the devaluing of Arts education “apart from when students are needed for concerts or eisteddfods to show how clever and talented we are [as a school] we are irrelevant to the actual business of the school”.

Teaching requires various kinds of energy, including, but not limited to, intellectual, physical, spiritual, creative, and emotional energy (Andrzejewski, 2009). This is even more evident in teaching dance. Claire describes feeling worn out, “because you can’t just sit at the front and conduct a dance class; you have to be on your feet”. The video recording shows this clearly as she (despite her self-described, ‘old body and bad hip’) is constantly on the move.

The video recording and my observations show that a significant proportion of time in the early sessions was taken up with classroom management. This included controlling the movement of students between the dance floor and the seating, accompanied by constant reminders of the rules, as well as mini lectures whenever behaviour that was deemed inappropriate took place. On occasions, teacher direction dominated to the extent that stand-offs occurred between teacher and a few students, who found the boundary between moving freely and then sitting still hard to maintain. Claire was keen to maintain a ‘standard’ of appropriate behaviour that she had worked hard to establish in her Music classes.

The struggle sometimes depleted Claire’s reserves of energy and self-efficacy. On a number of occasions she said to me after class “was that ok” or “am I doing it right?” I was able to provide some suggestions, to highlight the positive dance moments. As a participant observer with experience as a dance educator, I was able to provide this feedback to her. In Figure 1 below a group of boys, who were not always on task, and who had raised a number of classroom management issue, are shown devising some dance movement. They were able to work collaboratively, to contribute movement ideas and to

give themselves up to the dance. Being able to see this on screen confirmed that in fact, despite what looked like chaos, learning was taking place.



Figure 5 Collaborative dance making

There was no one in the school at Site A who could play the role of mentor, adviser, confidante or supporter of this teacher. Therefore as researcher and participant observer I was able to take on some of that role, by encouraging reflection, assisting her with technical issues in the classroom, listening to plans for the following lesson, de-briefing after the class, congratulating her on a successful lesson and noting student achievements.

#### **Site A - Claire**

##### ***The Payoff***

The outcome from Claire's first experience teaching dance the previous year had been positive. "The Grade 7's were the hardest, they didn't want to do anything, it was all new to them. But they did manage to create some dance in the end. I was surprised and pleased with what they came up with." According to her, dance was an opportunity for some students to achieve.

*It's also that students who normally fail or only just pass can actually get a good mark, they can actually achieve . . . get praised and feel good about themselves . . . we have to have these subjects, it balances out the other, which is all about writing . . . everyone needs to be good at something.*

As the term progressed, though, the later video recordings show Claire becoming more relaxed and comfortable with the experience; smiling; spending time with various groups; validating students' movement ideas with her trademark 'thumbs-up'; and generally being in closer proximity to students. Figure 2 below, shows interaction between teacher and students as they prepare to show her a dance idea and she moves closer to them in proximity.



Figure 6 Teacher student interaction

Positive interaction between the teacher and students was apparent when she took interest by watching attentively; praising their concentration or persistence; commenting on their movement choices and encouraging further development of ideas. This was evident when a student responded to the teachers encouragement by smiling, turning to his dance partner and taking him in hand to return enthusiastically to dance making. This same student had spent the first few lessons with his head bowed and one arm crossed behind his back holding the other arm; hardly making eye contact.

At the end of the term and the dance unit Claire was proud of her achievements, saying to me on my last day at the school, "you know, I think I did a pretty good job". In the final discussion with Claire she named two things that "made it all worthwhile". Firstly on the day of the final presentation of their dance creations one student led the rest in asking the teacher, "can we do some more dance now". This same student had said to Claire earlier in the term that what was happening in the class "wasn't real

dance”. Secondly an indigenous parent came and asked Claire if there was a room available for rehearsal because the girls wanted to practice and learn contemporary dance. The parent explained that” they wouldn’t have asked for this at the beginning of term because of “shame” (shyness) and disinterest in dance. The parent was pleased because she had been trying to encourage them to dance for quite a while.

### **Site B–Kate**

#### ***The Struggle***

The findings at this site reinforced themes of ‘struggle’ and ‘payoff’. The struggle for this teacher was not so much about what was going on in the class, as about the pressure and demands from outside, such as from classroom teachers demanding more time for core subjects. During her time at the school, the demands of a new building program, and curricula requirements put pressure on the arts program.

The arts lessons in Site B, like the music, dance and drama lessons in Site A, took place during the regular classroom teacher’s non-contact time. Therefore it was rare for classroom teachers to attend or take an interest in these lessons. Arts lessons were timetabled to accommodate the non-contact time, not to maximise learning, and so were subject to random change or cancellation often with little or no notice. This compromised the planning of a sequential and cumulative unit of work in dance or the other art forms. In addition, the end of term performances for which the Year 4 students had created and rehearsed their dance performance was cancelled because of a change of timetable.

### **Site B–Kate**

#### ***The Payoff***

The ‘payoff’ for Kate came from the personal satisfaction of seeing the development of students’ movement skills; the increase in attentiveness and

concentration during dance lessons and their requests for more dance. This was confirmed by my reaction to seeing a video recording of the Year 4 students for the first time. I could not help but comment on the focus the students showed, and the fine touch they used in their movement explorations. A further acknowledgement of what had been achieved came from another teacher at the school who saw the video. This teacher had taught some ballroom dance to these same students as part of a co-curricular program. She also told Kate that she couldn't believe they were the same group who had been extremely reluctant about doing dance, and had been "very difficult to control".

For Kate the impact of teaching dance in the curriculum was ultimately to confirm what she already knew, that embodied learning through the arts should have a valued place in the curriculum and "proved yet again that it is possible to teach dance in primary schools, and that teachers should just "give it a go".

### **Findings - Students**

The students' written and embodied responses to dance will be discussed in relation to three emergent themes, corresponding to the ways that dance has been valued. Firstly dance has subjective value for young people that can contribute to their well-being and awareness of individuality and difference. Dance also has intrinsic value, because it combines physical, emotional, cognitive and aesthetic learning. Finally dance has instrumental value because of its capacity to build social and emotional intelligence and enhance skills in interpersonal and intrapersonal communication as well as increased understanding and awareness of symbolic and abstract meaning.

Students enjoy the physical nature of learning in dance, the opportunity to work in groups to solve movement problems and to express their ideas. It is the subjective and intrinsic values of dance that draw students to it and enable them to benefit from its instrumental values (Torzillo, 2009).

### **Subjective**

Many responses used the word, 'fun'. Students described the enjoyment they got from dance, such as one who described dance as “super fun with movement”. Fun was also combined with an opportunity to get fit; Students described dance as, “a fun way to get fit and motivated”, and as, “Movement with your body in time and getting active with friends”. Another saw dance as an inclusive activity or, “Something that everyone can do, moving, having fun”. Yet another wrote that in dance you should follow one rule, “Just to have fun and don't give up, ever!”

### **Intrinsic**

Students appreciated that learning in dance was different to learning in the other parts of the curriculum. One enjoyed the opportunity to learn in a different way when you could be, “creative, watching people instead of writing”. Dance gave one student the chance to “learn by moving around and trying new things and instead of writing [to] move”. One student wrote, “Dance is where you move around, flowing, jumping, kicking”.

Many of the students stated that in dance they learnt to work with others, one saying that they learnt, “Cooperation and being friendly” and another that, “you have to work with people you might not like”. When there was a negative response it was sometimes about group members who did not cooperate so that in the final performance, “our group could have done better, if they had cooperated”.

### **Instrumental**

Students did learn some language for describing what they learned in dance, and as well felt they had gained skills and understandings. Dance gave many students the opportunity to learn about creativity, such as by “Being creative, experimenting and watching other people”. Another student combined two

themes writing that in dance you have to “be more creative and . . . get along with others”.

Confidence was mentioned as a benefit, one student learned, “to have confidence to do and try new stuff”. Some students could not write whole sentences in answer to the questions about what they had learned, but used the words “inspiration, skill and motivation”. They could not always spell these new words, but were emboldened to write them. And lastly some students had discovered that dance was a way of communicating an “art of telling a story put into acting through a dance”.

Figure 3 below shows some stills from a video recording at Site A, in which students are engaged in collaborative and physical learning to solve a movement problem.

*Watching the video recording of the dance making, I am reminded again of what made me focus the camera; I could see at a distance that there was energy in the group and the process. The enjoyment was evident, but so was the engagement in learning and working together.*

*The group crowds around the piece of paper on the floor; everyone is engaged in the discussion, although there is an inner circle of maybe three. Then one jumps up and starts marking out a movement. The rest of the group follows, the first couple almost straight away, the next a bit more reluctantly.*

*Another student spontaneously does a movement that is just as spontaneously copied by the rest of the group. The students take turns at taking the lead, some actually physically moving others.*

*The leadership is fluid moving from one to the other; sometimes one student takes a minor role, seemingly happy to copy other's ideas. There is checking between their map and their movements.*



Figure 7 Solving a movement problem

An extract from a vignette of dance at Site B shows how the enjoyment of the intrinsic experience of dance enabled students to learn about the elements of movement.

In the vignette that follows, I describe a moment from a video recording from Site B. In this activity, half the class at a time was engaged in an exploration of sustained movement. In preparation for this type of exploration, they had practiced moving as individuals within a whole group using an image of being inside a bubble in order to facilitate free expression without intruding on the space of the other dancers. The facial expressions and gestures of the dancers including the one I describe suggest they were relaxed and comfortable performing this type of movement in front of their peers.

*He moves, with sustained light controlled energy, the body seeming to know where it should go next and how, the eyes following the hand. Others also seem entranced by the movement exploration. One student appeared slightly distracted by the camera, but yet did not interrupt the others, and managed at moments to give himself up to the movement. The boys in particular were focused on the task at hand. I was struck by the absorption in the movement. I believed I could see their thinking as they moved. The task was complex not the least because it was a new experience, their first taste of creative dance or movement.*

## **Discussion**

The research questions will be used to organize this discussion, by first considering the question of how students respond to dance in the classroom

and secondly by looking at the impact of implementing Dance education on teachers.

### **How do Students Respond to Dance in the Classroom?**

In the classes I observed in both sites I observed students responding positively to dance and the opportunity to learn through creative problem solving with friends. Research has shown that dance has the potential to be liberating and empowering because it is an opportunity for students to exercise agency and experience pleasure and control in physical activity (Bond & Stinson, 2000). Children at Site B were eager to keep practicing their dance for as long as the lesson lasted. Their absorption in the movement and focus as shown in the video recording, suggests that some students may have been experiencing what Csikszentmihalyi, called “flow” (1975) in dance this could be when students are fully engaged and when the boundaries of work and play break down (Stinson, 1997).

There have been many moments in this study when there seemed to be genuine interest, pleasure and ownership of the dance. Students at both sites engaged with the creative and collaborative process of making dances. This confirms research showing that students appreciate opportunities for self expression, the chance to contribute and share ideas and to have ownership of the creative process (Minton, 2007). The students in Site A, albeit in a sometimes naïve way, were able to explain their feelings about dance and what they had gained from it. Working together and having fun with friends, expressing yourself, and coming up with ideas and movements were all important. The students had acquired some vocabulary to describe what dance was and what they did, describing: shapes, levels, locomotor movements, copying, patterns and fast and slow movements. The students at Site B demonstrated their understanding of dance vocabulary and movement language through their detailed attention to the movement improvisation tasks. According to Minton, an observer of a creative dance lesson may judge the

process as wasting time, simplistic or merely reproduction, however, the students' perspective reveals the complexity of thinking and feeling that happens in dance and dance-making and their feelings of achievement from choreographing their own dance (Minton, 2007).

Unbeknownst to most teachers this is what is happening in dance classes during their non-contact time. Teachers in a New Zealand study discovered the value of dance when they had the opportunity to co-construct dances with their students, they appreciated the creative problem solving that had taken place describing it as "pure thinking" (Buck, 2003, p. 307).

It appeared that students at both sites took seriously the dance problems they had been given to solve. The pleasure of achievement was palpable. Students who had refused to perform in front of the class were now happy to do so, smiling and clapping each other's hands as they came off the stage. Students applauded other group's performances and gave positive feedback. When the teachers at Site A arrived to collect their classes after the final showing of their dance map piece, each class demanded that the teacher stay and that they perform again for them. There is much evidence from practitioners, as well as from research, to document the positive effects of dance on young people as learners and as social beings because it has the capacity to develop personal confidence through the exploration of ideas and feelings and by risk-taking (Buck, 2003).

### **What are the Impacts on Teachers of Implementing Dance in the Classroom?**

Both teachers experienced the struggle of teaching dance, and the pay off. Teachers are often reluctant to take up the teaching of dance, because of its association with skill and performance (its performative meaning) (Buck, 2003), thinking they have to be 'dancers', in order to teach it. It has been my experience as a dance specialist that the discourse of the expert 'can be both "enabling and constraining" (McArdle, 2008, p. 11). On more than one

occasion, Claire excused herself by saying, “I don’t really know what I’m doing” or “I’m no expert”. However, despite the lack of experience and content knowledge; or fear of students getting out of control, this teacher tried dance. Ralph Buck and others (Ashley, 2005; Sansom, 2009; Thraves & Williamsong, 1994) maintain that dance can be taught effectively by classroom teachers.

If teachers can see dance as springing from the children’s own movement ideas, rather than from preordained steps, then including Dance education in their classroom will be more approachable, achievable and inclusive (Ashley, 2005).

As Claire pointed out, teachers have to learn “I teach are usually accompanied”.. She was initially reluctant, but armed with the curriculum, ideas from one professional development workshop and her own experience as a classroom teacher of Music; she began to teach a dance unit with her Year 7 class. National and international studies in curriculum implementation in dance indicate that teachers prefer to teach practical skills development in dance rather than the development of ideas through creative dance or dance making (Carr, 1984; Fraser, et al., 2007). There is a degree of certainty in teaching dance as a set of steps that fit easily into the lesson plan structure and the time limits of the school day. This approach to teaching dance can be used as, “a management strategy, more than a pedagogical technique” (Fraser, et al., 2007, p. 26).

Claire in particular experienced the perhaps negative implications of a creative approach, often trying to impose a clear structure on the creative process, but persisted in order to experience eventual success.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study are that positive dance experiences can be implemented in school classrooms, using a creative dance approach. When

children participate as creators it places them ‘in a different relationship with dance’ (Buck, 2003, p.295). I would argue that despite the apparent simplicity of the dance-making process these students engaged in and the relative lack of sophistication of the dance sequences created, that perceptions of the nature of dance have been broadened for these teachers and their students. The focus shifts from the teacher’s goals and a performative discourse to the students’ viewpoint (Minton, 2007, p. 119). Based on the experiences of the students and their teachers in this study it seems that success in dance, when measured by a focus on “the ‘human’ rather than the ‘dance’ (Buck, 2009) enables a respect for the value of the learning that has taken place.

## **Chapter 5 - Making Movement, Making Meaning: Dance in the Primary School Classroom**

*The paper 'Making movement, Making meaning: Dance in the primary school classroom' was published in The International Journal of Arts Education in 2014*

### **Introduction**

There is much evidence from literature, including from brain research, of the value of collaborative dance making to cognition and to social–emotional learning (Hanna, 2008; Grafton & Cross, 2008). Dance making is a process, not just a product. Therefore, an appropriate methodology for studying dance will explore dance making as it happens. Video data was reviewed to identify: student engagement with movement tasks, such as the use of physically energetic, direct and sustained movement qualities. It further identified strategies and processes, such as repeating and elaborating on each other's movement suggestions; and physical interactions between teachers and students. Results show that despite variations in teaching strategies and the relational contexts of classrooms, teachers' commitment to the core principle of dance as a tool for meaning making contributed to student engagement and deep learning.

This chapter describes a methodology used to explore teacher and student experiences of dance in the primary classroom. Definitions of creative dance and its physical, creative and cognitive aspects provided a foundation for the analysis of data. The analysis was informed by the work of dance theorists and researchers who have investigated the particular types of thinking that are involved in dance making in particular dance making by children and young people (Giguere, 2011; Sansom, 2009; Minton, 2007)

## **Background**

In 2014, a new national arts curriculum was introduced in Australia. Dance is one of five subjects in this curriculum; the others: Drama, Media, Music and Visual Arts. Generalist classroom teachers will implement this curriculum, and also (in the state of Queensland), specialist music teachers who may have no training in other arts subjects; dance in particular. To date schools and teachers have been reluctant to introduce dance into schools, even though it has been part of curriculum planning in Queensland schools for some years. In fact dance is often the least taught of the artforms (Nilson et al., 2013, Pascoe, 2007).

In the literature and among Dance education practitioners in Australia and internationally, creative dance or dance making is considered central to dance in the classroom (Schiller & Meiners, 2003). The work produced by children and young people in a primary school classroom where creative dance is taking place, might not be what one expects or thinks of as 'dance'. Students will probably not be standing in lines behind the teacher learning a sequence of steps, but rather working in groups teaching each other the movements they have created and trying to sequence and vary them.

Creative dance making by children might not have the certainty of pathway or outcomes desired by educational systems (Anttila, 2007) or fit the ordered or decorative aesthetic with which teachers are familiar (Message, 2009; Minton, 2007) in the United States, Sansom (2009) & Buck (2003) in New Zealand and Anttila (2007) in Finland have interrogated this perception of dance and how it might deter teachers from teaching dance in their classroom or influence the types of dance taught; skills based, rather than creative dance, because it fits the vision they have or is seen as easier to teach. Despite the existence of a curriculum that are "philosophically clear" (Buck, 2006, p.211) and pedagogically sound, dance often remains limited to re-creative rather than creative learning. Yet a key to the potential of Arts education, and

therefore Dance education, is the creative process; a process that involves critical and creative thinking (Nilson et al., 2013). Furthermore, creative dance in particular, engages the student in a holistic way, through collaborative, physical, expressive and creative problem solving.

### **Research Design**

This study used qualitative methods in order to make explicit the qualities of the educational experience within Dance education (Eisner, 1991). A case study exploring teacher and student experiences of dance in the primary classroom used multiple sources of data to understand the impact of teaching and learning in dance in two sites (Site A and Site B).

I was a participant observer (Jorgensen, 1989) at Site A for two terms, observing and documenting the teaching rituals, the learning and engagement of students and the shared reflections of teachers, students and researcher. Video of two dance classes at Site B and an extended research conversation with the teacher took place before and during her planning for the dance units, during the teaching of the unit, and while we watched the video of the dance classes together.

In this case study I aimed to make visible the processes of dance making and the kinds of learning that take place during dance. I was interested in the system of action that is Dance education (Stake, 1995). It was hoped that teachers would be able to relate to the data generated and make sense of it in relation to their own experience and understanding of pedagogy (Stake, 1995) and enable them to see students and their moving bodies in a new light. In case studies, researchers need to provide thick descriptions of the action that “provide opportunity for vicarious experience” in order that the reader might make “naturalistic generalisations” (Stake, 1995, p.87). The focus is on how students and teachers engage in dance; not just in what they say, but in what they do - in the dance of the classroom.

The two teacher participants teach in primary schools in regional Queensland. They are music specialists who teach Grades 1-7. The participants are a purposive sample, as they have self-identified as being interested in Dance education by attending workshops and following up with questions, discussion and or email to confirm their interest. Therefore they have credibility for the purpose of this investigation, where I was interested to understand how generalist teachers or teachers without a background in dance would teach it, as well as how their students who also have little experience with dance in the classroom responded to it.

### **Tools for Analysis**

This research drew on some key theorists and practitioners for the study in order to develop a method for analyzing children's dance making. Their writing and research is evidence of the breadth of thinking that takes place when children are making dance (Giguere, 2011; Minton, 2007). The voices of young people confirm that dance making involves critical thinking and is valued because it represents their own creativity (Minton, 2007). Therefore this study aimed to identify the collaborative creative strategies used by children in their dance making.

This chapter focuses particularly on the relationship between children and dance and how through creative dance and their individual contributions to shared dance making, children construct their own relationships to dance. The dances they make in this way often subvert expectations of what 'good' dance or a 'good' dancer should be (Anttila, 2007a).

The relational processes between students and teachers and between students in creative dance, is based on the idea that knowing and learning can be constructed through collaboration. In creative dance, critical and imaginative learning is highly valued and plays an important role in the critical thinking, problem solving and choreographic processes involved (Chappell, 2007). The

opportunity to express through the body in dance asserts the importance of the body in learning.

There is rich “cognitive activity” involved in children’s dance creation (Sansom, 2009, p.169). Giguere’s (2011) study of creative dance making in elementary school classrooms looked at the group nature of the choreographic process in creative tasks that were both generative and exploratory. A range of cognitive strategies specific to children’s dance making were identified, as were the relationship of these strategies to the development of their critical thinking, problem solving and problem finding skills (Cremin, Burnard, & Craft, 2006). Importantly, in this study the process was unstructured; children had control over many of the creative decisions, and collaborated to make choreographic choices. Elsewhere young children have created “rich . . . intriguing movement patterns” that reveal “the choreographic skills young children possess when they are conversant with a range of dance vocabulary and able to recreate dances they have learned” (Sansom, 2009, p.169).

Detailed recounts of young children’s movement choices and movement patterns have used methods of analysis specific to dance. An example is the description of children’s movement in a study that investigated dance in an early childhood setting. The boys’ movement at the beginning of the study was typified by “speed, explosiveness, free flow, and awareness of body weight” while the girls exhibited a “kind of rhythmic synchrony . . . [and] a quality of hushed lightness, even delicacy”(Bond, 1994, p.29). The description of the movement qualities of children before and after a choreographic exploration showed how the use of masks and a facilitated creative dance process de-gendered their expressions and created a community of dancers.

Laban movement analysis has been the basis for the dance language used within Dance education since its inception in the United Kingdom in the 1950s (Smith-Autard, 1994). The elements of dance in most dance curricula and in the dance component of the National Arts Curriculum are based on Laban’s

original work. Body, space, time, dynamics and relationships are used as elements of composition, performance and analysis (Meiners, 2001). The relationship of the movements to the effort qualities of time, space, weight and flow, and the bodily preferences of dancers added to a richer understanding of the moments of action that stood out in the dance class.

The literature and my socio-kin/aesthetic perspective guided my interpretation of children's dance and dance making in its various aspects. These included: the thinking skills and strategies they employed; the relational processes between students and students and teacher, the choreographic processes and skills they adopted and the movement qualities they displayed. Diverse data sources in the case study provided insight into students' engagement in a physical social, aesthetic and cognitive sense. An investigation of the micro-processes of the dance class included the movements and movement relationships within the dance class as well as what was spoken or written.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative approaches are best suited to capturing the essence and richness of interactions in the dance class. These are complex, consisting of movement, gesture, facial expression and spoken words (Bresler, 2004). The act of dance making itself is a dance, therefore an appropriate methodology for studying dance explored dance making as it happened, by looking at:

What was happening, such as students were standing or sitting in small groups facing each other.

- What children were doing and how they were relating such as students were copying each other's movements and making eye contact with their group members
- The thinking strategies and compositional processes they employed, for example, they copied a movement but changed one element such as timing or level or body part used

- The movement qualities they used, for example some dancers within groups paid attention to space by moving directly and with sustained energy when modeling a movement and there was a connection between the movement qualities of the group, in other groups dancers individually explored movements and gestures in a more free form improvisation.

### **Findings**

The findings here are based on video and observations of a dance-making exercise in which students in small groups created a dance map, first on paper and then in movement. As I was viewing and reviewing the video and photographic documentation and my observation notes, I looked for what stood out in relation to the socio –kin/aesthetic perspective. Videotapes and photos were viewed and transcripts written that attempt to capture the relationships, choreographic and thinking strategies used and the movement qualities of the dance-making process. I was looking for “moments of meaning” (Giguere, 2011, p.12) in the action. The process of interpretation resulted in transcripts, or rich descriptions of the action, being written. In this way what was clear or stood out was named, and thus patterns emerged.

It seems that when children given enough information, a movement stimulus that interested them and a clear enough structure or process, they engaged fully in the process of dance making without much encouragement, or direction from the teacher. In some ways they taught themselves, given the right set-up. Without explicit instruction children used choreographic tools or techniques of: seeing; relating; echoing; discovering; inventing; gathering; combining; repeating; layering and varying.

In the video I was also looking for the participatory processes that, according to Buck “dovetailed with teachers’ larger rationales for education” (2003, p.296). The pedagogy of creative dance is about “constructing

knowledge” (Buck, 2003, p.297), in this case bodily knowledge through dialogue and negotiations of meanings and actions. These participatory processes were evident in their “dance conversations” (Giguere, 2011) as they shared ideas through talking and moving. Not all were totally focused for the whole time, but they were drawn back into it, and there were moments when all seemed to be sharing or co-constructing their movement ideas.

*The group of five boys all turned to face one another and started sharing the next movement, almost as if they were all talking at once, only in movement. Their conversation around the map and what to do was illustrated by gesture as they described with hands, arms or shoulders, the movement idea or image.*

These movement conversations were a choreographic tool, by which they shared, copied, varied, extended or layered movements to create new movements and sequences. In a kind of movement chatter they constructed their dance, by building on and developing a movement idea.

*Then one student on the other side of the circle demonstrated a sequence of sitting movements, an arm gesture (tilting side – to – side) is repeated with a different timing. Then the others repeat and then extend the actual demonstrated gesture i.e. tilting right and touching right hand down to floor and repeating to the other side.*

The creative process in this class was much more structured than the student directed and unstructured process described by Giguere (2011). Nevertheless it gave them a greater degree of freedom to find and solve problems than they had experienced elsewhere, including in other arts classes, such as music. My observation of earlier sessions shows that they had to practise paying attention to and focusing on their groups’ dance-making process, but as the weeks went on, it became easier and they overcame

“immediate pedagogical barriers that dwelled in stereotypes of gender, ability and behaviour” (Buck, 2003, p. 297).

*The girls then started a unison arm movement rolling arms and pointing all in unison, the group of five kept improvising on the jumping idea, while the group of three boys started a movement where each circled their arm around another's in a mechanistic/machine like way.*

When the emphasis was on the process of making rather than teacher exposition or direct instruction of dance steps or technique then collaboration and negotiation of the movements chosen and the final design became evident (Buck, 2003).

*The boys started by sitting together and facing each other. They had the dance map on the floor looking at it and then one starting a wave movement of the arms to the side. The second followed and then the third, this one laughing and doing a simplified version of it. They repeated this process with a few variations on the arm wave.*

They engaged on a number of levels: physically by doing and not just watching, emotionally by laughing and engaging enthusiastically; creatively and artistically by varying, repeating and adding to movements; and cognitively by translating between the dance map and movements. In the following transcript from the video different types of involvement are evident and these reflect the different perspectives. A group of three boys were sitting together. The teacher had instructed them to review their dance map and decide if they wanted to make changes.

*“What could we change?”*

*“Oh, I know,” one says, starting to stand up.*

*The others follow, he holds their arms and starts to ripple his arms, and it goes around the circle, another boy is jerking his shoulders back and up and the others are trying out that movement in different ways and smiling*

*“Yeah, we could be like robots.”*

*The group of five are seated and doing something similar, rolling and lifting their shoulders, while talking, one lifts his shoulders rhythmically twice on the right and then twice on the left and so on.*

*“Yeah, let’s do that.”*

*He starts a movement of rolling his hands, “You’ve got to roll your hands;” two others nod in agreement, all are looking at the speaker/mover*

*One boy points at the dance map (on the floor between them) “What’s that, what’s that?”*

*“Spin,” says one and spins his hand to illustrate*

*Their conversation around the map and what to do is illustrated by movements as they describe with hands, arms or shoulders the movement idea or image. One stands to spin his body by using his right arm, they continue to converse, but are called by the teacher to get ready to do their dance again.*

Viewed from a socio-kin-aesthetic perspective, children in this ‘educative encounter’ (Carr and Kemmis, 1986) made imaginative decisions, by building on and extending each other’s ideas; becoming a community of choreographers as they physically solved the creative task.

### **Limitations and Possibilities**

A limitation of a Naturalistic approach is the subjectivity of the researcher. I declare my own passion for dance and belief in the value of dance in the

education of children and young people. Personal interests can influence the research, such as the ways that questions are followed up in interviews (Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones, & Van Dyke, 1990), or by “assigning greater significance to some responses . . . because of hoped for data or outcomes” (Lankshear and Knobel, 2004, p.362). My aim in gathering or interpreting the data was to take account of the disconfirming as well as the confirming moments.

The study is based on observation of three classes and video evidence of another two. Therefore the study did not benefit from being able to gather data from a large and diverse sample (Bond & Stinson, 2000). This could limit an attempt at a more comprehensive portrayal of dance in the classroom. A study of dance in two schools cannot make predictions or claims about other classes and schools. One study could never provide the total picture of Dance education, but only hope to provide an image of what is possible (Stinson, 1997). Any description of someone’s experience can only ever be incomplete, since thoughts and feelings are not fixed. In qualitative research, making generalizations may not be as important as focusing on the unique and particular (Bannon, 2004).

As a person with considerable expertise and experience of dance teaching or connoisseurship (Eisner) I am able to see and interpret with some insight. As an outsider eye, without the responsibility of being the classroom manager and leader, I may have been able to recognise creative, engaged and insightful responses of children (Fraser et al., 2007).

Alongside the data collected from two schools, I revisited my own stories of teaching using my researcher’s journal as another layer of data to assist in the interpretation of what I had seen. I hope that vignettes from my own dance history "enrich the story . . . or case study, and enhance the reflexivity of the methodology" (Humphreys, 2005, p.853). Ultimately I aimed to use the data from the classroom to create vignettes that also used the children’s own words

to bring to life their experience and see inside the dance-making process of children.

This study has demonstrated the potential for further research into the learning that takes place during dance and how teachers design learning to encourage creative problem solving. It also suggests the possibility of linking the critical thinking that children engage in during dance to learning in other content areas using integrated approaches.

## **Chapter 6 - Dance in the Primary School Classroom: Making It Happen**

*The paper 'Dance in the Primary School Classroom: Making It Happen' was published in The International Journal of Learning: Annual Review in 2013.*

### **Introduction**

*In most school systems there is a hierarchy in the curriculum in which some subjects are evidently considered to be more important than others. At the top are languages and math and at the bottom are the arts... Within the arts, there's another hierarchy. [visual] art and music are generally thought to be more important than drama and dance. Dance is usually at the bottom of the heap*

*-Ken Robinson*

There is a disconnect between the reluctance of teachers to teach the Arts including dance, and their positive comments about its value (Chapman, Wright & Pascoe, 2013; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; Snook & Buck, 2014). Curriculum change is challenging (Brennan, 2011, Ewing, 2012) therefore dance might seem to be just 'too big' a challenge, too difficult and too risky (Atkinson & Scott, 2014). A modest pedagogy (Tinning, 2002), even one 'good enough' (Wien, 2015) to get teachers started, could help relieve these fears.

This chapter outlines relevant and accessible strategies for implementing dance, in primary school classrooms. The strategies draw on the literature related to Dance education and the findings of a study exploring primary school teacher and student experiences of dance in Queensland, Australia. The design of the strategies draws on a theoretical perspective I term, 'socio-kin-aesthetic'. The values of this perspective are:

- sharing and collaboration
- engagement and participation
- openness and attention

These values are embedded in a more participatory, relational and creative pedagogy that sets up opportunities and contexts for collaborative and creative physical problem solving.

While there is much research evidence about the value of dance to physical, creative and collaborative learning; and despite the presence of dance within state curricula for over twenty years dance is rarely taught in Australian primary schools (Nilson et al, 2013; Pascoe, 2007). Teachers are reluctant to teach dance because of professed ‘lack of skills or content knowledge’; and schools are reluctant to make room for it in crowded timetables because of lack of space or resources (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010).

Yet, generalist (primary classroom) teachers should be able to successfully integrate dance into their programs by focusing on creative dance through dance making, rather than on performance and technical skills. Furthermore, a focus on dance making de-emphasises technique-based skill, fosters a more inclusive classroom climate and highlights the thinking involved in the creative process. The term ‘creative dance’ has been used to encompass the idea of the personal expression of inner thought, feeling and ideas through movement improvisation (H’Doubler, 1957). Creative dance is particularly seen as inclusive since “the movement required is derived from every day, natural actions” (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010, p.102).

### **Dance in Education**

At the heart of Dance education in schools is the emphasis on the “learner as creator” with the central purpose of ‘making’ dances (Schiller & Meiners, 2003, p.104). In line with these ideas and common to all dance syllabi in Australia has been “the reference to the communication and expression of ideas and values”, “the use of movement as an expressive code” and the use of “dance as a symbol system” (Buck, 2003, p.16).

In the new Australian National Arts Curriculum, Dance is one of five subjects, along with Drama, Media, Music and Visual arts. Through dance, students represent, question and celebrate human experience, using the body as the instrument and movement as the medium for personal, social, emotional, spiritual and physical communication (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA]. 2016c, par.1). In this curriculum, the creative process is embedded in the organising strands, ‘making’ and ‘responding’. Making refers to using processes, techniques, knowledge and skills to make art works, and responding means exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting art works.

### **The Contribution of Dance to Learning**

There have been successful examples of Dance education in primary and early childhood in Australia; evidence that embodied learning through dance could have a valued place in the school curriculum. Middle primary school children were involved in a ten week dance project in which they created dance and then made short dance films. The process of working collaboratively in an open-ended yet structured process encouraged students to develop individual movement vocabulary while learning physical control and coordination. “Through the noisy, seemingly disorganised chaos, these students worked intelligently, creatively and collaboratively” (Rank, 2009, p.2).

Deans used participatory methods and diverse data sources, including children’s drawing/telling, photo documentation by researchers and children, digital video observation and conversations with children to examine their ‘lived experience’ of creative dance in an early childhood setting (Deans, 2011). The dance sessions followed a structure based on individual, whole group and small group improvisations, with each session ending in reflection. Pictures of children engaged in dance as part of this project and their drawn and spoken reflections indicate an enthusiastic, involved and committed enjoyment of dance making (Education Services Australia [ESA], 2014).f

In Queensland Australia a regional P-9 school (catering for students from the preparatory year of school to the ninth year of formal school i.e. students aged from 5 to 14) developed a successful dance program. Generalist (primary classroom teachers) taught dance as part of their implementation of the Arts Essential Learnings curriculum to Years Prep - 6 (QCAA, 2016b) and a secondary dance specialist taught the middle school classes (Years 7-9). In this study, three teaching styles and interpretations of the curriculum were identified: teacher as expert, teacher as facilitator, teacher as collaborator. Stevens suggests that varied different teaching styles and interpretations of the curriculum were able to provide for the diversity of students and their learning needs resulting in “a fluid dance program, which twists and turns in response to the needs of the children” (Stevens 2010, pp.123-124).

### **Dance: Making It Happen**

The reasons why primary school teachers do not teach dance are both external and internal. External factors include: lack of time; crowded curriculum; constant interruptions; minimal facilities and organizational factors. Internal factors include: fear of the unknown and the students’ reactions; lack of confidence and inhibition; lack of teacher training and lack of time to fit dance into the curriculum (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010). The literature and the author’s personal practice knowledge suggest that there are strategies available that could help to overcome some of the internal barriers to Dance, in particular; lack of confidence and inhibition; misunderstanding of what dance in education involves and concern about classroom management issues (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010).

### **Teachers’ Lack of Confidence**

Teachers’ feelings of uncertainty about and lack of confidence in teaching may come from a corresponding lack of experience and background knowledge of Dance education. In their favour, however is their understanding of

pedagogies and of their own students. Without teachers commitment and support Dance education would be a one-off-event; not a sustainable and ongoing part of the curriculum (Buck, 2009; Snook, 2012). Ashley (2005) suggests that generalist teachers may be empowered to ‘cope’ with teaching dance once they understand that it is a collaborative, creative process; similar to one they may undertake in other curriculum areas, such as when jointly constructing texts in English. Learning is a bottom up process, but one where the teacher should “learn to draw on the repertoire of possibilities in the class” (Hopper, 2010, p.13).

Connecting with pedagogical frameworks they are familiar with could help teachers to bridge the gap from pedagogy they know and use into the unknown territory of dance. Generic teaching strategies that can be used successfully in varied contexts are essential elements in a teacher’s toolkit (Killen, 2003). Of particular relevance to the teacher of dance ‘as dance making’ are the cooperative learning strategies such as think-pair share, jigsaw and expert groups (Thousand, 1994).

Buck used a framework of ‘ask, use, pattern’ in a study where teachers and students collaboratively made dance together, (Buck, 2003, p.320). This was a kind of ‘pedagogical cycle’ where the teacher asks students for movement ideas, acknowledges the ideas, uses them by manipulating the elements of dance and then patterns them (Buck, 2003). This structure can be used many times over, with many different movement stimuli. It is based on the idea that teachers should encourage students “to develop and elaborate their skills in dance “from their own expressive ideas” (Anttila, 2007a, p.877).

For example students are asked to create their own movement to depict fire or water. Some of those movements can then be selected and suggestions given to use them in different ways by varying the use of the dance elements of time, space or energy. Such ways include: speeding the movement down or

performing it at a different level. A selection of movements can then be combined to make a sequence with a clear pattern or structure that the whole class can perform, for example one movement repeated a few times to the right and left, the next movement used to travel around the room and the last performed on the spot. Simple but transferable strategies such as this can 'enable' teachers to adopt interactive and dialogic practises (Edwards-Groves & Hoare, 2012). For teachers new to teaching dance, and concerned because they do not know a dance or steps to teach, a scaffold to structure the process of dance making with students could help them to teach dance by drawing on the ideas of their students.

Teachers often express concern that students, particularly boys won't like dance (Holmes and Dougherty, 2010). However there is evidence that student engagement is enhanced when students are able to work with their peers (Fraser, Price & Aitken, 2007). In my own research, students have used movement conversations (Giguere, 2012) as a choreographic tool, by which they share, copy, vary, extend or layer movements to create new movements and sequences. One group of Year 3 students used a kind of 'movement chatter' as they constructed their dance, based on a dance map (a graphic plan that identifies movements and pathways for a dance) building on and developing a movement idea. These children engaged physically by doing and not just watching, emotionally by laughing and engaging enthusiastically, creatively and artistically by varying, repeating and adding to movements and cognitively by translating between the dance map and movements. They did all this in a reciprocal process involving verbal and non-verbal communication that was sometimes expressive and sometimes functional. The emphasis was on dialogue and negotiation, rather than teacher exposition or direct instruction of dance steps or technique (Buck, 2003).

### **Teachers' Misunderstanding of the Meaning of Dance**

In a New Zealand study of teachers' attitudes to dance, it appeared that they did not view the making of dance or choreography as 'Dance', because the word had connotations of skilled performance rather than having something to do with the creative process of making dance (Snook, 2012). Many Australian teachers would be familiar with dance as part of the physical education curriculum area (Ewing, 2010, p.21), where dance, if it became part of the curriculum at all, was often confined to learning 'social' or 'folk' dances rather than creative dancing. A private provider that has marketed itself successfully in North Queensland teaches social dance with objectives that are in line with the NSW physical education curriculum, including practical learning experiences to improve: "self-expression, coordination, respect, etiquette, school spirit, team-work and sportsmanship for all children" (Dance Fever, 2010).

Male teachers in a study in South Australia, said they would be happy teaching social dance "because it is more structured, compared with creative dance" (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010, p.104), perhaps because of the association of creative dance with self-expression and spontaneity (Fleming, 2008). The authors suggest that this preference could be their entry into teaching dance. If teachers are comfortable teaching a social dance, even as part of a fitness program, they could use this as a starting point to develop a lesson or series of lessons that also incorporate 'making' and 'responding'. I saw this potential when a large group of students were learning a modified progressive dance as part of a daily fitness program (Department of Education, Training and Employment [DETE], 2012). I was co-opted to partner one of the most reluctant students. Using facial expression I communicated the idea that I sensed his reluctance, but was myself willing to give it a go. As the exercise progressed, I subtly added some extra gestures and variations, and so did my partner. He was clearly enjoying the game and had forgotten his initial reluctance. The student who initially had refused to dance, became engaged and involved in the dance activity, because of the "choice offered" (Stinson,

1997). It seems that how dance is taught is more important than what is taught (Buck, 2009).

This could work on a larger scale for a whole class or large group. First the steps of a dance (progressive? barn dance, bus-stop, line dance) could be taught; then a more contemporary piece of instrumental music selected. The question could be asked, how we might change the movements and the style to suit this music. Students in pairs or small groups could be invited to make changes to the dance such as to change the timing, quality, level of the movements, to create a new dance. The new dances could be shared using a low-stakes strategy where pairs or groups share with and give feedback to another group.

In Drama, the idea of constraint is used to focus the tension in devised work, for example by excluding or limiting dialogue or time allowed for an improvisation (Ewing, Simons, & Hertzberg, 2004). It has the effect of encouraging problem solving and creative responses. Teachers use this technique when they teach a genre such as narrative that has specific structural and linguistic features.

In dance, constraint can be part of the choreographic structure and can give students a clear idea of what to do, while helping teachers to manage the creative process. Such a structure might be, for example, that all students come up with a movement following a theme or image, such as a movement to represent their name. Rather than telling students to 'make up a dance' the process is broken up into manageable, but nonetheless open-ended tasks. Students could be asked to create their movement perhaps using the rhythm of their name or their favourite sport. This task could be done with students spread throughout the area of the classroom, or in a circle with each student in turn showing their movement, which is then repeated and or varied by the whole group. Following this, in groups of four they could teach each other their movements and practise doing the movements in unison. Task cards,

whiteboard or projection can then be used to suggest specific changes to each of the movements, for example to repeat one, change the speed of another or to add a turn or jump to another. The task can offer the group choices in making changes or specify the changes and the movements to be changed, depending on the confidence or experience of the group. Students then decide on the order of the movements and any transitions, which they can refine through practice.

A common approach to teaching dance in classrooms, particularly in primary schools has been the 'free for all' approach, where students are given music and told to make up a dance (Dinham, 2013). This is in line with the idea that had been prevalent in arts in the past, where teachers avoided structuring or guiding student art-making or making judgments (Mcardle & Piscatelli, 2002). My own pre-service Arts education students often express the belief that you can't judge artworks, especially of children, because they are a personal expression. The 'hands-off approach' however, while it involved little or no planning on the teachers part, often meant in practice that the students who already studied dance outside school, taught segments of their dance routines to those in their group; thereby marginalising those who lacked experience or physical confidence. Furthermore, teachers often found assessing such dance difficult.

In contrast to this is a more structured, or scaffolded approach. Students are asked to create movements in response to a text, a list of words, an image or a movement problem, which gives them the same starting point. For example a class of students created their own movements for each word of a descriptive phrase about the Great Barrier Reef "the wonder down under". The starting point was the same, but there were many interpretations of each word. Further hints gave students a recipe to explore movement and construct a dance (McGreevy-Nichols, Scheff & Sprague, 2006). If each student in a group of four selects and then creates a movement to represent one of the words, the

four movements can then be combined in a group phrase. For a teacher new to teaching dance, such scaffolds support their own learning about dance and dance pedagogy. Teachers could create concrete guides in the form of task cards, prompts on whiteboard or EWB (electronic white-board), or props that students might need to solve a movement problem, such as a hat, cane or large sheet of fabric. In scaffolded learning, the criteria for assessment can be more easily made explicit because in making their dance students are using the elements or structures specified by the task criteria ,for example variation of formations, levels, timing or quality.

Snook proposes that integration of dance into the curriculum is the key to the sustainability of Dance education in New Zealand schools (2012). Through cross-curricula learning, students may understand that dance has a valid place in the curriculum if it is used to extend their understanding of other curriculum content (Hudson, 2012). Dance was taught as part of an integrated unit that combined the study of the Great Barrier Reef environment. This included a persuasive speech about the Reef and a dance interpreting human impacts on the reef, or eco-systems. The opportunity to express their ideas through dance encouraged a group of previously disengaged students to create a dance based on a complex narrative about environmental destruction.

In another dance unit, children used a poem written by a 12 year old to interpret metaphors of reconciliation expressed as images of the Australian landscape. The “language-like” (Hanna, 2001, p.12) ability of dance to communicate symbolic thinking makes it an ideal platform for subject integration and cross-curricula learning. Students involved in the dance-making activity above, where they made movements to express metaphors enabled students to give “concrete, moving expression to [an abstract] concept[s]” (Hanna, 2001, p.12). Movement also provides a way of “connecting up experience through the body”, helping students to understand

the content and ideas in other subjects, while connecting with positive emotions “that may make school important to students” (Dils, 2007, p.98).

### **Teachers Concern about Management Issues**

My own experience as a specialist teacher confirms a general fear among teachers that the dance class will be a behaviour management ‘nightmare’. Dance involves moving bodies, which in schools is typically regarded as disruptive (Foucault, 1979, cited in Bresler, 2004). There is a degree of certainty in teaching a practical skill with a measurable outcome that fits more neatly into the lesson plan structure of a day, in contrast to less organized processes involved in improvisation, which may be “noisy, takes up space and . . . look[s] like nothing is happening” (Fraser et al. 2007, p.26). Expressive movement and physical contact between students is not part of the “choreography” that regulates bodies within classrooms (Bresler, 2004). Teachers in a New Zealand study expressed concern about maintaining discipline in dance lessons (Buck, 2003). In my own research and experience as a teacher, I have observed that classroom management in dance is a key concern of teachers.

Park used action research to develop a pedagogical model for teaching dance in an urban elementary school. As she taught, she became aware that more structure and use of signals, in this case use of a drum, would support students’ learning needs (2011). Also important in ‘managing’ the learning is to be aware of pace and the physical design of the learning. The ‘warm-up’ can start with all students performing movements in a circle and then transition into moving in the general space in different ways (walking, hopping, skipping) on a cue they move back into the circle. In this way students have the opportunity to practise dealing with personal and general space. Moving between formations in this way can be used to move students around and perhaps avoid problems, a movement game in which students have

to dance with a partner, perhaps mirroring each other's' movements and then changing partners on a cue could be used to achieve the same end.

Engagement in dance is often heightened by the use of meaningful transitions between movement images and ideas. Meaningful transitions come when ideas are developed from warm-up to movement exploration to dance making and then to sharing. A movement idea such as 'greetings' (high-fives, hand-shakes, bows, etc.) could be used as part of the warm-up, for example students are asked to freeze when the music stops and shake hands with the nearest person. The teacher then suggests variations of time, quality, direction etc., and even more open-ended challenges such as asking for a 'hip-hop curtsey.' A few movements are selected and combined. After the whole class learns this phrase, in pairs they then use this phrase and make some changes, including adding their own movements and deciding on an ending.

In my own practice, I have drawn on a New Zealand study in which a teacher endeavoured to reduce the use of verbal feedback in Dance education. It inspired me to further reduce my own use of verbal instruction and feedback (Fraser, et al, 2009). I have had success in lessons where I start the music as students enter and, without instruction, draw them into the circle with gesture, and begin a simple set of repetitive movements that are then varied. These include clapping in time with the beat, doubling or halving the time signature, clapping on every beat, then every second beat, and asking for suggestions from students, such as "where else we could clap". Talking can occur later. In another class, when Year 6 students were asked to work on dance making in groups without talking, this constraint enhanced their concentration and engagement in the task. In a recent class I asked groups of four students to pair with another group to share their dance draft. They gave feedback to their peers by demonstrating interesting movements or use of the elements of dance rather than by telling them in words.

A connection with positive emotions also relates to teachers' pedagogical approach or the attitude they take to teaching. Humour was identified as an important aspect of the pedagogy of a group of male dance teachers in New Zealand (Buck, 2011). Play, humour, gesture and physicality were used as important pedagogical tools. "They had fun and found shortcuts to give and get messages, through jokes and gestures, allowing them to deconstruct the traditional pedagogic identity of the authoritarian instructor" (Friere, cited in Buck, 2011, p.9). In my experience of teaching dance children seem to appreciate and enjoy the use of humour in dance lessons. It helps to reduce apprehension, and is often employed as a stylistic element in performance especially by children who are new to dance and therefore lack confidence.

Teachers often avoid dance because they think students, won't like it (Holmes & Dougherty, 2010). If the teacher acknowledges students' hesitation, but suggests they try it and adopts a positive attitude (Stevens, 2010) students seem to be more ready to accept it. Trying dance should seem like an opportunity rather than coercion. I was once told by a group of boys when I arrived at a school for the first of a series of dance classes, "of course we [boys] won't be doing dancing". I suggested they 'give it a go', and promised that it wasn't going to involve ballet or learning steps, and that I believed they might actually have a good time. They did.

It may be dance's relative lack of restriction and freedom from regular classroom rules that accounts for its appeal to youth (Hanna, 2008). According to Gard, dance gives young people a chance to escape the bounds of the everyday and, to "be somebody else" (2003). He argues that exploring the elements of dance is not as important as exploring ideas about the self (Gard, 2003). This has relevance for older primary school students, who from my experience as a teacher appreciate dance, as Stinson pointed out, when it involves challenge, choice, freedom, a sense of control, and an emphasis on intrinsic motivation (Stinson, 1997).

### **Where to from Here?**

The sustainability of Dance education will depend on how successfully teachers and schools overcome barriers to it. External factors are the most difficult, often because they are the result of wider changes in educational policy, such as literacy or numeracy initiatives that mandate minimum hours for these curriculum priorities (Ewing, 2012). Back in the classroom, teachers need to be empowered to teach dance in order to overcome internal barriers of lack of confidence and inhibition; misunderstanding of what dance in education involves and concern about classroom management issues. Pedagogical strategies useful to teachers would be explicit and adaptable, allowing the teacher to control the process according to student needs and experience, while at the same time allowing for divergent creative responses.

Consultation reports on the Draft Arts curriculum suggest “Generalist primary school teachers need the strong support of assessment tools, rubrics, checklists and work samples” (ACARA, 2012) in other words suggesting that assessment is the point of learning, but what are they learning. A pedagogy of critical thinking however, might be the key to adequate delivery of arts curriculum by generalist teachers (Nilson, et al., 2013), enabling teachers to bring to the teaching of dance all they know about pedagogies that encourage thinking. Professional development, teaching materials and specialist programs should be based on dance making and responding, along with well-structured strategies that support teachers in the management of learning in this new context. This could serve to bridge the gap between the curriculum and its expectations and intent, and the knowledge and experience of the generalist teacher.

In Queensland, Australia, generalist teachers and classroom music specialists have a crucial role in Dance education, even if schools choose to outsource dance teachers. They are called upon to support artists by managing the class as well as building on the specialist sessions in their own classrooms. Having

already established a relationship with their students and an understanding of their learning needs and styles, they are well placed to begin teaching dance, equipped with some basic dance-making tools. For some teachers it will mean using collaborative learning strategies that are now somewhat out of favour. Ashley (2005) suggests that generalist teachers may be empowered to ‘cope’ with teaching dance once they understand that it is a collaborative, creative process, similar to one they may undertake in other curriculum areas.

My experience as a teacher shows that dance teaching pays off. This payoff from experience is often felt by novice dancers and performers in community projects. It is at the end of a project, inspired by the excitement of the performance or event, the heightened state of the collaborative effort and the physical rush, that they recognize the value and the thrill of their achievement. The ‘payoff’ is what makes it worth it in the end, when the students’ enjoyment of dance and the positive effects on self-concept and attitudes lead to a feeling of achievement (Torzillo, 2013).

Classroom teachers are often surprised after seeing the results of a creative dance session, for example that boys produce some of the most interesting work. It is not just the result that is important, but also the creative process of making a dance and the joy it inspires in children. My observations of student responses to dance include many examples of student success that surprised teachers when they saw previously disruptive, withdrawn or disengaged students participating eagerly in dance making. Pedagogical strategies that build on teachers’ practical knowledge of teaching and the needs of their students could make this possible in many more classrooms.

## **Work in Progress – CONSTRUCT**

Ch 7 - Everyday pedagogy for Dance education

Ch 8 - Showing what we can do - Assessment in dance

Ch 9 - Dancing towards each other

Research and dance making making involve ongoing work in the continued progress toward the construction of the product. Something can always be added; new literature; new movement material; a new insight; a nuance to a gesture; a new juxtaposition of the body. Teachers, too, are constantly remaking and reworking their approaches to pedagogy, curriculum and assessment as they are reshaped by the interactions and happenings of the classroom.



## Chapter 7 - Everyday Pedagogy for Dance Education

*The paper 'Everyday Pedagogy for Dance Education' was published in the International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum in 2015.*

### **Introduction**

Teachers must operate within systemic guidelines; plan according to established curricula; and teach using prescribed or prevailing pedagogic approaches. This places limits on how or when they can include the Arts in their programs. At the current time in Australia, school timetables are dominated by mandatory hours for the four core subjects (English, Maths, Science and History) in the Australian National Curriculum (Queensland Studies Authority QSA (2011).

In Queensland, Australia, neo-liberalist agendas in Education have brought with them high-stakes assessment, a 'back-to-basics' curriculum and performativity demands (Garvis & Pendergast, 2010). In this climate, and as a way to address concerns about falling standards in education, many schools in Queensland have adopted prescriptive forms of planning and pedagogies based on direct instruction and explicit learning models (Luke, 2014).

Dance, although included as one of five subjects within the new National Arts Curriculum, falls well outside the core and therefore outside of what is counted as learning. This situation has been exacerbated, in North Queensland at least, by a move away from student-centred, cooperative or inquiry-based learning and towards teacher-centred, direct-instruction and explicit teaching. In my experience as a researcher and dance educator, I have encountered a variety of pedagogies being used to teach dance. The aim of this chapter was to unpack and draw parallels between a prescriptive and teacher-centred, explicit teaching model and a more collaborative, creative, inquiry-based approach, as a way to consider the question: "Which pedagogic framework best supports teachers to implement dance in their classrooms?"

Findings suggest that teachers are more likely to introduce dance if they can use familiar strategies when doing so.

## **Background**

### **Performativity and Creativity**

In the lead up to the development of the current Australian National Curriculum, state, territory and commonwealth Ministers of Education compiled the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians in 2009, to set the educational direction for the next ten years. This document included strong statements of support for the arts to ensure “all young Australians become successful learners, confident and creative individuals, and active and informed citizens” (Ministerial Council on Education & Youth, 2008, p. 8), p. 8). This conceptualization of confident, creative, active and informed students was used as the basis for the ‘General Capabilities’ that inform the Australian National Curriculum. These capabilities “encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that, together with curriculum content in each learning area and the cross-curriculum priorities, will assist students to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century” (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] 2016d, par.3). Policy makers as well as advocates are in agreement that “creativity is a resource that must be nurtured in order to harvest the rewards of innovation” (Florida cited in Gibson, 2012, p.3). The General Capabilities need to be addressed by all subjects within the national curriculum, including the Australian National Curriculum for the Arts. The rationale for the inclusion of the Arts in the National Curriculum is their “capacity to engage, inspire and enrich all students, exciting the imagination and encouraging them to reach their creative and expressive potential” (ACARA, 2016e, par 2). As Eisner has argued, “the Arts should be justified in education primarily in relation to their distinctive or unique contributions” (2002, p.234). Many of the ideas, experiences and learning that occur in the

Arts are unique to the Arts because they are at the centre of cultural expression and understanding (Gibson & Ewing, 2011).

Alongside this interest in creativity and the Arts there has been a return to a 'back to basics' agenda arising from concerns for falling standards and an emphasis on nationwide high stakes testing from an early age (Harrison, 2010). It seems that the place of the Arts in schools has been constrained by a performative drive (Alter, 2010; Ewing 2012; Garvis & Pendergast, 2010; White & Smerdon, 2008), where what is valued is what can be measured by internal and external monitoring and standardised testing (Ball, 2003). The Arts are placed outside the limits of what counts as important or central in many schools (McArdle, 2008). Policy rhetoric might emphasise the need for creative education, however "the reality of central administration, regimes of control and the need to comply with performativity has often prevented the development of innovative learning environments" (Burnard & White in Davis, 2013).

### **Pedagogy in Dance**

Dance is an ideal medium for social and emotional learning (Bresler, 2004; Buck, 2003). In the social constructivist classroom as envisioned by Vygotsky, the interaction between adult and child is like a dance (Berk & Winsler, 1995) and in the dance lesson itself, this interaction is stripped back to its essence without the chairs, tables, whiteboards or electronic gadgetry of the classroom, which even for the committed constructivist could be confronting. An everyday pedagogy for Dance education would help teachers to support children's creativity and encourage collaborative learning while also helping them to manage the classroom activities.

Pedagogy remains important, to balance rigor with pleasure, and engagement with challenge (McWilliam, 2009). In any teaching situation that foregrounds collaboration and inclusion of children's knowledge and prior learning, "a

balance of explicit instruction and learner-driven pedagogies” (Ryan & Healy, 2009, p.11), is more appropriate than strict adherence to one or the other. A repertoire of pedagogies might be needed in order to provide students with the freedom to creatively explore and the tools to be creative. In order to develop the “practised spontaneity” (Antilla, 2007, p.876) required for creative inquiry, children need multiple opportunities to play, revisit, repeat, refine, and develop ideas in the Arts. In other words, improvisation or creativity of response does not imply lack of thought or intention, or that creativity and improvisation cannot be learned. “This is not to deny that the spontaneous first response may also be the best response . . . playfulness and invention is enhanced when they don’t have to get it right” (Fraser et al., 2007, p.57). In teaching for creativity, teachers could work toward a pedagogical balance where children could learn some of the “aesthetic conventions” of the artform in order to communicate their own creative ideas (Chappell, 2007, p.45).

### **School improvement and explicit teaching**

In Queensland, Australia, in recent years, there has been an emphasis on school improvement, with a strong focus on what happens in classrooms; that is on pedagogy and the ‘teacher effect’ (Hartnell-Young, Marshall, & Hassell, 2014). Accordingly, by the end of 2013, every Queensland state school had implemented a school wide pedagogic framework designed to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning and focusing on student achievement (Conway & Abawi, 2013). In much of the state, this has resulted in a move away from student-centred, cooperative or inquiry-based learning and towards teacher-centred, direct instruction and explicit teaching.

### **The explicit teaching model**

In response to the requirement to institute a pedagogic framework many schools in North Queensland Australia have mandated the use of a particular version of explicit instruction, which is often referred to as the ‘Fleming

Model' (Fleming & Kleinhenz, 2007). In this model teachers use a highly structured, and to a degree scripted format for the delivery of all lessons across year levels and subject areas. The Fleming model is a variation of the Gradual Release of Responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Fisher & Frey, 2013). In the original model there are four stages. The first stage is the focus lesson – called 'I do', where the teacher establishes the purpose, models their learning and build or activate background knowledge. Next comes Guided instruction – or 'we do it', where teachers question, facilitate, and guide children through the learning with opportunities for formative assessment (check for understanding, giving timely feedback and re-teaching). The third stage is collaborative learning, 'you do it together' where students practice and apply learning interactively. Finally there is independent work 'you do' where students synthesise, transform and apply their knowledge. In the version of the explicit framework adapted by Fleming & Kleinhenz (2007), the collaborative stage is omitted, even though it was deemed "critical" by its originators (Fisher, 2008, p.2). The Fleming model privileges teacher-directed, whole class focused learning episodes, followed by individual learning activities (Fleming & Kleinhenz, 2007).

The aim of the original versions of the explicit teaching model, The Gradual release of Responsibility model, was to work toward rather than away from student centred learning and the construction of learning by students (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983;(Fisher & Frey, 2013). In the local interpretation of the model, it seems that this approach to education is not only dead, but buried (Rowe, 2006). The literature in Arts education and creativity strongly supports the view that "centrally controlled approach [es] to pedagogy" reduce opportunities to foster creative teaching and learning (Craft, 2003, p.120).

The lesson sequence in many schools always follows the same format.

<b>Orientation</b>	
A fast paced familiar introduction	Rapid Recall Routines (Warm up)
A way of making a connection to students prior or personal experience	Activate Prior Knowledge (Tune-in)
<b>Framing</b>	
An explicit statements of expectations and intent	Lesson Intention
	Success Criteria
<b>Instructional sequence</b>	
A familiar sequence for student/teacher action	I Do We Do You Do
<b>Plough back Revision</b>	
Reflection or consolidation of learning	Review and consolidation of learning
	Check for understanding and satisfaction of lesson intention and success criteria

Figure 8 Explicit teaching Lesson Outline (Source: Trinity Beach State School, 2014)

### **Methodology**

This chapter is based on a case study of Dance education in two Queensland primary schools. My methodology uses case study to contain the collection and interpretation of diverse forms of data including my own practice and the practice of other teachers; and the engagement and responses of students (Yin, 2013). Case study is an ideal design for the investigation of “complex social phenomena”, using diverse data sources (Yin, 2013, p.4). I have used self-study, observation, interviews, student reflections and drawings (Stake, 1995) to deepen my understanding of the experience of Dance education in classrooms. As a researcher I constructed my thesis from the materials of my own narrative as a teacher of dance: from the stories of dance I saw in classrooms; and the dances and stories about dance from teachers and students. I use those materials to inform the development of a pedagogical framework for teaching dance.

In research a design is chosen because it is the best way to achieve our purpose and answer our questions, and because it is in line with our assumptions about the nature of reality and knowing. (Marais & Lapan, 2004). In the constructivist and the constructionist interpretive paradigms there are multiple realities where the researcher and researched co-create understandings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). As a teacher of dance I make dance with my students, we co-create the dance, we find movement material from our own stories and our take on the world, and they evolve as we work together what we create contains more than all the individual takes on the world. While there are multiple objective understandings of truth or reality, some may be more or less 'useful, liberating, fulfilling and rewarding' (Crotty, 1998, p.48) than others.

In this chapter I compare two pedagogical models: the explicit teaching model and my own pedagogical approach, which is based on collaborative learning and the co-construction of dance in a classroom setting. The strategies described here, took shape from my own reflections on teaching that demonstrated student enjoyment of physicality, group dynamics, fun and extrinsic motivation. They are based on what might be termed the 'cultural capital' of the creative dance world, which I have had the privilege to draw from over time. Many wonderful and generous practitioners have informed the dance teacher I now am. As a result of this heritage, my own narrative could be considered 'information rich' as it contains many images of the possibilities of Dance education, rather than being a means toward generalization (Patton, 1990).

The research is framed by two questions.

1. How do students respond to Dance education in their classroom?
2. What are the impacts on teachers of implementing dance in the classroom?

These questions explore the experiences and understandings of dance from the student and teacher perspective. In this chapter I draw on my study to date, to explore the possible alignment of dance teaching with the ‘explicit teaching model’. Ultimately I hope to use the results of this study to develop a pedagogic framework to support generalist classroom teachers and music teachers to implement effective and engaging dance in their classrooms.

### **Making connections**

In this section I describe each stage of the explicit teaching model and then describe my process and what strategies I use, at a similar stage in the lesson or learning experience, with the aim of discerning any relationship. The stages are those named in Fig. 1: a fast paced familiar introduction; a way of making a connection to students prior or personal experience; an explicit statements of expectations and intent; a familiar sequence for student/teacher action and reflection or consolidation of learning.

There is limited research into how the proscriptive formats of the explicit model are being used in schools, and no evidence that I could find that described the use of them in primary school Arts education. By mapping my experiences and those of teachers and children against a framework, I hope to maintain the collaborative and creative nature of dance in any strategies I outline.

In the current Australian National Arts curriculum the ideals of constructionism are foregrounded. Creative dance emphasises the student’s right to construct their own dances, using their ideas, experiences and life-worlds. There is general agreement in the Dance education literature that dance in schools should be based on the central purpose of making dances (Schiller & Meiners, 2003), while taking into account the need to provide culturally relevant learning (Ashley, 2010). Collaboration is a key to the special forms of cognition that take place during dance making (Giguere, 2011). “When dance

is based on “children’s own movement ideas, rather than . . . preordained steps” (Ashley, 2004, p.10), they can experience: choice, challenge, fun and intrinsic motivation (Stinson, 1997).

Finding a place for dance in the curriculum will be more likely if teachers can see the possibility of teaching it themselves, using a pedagogy and terminology that align with the ways they have to teach in the rest of the curriculum. I have considered the stages of the explicit model and how my own teaching could be understood using the descriptors for each stage, I do this with a view to begin to answer, for my own context, the question of whether creativity can be achieved even within standardized structures (Corner in Davis, 2013).

### **A fast paced familiar introduction**

In the explicit model the fast paced familiar introduction, is referred to as a ‘warm-up’. The purpose is to activate prior knowledge about the content, placing relevant knowledge in to working memory. In effect ‘warming up’ the brain, and connecting what is already known and what is to be learnt (Fleming & Kleinhenz, 2007). Within this model, the warm-up is also intended to ensure student ‘accountability’ or compliance, where all students are expected to actively participate, so that the warm-up can also provide the teacher with feedback and to check not just for understanding but ‘automaticity (Trinity Beach State School [TBSS], 2014).

In the dance class, the purpose of a warm up is to literally warm-up the body for movement. It is used to focus and centre the students and create a community of dancers from all the dancing bodies. In the language of the explicit model, the purpose would be to: activate prior knowledge about the content, physically and mentally activating relevant knowledge in the body. In effect this is ‘warming up’ the mind/body. The dance warm-up helps students make connections between what is already known and what is to be learnt, by

activating students own movement vocabularies. The spatial organization of the warm-up is important, to encourage and support participation, but not enforce it. A circle is a standard starting formation. Alternatively, movement in the space (to an instruction, movement rule or score) is also used. Students often experiment more when they realize that everyone is not looking at them. Confidence can slowly be build up, by gradually introducing more formalized sharing, such as when a small group shares the small dance sequence they have made with another group, The spatial organization of the warm-up, contributes to its familiarity and provides the teacher with a way of managing students, who, out of their desks, can be difficult to control.

Activating knowledge and introducing the lesson content should include familiar routines based on functional and known movements, such as: stamina and stretch routines; different types of travelling movements; simple whole body repetition and variation. Important skills for creative movement including: visual and spatial awareness, attention, readiness and persistence can also be practiced (Chappell, 2007). This is done by encouraging participation, at first with easily repeatable repetitions and movement tasks, based on a simple pattern or game such as 'Follow the Leader'. Eliciting movement suggestions and variations from students empowers their creativity even though each suggestion might be simple. For example, the teacher might start clapping in time with the music and after a while ask "Where else or how else can we clap?" This would elicit suggestions for changes of level, direction, timing or dynamics, aiming always for whole group participation and enjoyment.

The lesson always starts with movement, not with teacher talk or exposition. Ideas modeled in the warm-up therefore come from students and teacher. Movement concepts are related to the creative part of the class to follow, and help to build students' movement vocabularies, by providing more choice, other than just what they may have seen on television. Building of small

phrases and sequences of movement in the warm-up helps to develop movement memory, physical confidence and stamina. Working as a whole group with a shared and explicitly stated approval of the copying and sharing of each other's movement ideas, helps to support reluctant, shy or less confident students. The pace of the warm-up and the group energy draws reluctant students into to the common purpose of moving together in unison. So rather than introduce the elements of dance at the beginning in written form, or through teacher exposition, they are explored physically. At the end of the warm-up, as we cool down, and debrief, the teacher can describe, perhaps using visuals, what we have just done. For example, "Great warm-up, lots of energy, I saw you use all of the elements just then" and then identify and explain them with physical examples. Students could be asked to give physical examples, "Could someone show me how we just used different levels of space?", or, "could someone show me how we used unison?" What is interesting in the dance making of children is how they quickly take on board the idea of sharing and varying each other's movements to create a class movement theme.

#### **A way of making connection to students' prior learning**

In the explicit model, this stage is intended to connect previously learnt content and skills, and sometimes to provide students with a rationale for learning it, demonstrating how similar content or skills have a real-life equivalent. It is easy, but not necessary, to put on Youtube and let children copy what they see, to make a connection to students' personal experiences and their prior learning, via popular culture references. Current music genres can be used, but the teacher should take opportunities to extend the students' understanding and appreciation by selecting instrumental, world music or more slightly sophisticated choices. When children are invited to contribute their own movement ideas, they will bring into the mix, steps and gestures from favourite popular and cultural dance forms, such as hip-hop and cultural

dance. They enjoy learning new moves, but they also enjoy creating their own (Minton, 2007).

Certainly the artform itself produces in students, feelings of joy and ‘flow’ and “when learning moves beyond rigid boundaries it is possible for participants to “become engrossed to the extent that learners take intense ownership of the learning process, feel excitement and perceive the learning experience to be rewarding in itself “(Corner in Davis, 2013).

Humour is a little discussed but very important consideration in education (Buck, 2011). In my experience of teaching dance I have seen that children seem to appreciate and enjoy the use of humour in dance lessons. It helps to reduce apprehension, and is often employed as a stylistic element in performance, especially by children who are new to dance and therefore may lack confidence. It is also a way for teachers to connect with students, perhaps breaking down the stereotypical student-teacher relationship. Humour that is inclusive and shared has a positive effect on the classroom climate (Buck, 2011). In the Imaginative Education Framework, humour is considered to be an important tool for teachers “one of the glues of our social and family life” (Egan, 2001). In many classrooms, children have limited choice in any aspect of their learning, so when they come to a dance class they seem to enjoy choosing movements, narratives, group members and variations. Making a connection to student’s prior learning experience and understanding is therefore not merely a step in a teaching cycle, but a philosophy that influences pedagogical decisions.

### **An explicit statement of expectations and intent**

An explicit statement of expectations and intent, is intended to make clear to student what is expected of them in order to succeed. As a teacher who is physically involved by dancing with the students, I communicate the lesson intent and what I expect by modeling it, from the start. I want to set students

up for success, by encouraging initial involvement through the warm-u, after that I will clarify rules, expectations, and what they will be doing in the lesson. The statements of expectation and intent are always about the purpose of the lesson, which is to make dances as well as the idea of positive engagement and participation. The content of the lesson is made clear by explicit use of the language of the artform using a ‘think aloud’ strategy (Oster, 2001). The elements and choreographic structures of dance are foregrounded and made visible. Throughout the lesson explicit scaffolds support learners at each of the stages of the dance-making process, offering options and choices. In the first stage of movement exploration even though students might have the same starting point, they come to understand that there are many answers to the one problem. Challenge is always there because of the open ended nature of the tasks, there is never only one answer to the choreographic task or problem. In addition support is given not just as a general statement, but in the interaction the teacher has with students while moving among the groups during the making phase. During this phase the teacher can use proximity to notice student ideas, asking the ‘what if’ questions, and framing the action with dance language by describing what they see.

### **A Familiar Sequence for Student/Teacher Actions**

In the explicit model, this is contained in three stages, ‘I do, we do, you do’ (Fleming and Kleinhenz, 2007). In creative dance many different stimuli or starting points can be used with the same or a similar structure. The improvisational structure itself can become a familiar sequence; used with different starting points and stimulus materials. For example:

- Students create movements in response to questions, tasks, activities, movement scores
- Students are guided to explore ways to vary, repeat and combine selected movements into short phrases

- In groups students share and combine their individual movement responses into a longer sequence and then further refine those sequences using choreographic devices and movement elements
- Sequences are shared for group consideration and reflection

These stages could easily be identified and given names by the students, and the familiar sequence, become a source of security, giving teachers and students a degree of control over the risk and challenge of creativity. Teachers can provide clear scaffolding and strong tools to support creative collaboration (Davis, 2013, p.14). Specific dance tasks, including game structures and improvisations, provide clear guidelines. Teachers can vary the amount of support to individuals and groups to differentiate the learning. Students can choose how difficult they will make the task, i.e. by adding additional movements, variations and extensions. All students can take part, because they are able to translate the movements for themselves and encouraged to allow for individual differences in their group. Students find it relatively easy to adapt their dance sequence to accommodate the different skills and abilities of their peers. For example, one student performs more difficult or easier movements or takes a solo role within the sequence. Students who need less support and who are able to add complex pathways and elaborations to their group dance, often practise more because they work more quickly. In a way they create their own extension activity.

In the dance class, the gradual release of responsibility can be seen in the change from the centralized energy of the whole class warm-up with the teacher leading, to a de-centralised diffuse energy with co-direction of the energy by the students, as they work in pairs or groups to make a dance. The teacher moves among that energy, managing the flow, with proximity, advice, interest, enthusiasm, sometimes moving groups into more suitable spaces for the dance they have designed or being on the ground to defuse oppositional energies or encourage tentative ideas and emerging forms.

### **Reflection or consolidation of learning.**

In the dance class and in Arts education more generally, reflection is not just about 'ploughing back', to remind and reinforce particular content or skills. Rather it is about using a repertoire of reflective strategies to encourage students to revisit, what they had noticed, thought about or wondered about. The teacher provides continual reminders of the language of dance that can help to structure (but not restrict) their thinking. Reflection is not just a stage at the end of the lesson, but happens throughout the lesson, for example during the warm-up the teacher can name the dance elements just used; or during the lesson the teacher can ask students questions to encourage them to reflect on the creative process as they work in groups to make dances. A commitment to the inclusion of reflective moments reinforces the central purpose of dance making, yet not at the expense of the intrinsic value of dancing and the subjective enjoyment students derive from it

### **Discussion**

The explicit model is not the only pedagogic framework, model or approach in use, but it is broadly favoured and implemented in my region and indeed throughout Queensland. At this stage, the analysis of the explicit teaching model in relation to Dance education and its interests has given me a starting point for the development of a framework. When thinking about dance teaching and the engagement of children in dance: interaction, interdependency; collaboration; unison and sharing are constant themes. Indeed at each of the stages as I have described them above, there is something of connection, and I have named them as such in the list of six below. Each stage involves teaching procedures but the emphasis is on "what students will do; what type of "student activities they foster" (Munro, 1999, p.2).

I have named each as a type of connection:

- Connect to dance – Move first – help children to focus on moving, not on talking. Start with movement to reinforce the key purpose of the lesson, which, is physical participation and creating with movement.
- Connect with students – Encourage children to ‘bring what they know and who they are to the dance-making process, through their music and dance cultures, but extend them.
- Connect the dots – Help children to connect the warm-up, movement exploration, dance making, sharing and reflecting, with a clear framework for learning and assessment. The framing of lesson intent and the focus knowledge and skills is made physically, visually and aurally explicit as the class moves through the dance-making process.
- Connect with each other – Help and encourage children to work together in creative dance – making and share with them, to ensure that collaboration and learning interaction are at the heart of dance making and that students establish their own learning interactions and become self-motivated and directed learners
- Connect body and mind – Help children to name the stages of dance making, and the language of dance and make this visible (on posters or whiteboards or verbally), explore use of non-verbal communication and instruction, experiment with notating and recording dance in different modes.
- Connect with experience – Make reflection a familiar and regular part of all dance-making sessions, using varied and imaginative strategies and modes of reflection that encourage collaborative as well as individual recognition.

In order to clarify any relationships I have added a third column to the original table of the Explicit Teaching Model, (Figure 2), matching each of its stages with one of the Connect stages I named above. I have included useful strategies used within dance classes for each of the Connect stages.

Orientation		
Explicit teaching framework		Dance education
A fast paced familiar introduction	Rapid Recall Routines (Warm up)	Connect to dance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement comes first</li> <li>• Circles</li> <li>• Follow the leader</li> <li>• Copying and sharing</li> </ul>
A way of making a connection to students prior or personal experience	Activate Prior Knowledge (Tune-in)	Connect with students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension</li> <li>• Inclusive practices</li> <li>• Humour</li> </ul>
Framing		
An explicit statement of expectations and intent	Lesson Intention	Connect the dots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Describing and naming</li> <li>• Visual scaffolds</li> </ul>
	Success Criteria	
Instructional Sequence		
A familiar sequence for student/teacher action	I do	Connect with each other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvisational structures</li> <li>• Translation</li> <li>• Differentiation</li> </ul>
	We do	
	You do together	
	You do	
Plough Back Revision		
Reflection or consolidation of learning	Review and consolidation of learning	Connect body and mind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit use of language</li> <li>• Non-verbal communication</li> <li>• Notation</li> </ul>
	Check for understanding and satisfaction of lesson intention and success criteria	Connect with experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflective moments</li> <li>• Reflective guides</li> <li>• Collaborative reflection</li> </ul>

Figure 9 Explicit teaching sequence and dance teaching sequence

In the first stage ‘connecting with dance’, the strategies are designed to bring students into readiness for dance, by dancing from the start using familiar music, and forms such as follow the leader. In the second ‘connecting with students’ they are intended to cater for diversity and to support inclusion. In

the third stage, 'connect the dots', children are supported to make dance, with explicit structures and concepts such as copying and translation. The fourth, connect with each other', supports children to work collaboratively to share and develop dance ideas with their peers and begin to form a community of learners. In the fifth, 'connect body and mind' other ways of thinking are focused on, including: body memory; non-verbal communication and the notating of movement into visual form. In the last stage 'connect with experience' the experience of dance is captured, individually and collaboratively in multi-modal forms.

### **Conclusion**

My research is grounded in a socio-kin/aesthetic perspective, which values the role of the body, the importance of relationships and the central purpose of creative expression. Therefore, while I am interested to find some common ground with the explicit teaching model, it won't be at the expense of teaching dance as art-making.

I have heard from beginning teachers that they feel safe and supported by the explicit model (C.McNamara, pers.comm, 2014). For this reason developing a clear process, with specific strategies at each stage might encourage teachers to try dance. The theme of connection is in line with my theoretical perspective, which values embodied, relational and aesthetic learning. A growing body of literature accords greater status to teacher knowledge of the relational pedagogy of the classroom than to curriculum and technical skills (Buck, 2003; Antilla, 2007) and would concur that "steps are necessary but not sufficient for teaching dance" (Warburton, 2008, p.8). It seems that teachers are feeling the pressure of delivering curriculum content (Petriwskyj, O'Gorman, & Turunen, 2013). Understanding that in Dance education the process of physical, collaborative, creative problem solving is as important as any product, may relieve teachers of their anxiety about teaching dance as a

performing art. Relaxing reliance on 'measurable' outcomes (Buck, 2009, p.4) may seem easier if teachers have an accessible and familiar pedagogical model to use. A commitment to dance making throughout the class and at each stage encourages children to develop, value, and share their own ideas and this is at the heart of effective and joyful Dance education (Anttila, 2007a).

## **Chapter 8 - Showing What We Can Do: Assessment of Primary School Dance**

*The paper Showing What We Can Do: Assessment of Primary School Dance was published in The International Journal of Assessment and Evaluation in 2016.*

### **Introduction**

Assessment could be said to be the main driver of teacher decision-making and reflection in the current standardized and performative system (Lingard, 2011). Teaching dance offers opportunities, but also ‘threats’, to teachers. One of the threats is the requirement to make judgments and produce reports (Klenowski, 2012). Assessment is part of the work of a teacher, yet becomes a source of anxiety and even alienation from the profession (Ward, 2012). The Arts, including dance, are not immune to this anxiety. Dance is considered as one of the most difficult subjects to assess because its products are creative and expressive (Warburton, 2002).

This chapter considers assessment in general, before unpacking teacher and student meanings of assessment in the context of Dance education. The aim is to outline principles, approaches and practical strategies for assessing dance in the primary school.

Following an examination of various definitions of assessment, this chapter looks at the relationship between pedagogy and assessment in general, then specifically in relation to Dance education. Pedagogy and assessment in Dance education are unpacked using a socio-kin-aesthetic perspective and drawing upon literature and findings from this qualitative study, ‘re-packaged’ to present an approach to assessing dance intended to be useful to generalist classroom teachers.

## **Methodology**

This observation was written following a specialist dance lesson for nine-year-old children in a Queensland regional primary school:

*“Miss, miss, can you watch our dance?” Two or three groups are asking at once so I have to quickly allocate order, “Ok, your group first and then yours, practice while you wait if you need.” Everyone wants to share with me, they want acknowledgement of what they have achieved and advice. Is there anything not working? How is it going? We want to make it better. Sometimes other groups watch each other while waiting for their turn. They often observe their own movement being used by others, but in a slightly different way. This leads to a sort of unspoken acceptance that ideas can be shared in and between groups and there is much productive verbal and movement chatter.*

As the children made dances together, they were keen to show their ideas; they went from tentative explorations to fully fleshed dances, often asking for feedback. The way children worked in this context confirmed their interest in sharing their learning and the value of the playful development of ideas in dance. This led to questions of what is important, what counts as knowledge, and how and if that playful development and exploration could be assessed (Fraser et al., 2009).

A qualitative study was undertaken by the first author (the researcher) into the nature of Dance education in two primary schools in regional Queensland.. Assessment was not specifically addressed in the study, although in interviews, conversations, and reflections, children often spoke about what they saw as the point of learning (Bourke, Roseanna & Loveridge, 2014), including what they had enjoyed, learned, and found engaging or challenging. For their part, teachers would often make a point of remarking on the “surprising” engagement or achievements of the class or of individual children.

A re-search of the data was undertaken to more explicitly consider questions of assessment in relation to a proposed pedagogical framework for dance education that is the product of this study. In this chapter, a review of literature and policy is blended with research data, to more fully consider the data in relation to key models and approaches to the assessment of dance, within the arts subject of the Australian National Curriculum (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2016c) as a step toward a model for assessing dance in primary schools.

The methodology is qualitative, which is appropriate for exploring the qualities of an educational experience (Eisner, 2002) and the contextual and socially constructed meanings attached to teaching and learning practices in Dance education. There is a relationship between tensions in art research and tensions in the assessment of the arts. According to Leavy (2009, p.16) “Traditional conceptions of validity and reliability are inappropriate for evaluating artistic inquiry” that seek “resonance, understanding, multiple meanings, dimensionality and collaboration.” In relation to the assessment of learning in the arts, traditional conceptions of assessment using summative, standardised, definitive, best-practice models (Klenowski, 2012) leave no space for the consideration of process, uncertainty, diversity, and the valuing of experience when assessing children’s art-making.

In Queensland primary schools, dance that is taught according to the intent of the Australian curriculum (ACARA, 2016c) is very rare. Therefore, the selection of sites for the study is not representative of schools as a whole but akin to a convenience sample. The auto-ethnographic component, an account of the first author’s experiences teaching dance in regional Queensland in urban, rural, and isolated settings, was included to draw a richer picture of the experience of primary school children with creative dance. The researcher’s experience in dance warrants consideration of the educational connoisseurship method, which like appreciation of the arts, is an informed and perceptive

ability to “yield what is not obvious” (Barone & Eisner, 1997, p.100).

Connoisseurship also applies to the teacher participants “on the ground” knowledge of their own children and of classroom dynamics, an experience that needs to be respected. Connoisseurship must be balanced with criticism or the art of disclosure. This enables the generation of themes and the location of the general in the particular (Barone & Eisner, 1997).

The study is also heuristic through its “immersion in active experience” (Gray, 2013, p.33) and use of autobiographical data and self-inquiry. The authors aim to use theory to “help explicate what has become visible” (Barone & Eisner, 1997, p.100). Story informs the collection of data, the nature of the data collected, and the presentation of data (Lapan & Marrais, 2004, p.105). As a qualitative research method, “narrative inquiry serves the researcher who wishes to understand a phenomenon or an experience rather than to formulate a logical or scientific explanation” (Kramp 2004, 104).

Interpretation takes place from a perspective (Patton, 1990). The researcher’s subjectivity “determines what variables and concepts are most important and how the findings will be interpreted” (Patton, 1990, p.86). Therefore, it could be classified as “orientational qualitative inquiry” (Patton, 1990, p.86), because it is based on an explicit theoretical perspective, a combination of three perspectives: embodied, socio-cultural, and imaginative, termed ‘socio-kinaesthetic’. This perspective emphasises the important role of the body, cognition, and perception in Dance education (Bresler, 2004).

## **Background**

Assessment has always been contested (Stobart, 2008). In an era of national standardization in Australia, the imperative of data collection and accountability has greatly influenced pedagogical approaches being adopted. In some places, curriculum has been “abandoned in favour of improving test scores, especially for children who might be brought up to standard” (Brennan,

2011, p.16). National high-stakes testing has prioritized the “reliability of tightly defined assessments over continuing, formative assessment for learning, and authentically situated learning which is harder to fit into formal examination contexts” (Knight, Buckingham Shum, & Littleton, 2013, p.41). The Australian Curriculum provides no guidance for teachers since “in the core curriculum pedagogy is ignored and assessment is treated sparingly” (Ewing, 2012, p.100).

Debates about the teaching and assessment of dance and the arts in education take place in this contentious zone where assessment is increasingly seen as the purpose of schooling, further constricting opportunities for Arts education, and, therefore, dance in primary school classrooms (Garvis and Pendegast, 2010). It seems that the place of the arts is constrained by this performative drive (Alter, 2010; White & Smerdon, 2008), with the arts being placed outside the limits of what counts as important or central in schools (McArdle, 2008). Whereas integrated approaches to curriculum and generic competencies or skills de-emphasise content and emphasise processes in curriculum design and assessment, the new Australian National Curriculum “works against integration” (Brennan 2011, p.266). This has further reduced curriculum time available to the arts, because the curriculum is already overly full after the implementation of the first four “core” learning areas (Brennan, 2011).

According to the curriculum documents, children in primary schools have an entitlement of one hour per week for the arts. The Australian National Curriculum: The Arts stipulates that five subjects of the arts be taught (ACARA, 2016e). Yet in practice, dance and, to some extent drama and media, are hardly represented in school programs or in government-sponsored policy reviews (Pascoe et al. 2005; Davis, 2008). Dance is often taught for the minimum time necessary to satisfy the system requirements of inclusion of all five art forms in school programs and a summative grade that can be included in mid-year or yearly reports.

The way the body is viewed in schools shapes the way Dance education is conceptualised, and, therefore, the purpose and nature of assessment, whether as an instrument of public performance to serve the school's social goals and image, as a tool for children's personal growth and creative expression, or something that must be taught in a tightly controlled way and summatively assessed (Bresler, 2004). These different meanings of dance put different pressures on teachers.

Schools often expect a performance product. Parental expectation, tradition, and the idea that the art product should fit an accepted, neat, or tidy aesthetic, can result in conformity and a showcase for those children identified as "talented" (Miller, Nicholas & Lambeth, 2008; Warburton, 2002).

Performance could be framed differently as sharing, with audiences and in contexts of different kinds; thus lowering the stakes, but raising the inclusivity while not diminishing the enjoyment, empowerment, and seriousness that children give to the performance.

There can be tension between the ways the arts are devalued and teachers' beliefs in the broader and intrinsic benefits of Arts education. A narrative study of Australian primary teachers and principals revealed a concern that the arts would not be taken seriously by parents or the system unless it was subject to "formal" assessment. There is a "need to have assessment in music and the arts so parents feel it is valuable" but also the flexibility of activities that are not assessed (Garvis & Pendergast, 2012, p.116). Formative assessment feedback to support children's learning and valuing the process is one way to address this tension.

A summative grade is part of the demand for credibility to prove that dance and the arts have a legitimate place in education. According to Hernandez (2012), authentic criterion referenced assessments are necessary to increase the place of Arts education in the schools and to make Dance education an integral part of a school curriculum. In Queensland Australia, schools are

required to report twice yearly, providing a summative grade on an A-E scale on all subjects taught in their programs, including the arts (Department of Education and Training, [DET], 2016). Authentic assessments in Arts education should come from a strengths-based approach, typical of early childhood curriculum, in which children are recognized for what they can do, rather than what they cannot (Alasuutari, Markström & Vallberg-Roth, 2014). Reframing the A-E rubric as a continua or a series of statements of what a student can do would avoid the use of deficit descriptors such as minimal and limited while satisfying system requirements.

Despite the various demands on teachers, Arts education in Australia has by default been relegated to a third space, where it can benefit the school when needed but otherwise sits outside of what counts as learning. In primary schools in particular, dance exists at the edge of the accountability culture and controls that exist in schools (Lingard, 2011; McArdle, 2008). This is a curious situation where the arts, especially dance, as a result of their marginalised position, have a freedom existing as they do in a liminal space (McArdle, 2008). This is an opportunity for teachers to develop more relational and inclusive approaches to pedagogy and assessment. The Latin root of the word “assessment” is “assidere,” which means “to sit with.” This meaning suggests a less remote and more intimate assessment where teachers and children share the process of examining and reflecting on their learning (Atkin & Coffey, 2003).

In the teaching task of the arts, the emphasis is on learning through inquiry and engagement in the medium (Oreck, 2004). Stobart (2008) proposes that assessment in some ways shapes what is measured. In Dance education, with its moving and interactive assessment, it would be hoped that what is being measured could shape how it is assessed. The following extract from the Australian National Curriculum: The Arts identifies the rationale of the curriculum which is “to provide opportunities for children to create, design,

represent, communicate and share their imagined and conceptual ideas, emotions, observations and experiences” (Australian Curriculum and Assessment Reporting Authority, [ACARA] 2016e, par 2). In this curriculum, children are positioned as artists. The interactive processes of the dance class are suited to assessment for learning, which is “grounded in an understanding of the importance of the student-teacher relationship” (Klenowski, 2012, p.186). Assessment tasks should be designed to make student engagement in the iterative process of arts-making visible. Crucial aspects of effective arts pedagogy that promote creativity characterize learning in a dance classroom and, therefore, have implications for assessment. These include collaboration, physical interaction, and open-ended creative problem solving (Fraser et al., 2009).

Assessment is a social practice (Stobart, 2008), especially in a creative dance class where the predominant feature of learning is its collaborative and interactive nature. Assessment in dance must include the body; it is situated and emplaced and should be a natural part of the process of art-making. Stokrocki (2005) suggests that teachers should utilise the everyday processes of the arts classroom including problem solving and reflection as a more holistic assessment of learning. In other words, when assessment is part of the ebb and flow of teaching and learning, it takes advantage of the processes in the arts classroom, such as the integration of creating, responding, and presenting, which are part of the creative process (Warburton, 2002).

The socio-kinaesthetic framework has been utilised as a way to think about assessment in dance and to envisage a set of considerations and tools that teachers can draw from to begin to develop their own approach. Each of these components will be investigated in turn, to identify methods of assessment that are truer to the nature of learning in dance.

### **Sociocultural**

The literature and this research demonstrate the importance of interaction in the dance classroom (O'Connor & Dunmill, 2005; Holland & O'Connor, 2004; Heath, 2001). Exploring more dialogic and relational forms of teaching and more authentic assessment is an ideal way for teachers to enhance their children's' experience of and understanding of symbolic representation through collaborative, physical, and expressive learning.

Year four children in two schools worked in groups to create dances and afterward discussed the positive and negative experiences of collaboration. As a researcher, the first author was able to spend time talking to children after their dance experience. What is evident from conversations is how they build their understanding, developing it by making and reflecting on dance. They are learning not just about making dance but also about the process of working collaboratively.

STUDENT A: Everyone got so angry, for some reason

STUDENT B: Cause you were

STUDENT A: Cause I was like the leader

STUDENT B: It's good because you know about everyone and who leaded (sic) and everything since people were not here when we were practicing

STUDENT A: It wasn't good, Aaron going away, we lost track

STUDENT C: I saw good teamwork from other teams, but not our team. I was disgraced by two of my group. I wonder why they didn't participate in dance.

STUDENT A: I saw that working in a group [it] can be hard to agree on one thing.

STUDENT D: Other things you can learn in dance are how to work with your friends. You learn whether or not your good at it, you see who else is good at it and you learn an appreciation for dancers realizing how much effort they put into it

STUDENT E: You learn to be more creative and to get along with others.

STUDENT B: My group worked really well and we all worked as a team and came up with ideas and added to them and I enjoyed spending time with people

STUDENT D: The fun isn't all about it, it's a part of serious and it helps you in life sometimes and you are more social with people and you're more physical and you get to see other people and see their strengths and their weaknesses

Visible learning approaches, including self- and peer-assessment, give children increasing agency over their learning; this is important in terms of shifting and rebalancing the ownership of learning within the class, changing the relationship between teacher and student, and the co-construction of learning (Lilly et al., 2014). This relationship includes “high expectations, mutual respect, modelling of creative attitudes, flexibility and dialogue” (Davies et al., 2014, p.88). When learning is co-constructed, questioning becomes very important. According to Craft (2008, p.7), “While some views of creativity argue that at its heart, creativity in one domain is the same as in another, in that it ultimately involves asking ‘what if’ in appropriate ways for the domain.”

Questions and tasks provide feedback that move learners forward. Dialogue is important and consideration should be given to the purpose of questioning and the nature of questioning. In dance, the questions are not so much about problem-solving or right answers, but about stimulating curiosity, inviting

reflection, encouraging problem-finding (Craft, 2008). The affective domain is also important “children have to be able to invest in learning to believe they can achieve” (Spencer, Lucas, & Claxton, 2012, 14). In the theories of learning and development influenced by Vygotsky (1978), the social and relational contexts are all important. If the arts are ways to connect feeling and cognition (Damasio, 1999), then trust between the parties in the learning is paramount; children need to feel safe when engaging in dance. In dance, effective pedagogy, which encourages the development of ideas, benefits from the sharing of power with children (Anttila, 2007b).

A conversation with a year-four student during a dance-making episode involved the role of the body, mind and emotion. He was sitting away from his group, hoodie pulled over his head, not making eye contact.

TEACHER: Hey Jason, what’s happening, what are you thinking?

JASON: I can’t do that, don’t want to, I’m not good at moving.

TEACHER: Yeah, really, you know, I heard you play sport, I heard you’re pretty good

JASON: Yeah I’m ok (as if it was a silly question)

TEACHER: Yeah, of course, you play sport, so you’d be good at moving

JASON: Yeah, suppose so

TEACHER: I think so, yeah, I reckon, you could do this, you could make it work (I look beside me another member of his group is doing a type of hip-hop move, rippling from one arm to the other.)

TEACHER: Hey what about that move, we could add that in, and hey just before I saw you do ‘that thing’ (I demonstrate and talk through a

sequencing of movements where one and then the other runs around the back of the others and joins arms)

TEACHER: Maybe you could use that to bring everyone into the space, and you come in, last, and then you could start that wave movement . . . (He is looking a lot happier, going off with his group and taking an active role for the next part of the lesson, and in the final dance taking on a leading role)

Questioning is important, as is listening. Rituals of sharing can be developed, not just as an end-point summative moment but also as something that happens along the way. Groups of children can share their creative work in progress with another small group, offering ideas for what stood out or a moment that was not quite clear. Moments of individual and shared reflection prioritize the “sharing of cognitive, emotional, social and physical resources (Buys & Miller 2009, pp.3–4). Children develop a sense of us in the dance, what Glăveanu (2011) calls a “we” paradigm. By supporting each other’s dance and offering positive feedback for the moments they notice and appreciate, the combined performance of small group dance sequences becomes a collaborative enterprise (Glăveanu, 2011).

Dance is potentially an inclusive type of learning once teachers recognize that there is no one way to dance and are open to the movement offerings of their children. Recognising children’s personal and movement culture is a part of inclusive practice. A starting point for more effective and achievable pedagogy and assessment in dance is to share the process of creating movement with children, acknowledging and using their ideas. This can be done during warm-up and movement exploration. Children and teachers stand in a circle or spread throughout the shared space. Use of variations of copying, including mirroring, shadowing, and following the leader, allow children to take the lead in offering and sharing movement ideas. The feedback is visual and physical. Following the leader, copying, and mirroring becomes part of feedback.

## **Kinaesthetic**

Dance is a form of physical learning for the teacher and student, and engagement is visible. Changing the pedagogy changes the relationship between teacher and student, and different issues have to be confronted, such as children talking to one another rather than to the teacher (Windschitl, 2002). Changing the pedagogy also means “Designing assessments to capture the learning [you] want to foster” (Windschitl, 2002, p.133). If the teacher physically places themselves in the space as part of the moving process they have the opportunity to gather and record childrens’ developing understandings and other capabilities, such as their collaboration and persistence. There is more opportunity to observe children and talk with them during learning than after. Taking more opportunities to assess children’s physical performances during teaching could help to avoid the negative impacts when assessment is separated from the experience of learning. The high stakes attached to summative assessment can dominate teacher decision-making.

The following account is based on a story told by a teacher, during a discussion about past experiences of dance in school settings. It shows the impact of dance on one child and the abject failure of the assessment culture to maximize that impact. The real life event, the sharing of the dance with the parents and school community, was deemed to be fun and a celebration, whereas assessment was important and to be taken seriously.

*At first he was reluctant, expressing his disinterest and dislike of dance. Gradually he was won over by the enjoyment of the physicality of the ‘Haka’ and the challenge of getting it right, spending hours practising at home. He had been turned around and was now mad about dance. The day came for the performance in front of school and parents. It was a huge success; the audience loved it, the performers*

*excelled. They were on a high from the excitement and being able to show off their dance.*

*As part of a unit of work in the Arts, the dance needed to be assessed, but how? The teachers were unsure, thinking they had to assess the techniques and skills alone. They organised follow up performances in small groups where children would be judged in front of a panel of teachers. Now it was different, the buzz was gone, they were being graded, and their performance suffered, their grades were disappointing. The joy and excitement were gone, he was devastated by his failure, and didn't want to know about or talk about dance anymore. If there were to be a next time, he would not be interested.*

After a learning experience that engaged previously disengaged students through an embodied expressive experience, a “once-off” summative assessment might be seen as a failure, a breaking of the trust established. There needs to be a focus upon the processes of creative skills development, rather than outcomes, as evidence suggests that “external pressures in terms of achievement or exhibition deadlines can tend to distort creative relationships in the classroom and hence disturb creative learning environments” (Davies et al., 2014, p.89). The excitement children feel about performing is often heightened when assessment is involved. Teachers need to ensure that children are aware that the process is important as well as the performance. A performance of year three children after a series of four dance lessons based on a nature theme was designed as a shared celebration. Parents were invited into the classroom to view the small dances devised by mixed groups of boys and girls. The performance culminated with a spontaneous moving spiral of all children, allowing parents an insight into the joyous and enthusiastic collaboration that had been instrumental in the creative process of the past four weeks.

Through dance there is an opportunity for children to develop their kinaesthetic understanding and skill, albeit in playful ways. Children can learn

the difference between movement and stillness and what it takes to maintain stillness or readiness to move and develop movement memory through dance games. Movement vocabulary can be extended and children can be challenged to develop flexibility, strength, and balance in group movement activities, as they collaborate to invent movements and devise dance not connected to any performative, stylistic, or gendered idea of skill, but to fundamental movement strategies that are useful in life in general. Video and photo documentation and shared reflection (Sansom, 2009) could support children in recognising and documenting their developing bodily control.

Tests or assessments that limit what is to be tested, cannot account for the complexity and diversity of student learning and behaviour (Achter, Benbow & Lubinski, 1997). This is in accordance with the various assessment models for creativity (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2010) and Warburton's (2002) call for a holistic model of dance assessment. Assessment should consider the particularities of the domain being assessed; it should be in context and should take place over time, not just at the end of the learning.

When it comes to assessment, without an understanding and mastery of inclusive and democratic approaches to dance (Buck & Rowe, 2015), teachers will tend to see it as a talent contest, where those with the natural talent or physical skill will outperform the rest. In the dance class, the elitist and individualist idea promulgated by media events such as, "So you think you can dance," need to be replaced with a more generous and supportive idea perhaps, "We think we can all dance."

*Daniel was small; he was identified by the teacher at the beginning, as one to watch, because he's "on the spectrum." At the end of the second dance lesson he was clearly glowing with enjoyment and achievement. The teacher called him over, "I really loved the way you used your whole body when you danced." He looked unsure, maybe not used to getting this type of compliment, maybe he had done*

*something wrong. Then it dawned, I did something right, he was clearly chuffed and went away with a bounce. On the day of the final lesson and dance assessment, he and his group of four girls, went into the back room to get changed into their 'costume,' he emerged looking a little shy, smiling with embarrassment, but it didn't stop him, he danced his dance, he was part of the group, he completed the task, it was an achievement, and an enjoyable one.*

Reflective tools such as video documentation, audience feedback, or self- and peer-reflection could be used to document and explore these physical embodied experiences of dance learning. Multi-modal approaches, such as video/photo documentation, recording children's creative conversations, drawing, and writing could be used to allow children to express their embodied learning in varied ways (Nielsen, 2009). Teachers can keep track of learning and engagement, using distanced forms of documentation such as checklists or matrices. Alternatively, it is an opportunity for conversations with children about their creative processes and how they go about making their decisions. Children could map their own progress using journals, blogs, or more structured forms such as feedback grids. These can list skills, actions, and dispositions using "I can" statements that are organized according to the task criteria, using progress indicators (Lilly et al., 2014).

A common theme in children's discussion about dance is the opportunity to learn through the body. An effective pedagogical strategy to take advantage of this preference for the kinesthetic is to begin the dance lesson with a group dance as a warm-up exercise, where communication is limited to gestures and hand signals. This strategy of "move first talk later" is powerful because many children seem to become engaged and excited by this sudden change from the typical routine. It seems to engage children, including some who resist dance, because "It disrupts a classroom culture that they have excelled in" (Atkinson & Scott, 2014). This strategy demonstrates the value of physical learning,

engagement, and participation as an important element of successful learning in dance.

### **The Imaginative**

An imaginative perspective values the expressive nature of learning in dance (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000). Assessment of dance should align with the theoretical basis of the curriculum documents, which position children as reflective artists. The major foci of *The Australian National Curriculum: The Arts* are content descriptions and achievement standards (ACARA, 2016b), including affective, intrinsic, and embodied experiences in dance (Hanna, 2008).

The learning elaborations include examples of learning experiences characterized by interaction and student construction of knowledge, based on experiential and creative learning. For example, the level statement for years three-four includes “explore and experiment with directions, time, dynamics and relationships using groupings, objects and props” and “explore meaning and interpretation, elements and forms including shapes and sequences of dances as they make and respond to dance” (ACARA, 2015b, par 2). Such a statement defies the certainties and limitations of summative assessment.

Warburton (2002, p.119) calls for a new conception of the dancer as “less a receptacle of collective wisdom and choreographic tradition and more a person engaged in mindful movement and creative inquiry.” This statement was not written with primary school children in mind, yet it is relevant, because creating dance is an inquiry into movement. Reflection gives teachers an insight into this inquiry and the “deep connections being made when we dance” (Leonard and McShane-Hellenbrand, 2012, p.86). Reflection is also an opportunity for children who have other skills such as writing or drawing to demonstrate their understanding of dance. Reflecting is not about having the right answer. It is an opportunity for children to learn about themselves by seeing how others think and solve problems. Participatory strategies such as

the use of mind mapping (Whyte et al., 2013) encourage children to make connections between “learning in dance” and “learning through dance.”

Building reflection into the flow of learning, thinking aloud, asking “what if” questions, and valuing children’s responses builds a greater understanding of symbolic representation and of meaning making (Fraser et al., 2009). Using a reflective guide could become a classroom ritual whereby thinking is made visible, expressed in drawing, writing, speaking, or dancing (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011). Using questions to encourage discussion and feedback that moves thinking forward can help to build children’s understanding of the process. In turn, this leads to the development of peer and self-assessment (Black, Buoncristiani & Wiliam, 2014). Teachers could include moments of sharing during dance lessons when pairs or small groups of children show their work in progress to another group. Teachers could invite children to pay attention to particular aspects of dance as they watch, but not in a proscriptive way, and then to share what they observed with their peers, thus modeling strategies for appreciating dance and furthering their understanding of how dance makes meaning.

Research in New Zealand showed that when asked about assessment standards, children’s answers are typified by conversations about experience and the point of learning (Bourke & Loveridge, 2014). When primary children in two schools were asked about dance they talked about the experience and what they learned, which often was the same as what they enjoyed. They described the dances they made. They had opinions about what dance was. They had opinions about how it could benefit or help you. They described the successes and achievements. The point of learning for these children seems to be the experience of it and this included:

- Collaboration;
- Movement;

- Having your own ideas;
- Getting over shame or embarrassment;
- Creating something yourself;
- Feeling good about yourself; and
- Learning something.

It might be that “children’s predilection for spontaneous artful behaviors allude to the possibility that they are likely interested in the act of art as much as they are interested in its products” (Blatt-Gross, 2013, p.10). As they interact with children doing a dance class, teachers can draw attention to the tools available for the development of ideas in dance without detracting from the experience. At the end of a warm-up, as a cool down and debrief, the teacher can describe, perhaps using visuals, what we have just done. For example, “Great warm-up, lots of energy, I saw you use all of the elements just then” or “Remember when we were doing this movement,” as you name and physically perform the movement and some of the changes, such as changing the level and describing how that seemed to change the feeling or expression, recalling what happened using physical examples, not as a lecture, but by thinking aloud about the process (Torzillo, 2015).

The inclusion of diverse forms of assessment is necessary to recapture the diversity of learning for individual children. Paying attention to the creative process throughout is a reminder that we are making art and developing ideas, not just coming up with a pre-determined end product.

### **Conclusion**

Collaborative, embodied, and creative learning in dance is best fostered by inclusive, engaging, and challenging pedagogies. The type of assessment that best captures this learning is assessment that happens as part of the learning process, using varied means to incorporate the diverse individual and collaborative experiences and achievements of children. The dilemma for the

teacher is to resolve the tension between formative and summative assessment (Harlen, 2005). Ideas about valuing experience, uncertainty, and diversity in process can seem nebulous, hard to pin down, and difficult to achieve. Yet within dance there are many opportunities for collecting evidence.

During the dance-making process, children explore movement ideas, select movements and movement phrases, vary and develop these into dance sequences, refine and share these dances, and then respond and reflect on the process and the arts product created. During this process children can:

- Be observed—memos, photos, video;
- Observe—drawings, blogs, recorded conversations;
- Create—dances, mind-maps, reflective responses;
- Perform—to familiar and un-familiar audiences; and
- Reflect—artwork, blogs, presentations, journals, manifestos.

In particular, working more collaboratively with children and using cooperative methods is an opportunity to use questioning and discussion in more conscious ways. The teacher can scaffold this process using think-alouds, modelled feedback, and by introducing reflective moments into the lesson using guides such as, “What did I see, think, wonder, and feel?” If allowed to be open ended, without the need to get it right, a shared culture of reflection can be established. Furthermore, individual and group reflections can be documented using multi-modal forms, as demonstrated in the examples above. Collecting some of these in a portfolio of work will be a record of the embodied exploration and involvement and the development and expression of ideas in dance.

Acknowledging the process of learning and valuing each child’s contribution, by collecting reflections and making learning visible, would be a relatively small change for a teacher, which could have big impacts on learners.

Assessment from this perspective fulfills its requirements for summative

grades, but gives more status to the value of “learning as we go.” It also emphasises the shifts in understanding and transformation of each child and their learning journey (Sansom, 2009). The use of formative assessment keeps open the possibility of uncertainty (Garrowin, cited in Thompson, 2015) in Dance education in the primary school. Making collaborative, embodied, and expressive learning more visible challenges the idea of a benchmark or standardized criteria for dance, while valuing the dance experience.

## **Chapter 9 - Dancing toward each other: Dance in the primary school classroom**

### **Introduction**

*There is a bit of insanity in dancing that does everybody a great deal of good. –*

*Edwin Denby*

**D**ance is tactile and kinaesthetic; it involves many kinds of thinking, both individual and collaborative. It is a space for fun and hard work; a kind of joyous resistance to the prevailing paradigm in education which is prescriptive and sedentary, bound to the desk, competitive and mediated by technologies (Hardy & Boyle, 2011; Lingard, 2010, Polesel, Rice, & Dulfer, 2013; Thwaites, 2011). In dance, there is an opportunity to explore the self, and the self in relation to others, through the body and in the body (Gard, 2003).

Dance is often taught in schools exclusively as social dance; but creative dance offers the opportunity to build personal and social capabilities (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA], 2008) from the ground up (Alito Allesi, pers comm August 29, 2015). Learning in dance is social, physical and expressive, as well as being an opportunity for physical exertion and the development of increased body awareness and control. Creative dance involves ‘meaning making’ (Wright, 2012), the intentional creating of symbolic expression through movement. Teaching dance in this way challenges traditional roles and relationships between teachers and children in primary school classrooms (Craft et al., 2013, Windschitl, 2002), as well as performative and gendered meanings associated with dance (Buck & Rowe, 2015). It is very different to the technical or craft approach that reduces dance to the functional mastery of a certain set of physical skills or techniques (Dimondstein, 1985).

Arts education, in Australia at least, has by default been relegated to a third space, where it can benefit the school when needed but otherwise sits outside what counts as learning. My experience in Dance education and research has highlighted the curious situation of dance. On the one hand dance exists on the edge of the accountability culture (Lingard, 2011). On the other, as a result of its marginalized status it has a kind of freedom, in a liminal space outside what normally counts as learning (Atkinson & Scott, 2014)(McArdle, 2008). This might be an opportunity to advocate for dance as a site for critical and creative thinking and moving. However, if dance is to take its place in school, some systemic challenges need to be overcome, including: the impact of neo-liberal policies on education; increasing use of technology in classrooms; and the outsourcing of dance.

A multiple embedded case study (Yin, 2013) exploring teacher and student experiences of dance in the primary classroom used diverse sources of and kinds of data (classroom observations, teacher interviews, and conversations, mind-mapping, video and photographic documentation) to build a picture of the impact of teaching and learning in dance. It reveals the potential of dance to be a 'somatic (Ross, 2000) to traditional art lessons, fitness programs or well-being projects. In Dance education, 'somatics' refers to the development of understanding and awareness of one's own movement, as opposed to learning a skill or technique (Hanna, 1988). The case of Dance education in primary schools, in particular dance that is taught according to the intent of the curriculum, was investigated to understand the nature of the dance experience for teachers and students.

The title of the chapter refers to the relational nature of learning in dance; a 'towardness', implying direction, progress and turning to. It also relates to the movement journey of both teacher and student as they discover dance. The implementation of dance by generalist teachers involves willingness to become co-learners with their students. In this interpretation, "the efforts of

teachers and students are defined as imaginative, innovative, and collaborative endeavours” (Connery and John-Steiner, 2012, p130). This requires a re-negotiation of “power relationships” and a change from “a telling to a learning orientation” (Klenowski, 2012, p.186). Teaching dance differently might be unsettling or de-stabilising , changing pedagogy changes the relationship between teacher and student, as different issues are confronted, such as students talking to one another rather than to the teacher (Windschitl, 2002). Yet change can bring “greater opportunities,” such as the ability “to move around the class more easily and the different classroom dynamic of getting down to the children’s level” (Atkinson & Scott, 2014, p.86).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Questions**

This chapter is based on a case study of Dance education in two Queensland primary schools and is framed by the question:

- How do students and teachers experience dance in their classroom?

The findings detailed in this chapter come from a significant body of data collected from two sites. At one school the first author taught as a visiting specialist teacher, having built an ongoing relationship with the school and teachers (Snook & Buck, 2014). Classes were observed, and focus group interviews conducted with children. In a second iteration at this site, observations were followed by guided reflection, discussion and mind-mapping (Whyte et al., 2013). In addition, responses to a guided reflection were gathered from three other teachers who had taught or observed these units of work with their students. At another school, observation and video documentation of dance classes were conducted over two school terms; individual teacher interviews, small group and whole class interviews were conducted and children’s reflective writing and drawing collected. The research also charts the personal teaching journey of the first author, in line

with a self-study methodology that regards research as an extension of the researchers' life (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010).

The research takes an ontological stance, that recognizes the body as an active contributor in thinking and interpreting and values the body's ability to make meaning (Foster, 1995). In contrast are the impacts on education of technologies that lead to a “repelling of the ‘real’ or physical world . . . producing a distancing . . . impacting not only on our spatio-temporal actions ‘in-the-world’ but also on our emotional ‘with-the-world’ and ‘with-others-in-the-world’” (Thwaites, 2011, p.4). Therefore, observations and videos of children dancing form an important part of the data that tell the story of dance.

Data were analysed using a socio-kin-aesthetic theoretical framework that includes the relational, physical and expressive aspects of learning. The socio-kin-aesthetic framework values the central role of relationships within the dance class (Buck, 2009); seeks to bridge the divide between body and mind (Bresler, 2004) and places importance on the expansion of a child's perceptive and expressive capabilities through education. Childrens' and teachers' written and spoken responses to dance and video documentation of dances and dance making were examined to seek their understanding about each of these aspects. Student and teacher descriptions and narratives about dance were further considered in the light of recent or current pedagogic approaches to the teaching of dance in primary schools in Queensland, Australia.

Two methods of encoding and presenting the data are used in this chapter: InVivo and Holistic (Saldaña, 2012). InVivo coding uses the direct language of participants as codes (Saldana, 2012) as a way of foregrounding their perspective. Children's words are combined to present a picture of their thinking; echoing the rhythms and patterns of their written and spoken responses “that may not be reflected in the often sparse language expressed by an individual child or in a single instance” (Bond & Stinson, 2000, p.55). Holistic coding is a ‘broad brush approach’ suited to revealing the essence of

the varied examples of ‘self-standing’ data such as the anecdotes from the first author’s collection of dance teaching stories (Saldaña, 2012).

## **Background**

The situation of dance in education is threatened by broader changes taking place in education in globalized times and the effects these changes have had on pedagogic practices (Ward, 2012). These changes include: the impacts of neo-liberal agendas, technology and the outsourcing of Dance education. A strength of dance is its potential to enhance children’s collaborative, physical and creative skills and understandings. Yet this is also a challenge. Teachers and students may associate the architecture of the classroom with “the idea of structured learning” and find the open space and freedom of movement in dance classes confronting (Atkinson and Scott, 2014, p.85).

### **Impacts of Neo Liberal Agendas**

Neo-liberal agendas worldwide have constrained education; conflating teaching, learning and assessment and providing a pedagogic paradigm of instructive teaching that has drained it of its professionalism (Connell, 2009). This has implications for Arts education in primary schools, as instructive teaching methods form the basis of most school-wide pedagogic frameworks, required in schools (Conway & Abawi, 2013).

External, high-stakes testing seems to have the effect of shrinking the available time for the arts (Ewing, 2012). In Australia this is the case in many schools where literacy and numeracy account for the majority of the school week (QSA, 2011). Teachers are mandated to use a particular pedagogic approach across the curriculum including in the arts. This is a threat to the more student-centred, participatory and constructivist approaches common in arts classrooms (Holland & O’Connor, 2004).

## **Impacts of Technology**

A very powerful orthodoxy in education today is that education needs to adapt to the inevitable and embrace the educative potential of technologies (Buchanan, 2011; Postman, 2011; Facer, 2011). The idea that, “teaching is not effective without the appropriate use of information and communication technologies (ICT) resources to facilitate student learning” (Ertmer, 2010, p.278), has been incorporated into the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Romeo, Lloyd & Downes, 2013). In Australia as in the UK, the “raising of standards” of teaching and learning has become synonymous with the use of ICTs” (Watson, 2001). This had led to a concern that the body and its movements will become even more constrained, with classrooms dedicated to the improvement of test results and the production of ‘good data’ (Connell, 2009; Ball, 2000).

Literature in Dance, Arts in general, Physical Education, Environmental and Place-based Education warn of a potential narrowing of education, as it becomes more desk-bound and constrained by accountability. If children need to move to learn (Ainley, Banks, & Fleming, 2002; Kentel & Dobson, 2007; Leonard, Hall & Herro, 2015; Somerville & Green, 2011) then dance can provide that space. As Lakoff and Johnstone propose, it is through our movements in the world that we categorise and structure our understanding of that world and the concepts that organise it (1999). There is evidence that it is attention in particular, as a disposition, that is being reduced by over-use of technology (Greenfield, 2004), which is precisely the disposition or type of thinking that brain research shows is enhanced in dance (Grafton, 2009).

The easy availability of technology has enabled the teaching of dance, albeit in non-challenging and reductive ways; further establishing it as extra-curricular activity. A popular approach that is gaining ground is the use of online video programs, which require little planning or consideration by the teacher (Fitzgerald, 2012). Using an interactive white board or video projector,

students watch and copy the dance sequence on the screen. This strategy is often used as a transition activity; an opportunity to physically release students and get them ready for another bout of desk-work, or as a reward. Anecdotal comments from pre-service teachers, along with the literature, confirm that teachers use this approach (Maher, Phelps, Urane & Lee, 2012) because of their lack of confidence, stemming from performative understanding of dance (Buck, 2003). If teachers believe that dance is about the acquisition of technical skills and re-creative learning of teacher-designed choreography, or in many cases choreography copied from internet sites, they might believe that they don't have the skills to teach dance (Buck, 2003). A focus on skills and particular dance techniques can be a divisive and exclusionary approach, favouring children who attend dance classes outside school. An open-ended approach, that focuses on meaning-making, can include and connect with all students, whatever their training or experience (Gard, 2003; Trotman, 2005; Meiners & Garrett, 2015).

### **Outsourcing Dance**

There are also concerns about the takeover of education by private providers (Powell, 2014; Etherington, 2008). In Australian and New Zealand primary schools, outsourcing is changing the way Health and Physical Education is provided in schools (Leonard, Evans & Davies, 2014). Since many of the providers include dance in their offerings, some schools and principals have been 'ticking the arts/dance box' by outsourcing (Dance Fever, 2013). In North Queensland, Australia, private providers have become a popular choice as a means of implementing Dance education in the classroom. The nexus between the provider and the schools has been further tightened through sponsorship of professional associations (Early Childhood Teachers Association [ECTA], 2015; Australian Primary Principals Association [APPA], 2015).

Unfortunately, these outsourced programs are based on a more 'functional' purpose of dance and do not teach dance as a creative process, incorporating student's unique ideas and expressions. Dance, if taught as intended by the curriculum however, positions children as artists and audiences; foregrounding the primacy of making dance (Schiller, 2003). The assumptions of outsourced programs, dominated by Eurocentric dance techniques and social constructions of dance, are unable to take account of the life experiences of children and young people (Meiners & Garrett, 2015). Outsourcing is also a missed opportunity for the teacher to learn more about and with the children in their care, by participating with them in embodied expression, and for teachers to expand their understandings of the potential of their diverse individual students in a different context (Buck, 2003).

### **Learning in Dance**

According to Hanna "All youngsters may benefit from the creative process of dance making and dance-viewing and learn to 'write' and read the non-verbal, which is critical to human survival" (2008, p.95). Learning in dance is physical, social and expressive; it is about connection. The following sections explore the socio-cultural, embodied and creative aspects of Dance education.

#### **Socio-cultural – Connecting to each other**

Students might not have the skills for collaboration, but when "they are encouraged to explore movement concepts through structured improvisation, creative problem solving, sharing, responding and reflecting" they "take ownership of their learning and shared meanings are constructed" (Melchior, 2011). In creative dance, students practice a range of ways to make dance, including: individually within a whole class, in pairs and in small groups. Collaborative skills are advanced as students create and solve choreographic problems (Minton, 2007). As students work together to refine work, they further develop their observation and attention (Lord, 2001). When students

engage in structured improvisation exercises (akin to co-construction of texts); practice and then share their work; they also develop physical alertness and confidence, as they tune into each other in dance (Chappell, 2007). Simple dance structures, activities and tasks based on copying (mirroring and shadowing, follow the leader, call and response) are an opportunity for the teacher to share the creative process.

The most commonly used approaches to teaching dance are teacher directed (Fraser et al., 2007), which not only misses the opportunity for children to construct their own understandings, but puts pressure on the teacher as the fount of all knowledge (Buck, 2003). An alternative approach balances structure with improvisation as appropriate, resulting in a more responsive pedagogy (Burnard & Dragovic, 2014). Rather than relying on “teacher as model” or “student as imitator” (Ashley, 2005, p.10), collaborative strategies utilise the contributions of students and teachers.

The experience of co-creating dance with children can help to change teachers’ foundational understandings of important threshold concepts, including more inclusive definitions of dance and the dancer (Buck & Rowe, 2015). The collaborative processes in ‘creative dance’ favour inclusion. According to state and national quality frameworks, teachers in Queensland are bound to foster inclusive practices in their classrooms (Berlach & Chambers, 2011). Creative dance is inclusive because all children, no matter their experience or physical ability, can participate and contribute. Therefore teachers need to be attuned somewhat to the potential in even the most minimal offering; to offer the possibility of success and completion of the task, and to encourage enjoyment in the act of being physical and creative with peers, through choice and challenge (Antilla, 2010).

Principals and teachers have responded positively to the success of outsourced programs in social dance, commending the programs for having “brought the spirit of our school together” or for “producing a high quality product that is

affordable and accessible to all students” (Dance Fever, 2014). Yet in a creative dance class, the impacts are more diverse and cater more for diversity (Amans, 2008). Individuals experience dance differently and therefore there are many unique achievements and breakthroughs. At the same time, there is a sense of achievement and joy (Bond, 2009), discovered by the group when they work collaboratively on a creative process. The group dynamic and feeling of unity is built from the ground up, in that class and by that class.

The researcher’s journal documents the small steps as well as the big leaps for a cohort of eight year olds. Despite a short time frame for creation and rehearsal, a joyous dance performance was given by the whole cohort of four classes. As each class performed, they exhibited a cohesion that belied both their inexperience and the time allocated to the creative process. Each class performed shared movements or explored shared movement images such as moving through the space as if through a cave by twisting and crawling, ducking and climbing, or running in a long curving line like a river. Individual children, with varied talents, differently abled bodies, or levels of confidence, took their own moment to shine, spinning like a leaf in a canon down a line of students, or moving as if diving and swimming in a fast rapid, while standing on a large sheet of silk, imagined as water. Teachers can encourage children to work together creatively by using clear dance tasks and structures to ensure collaboration and enable students to establish their own learning interactions and become self-motivated and directed learners. Collaboration and expressiveness does not just come naturally to all, but it can be learned gradually, as confidence grows.

### **Embodied – connecting to the physical**

In the dance classroom the teacher student interaction is transparent; stripped back to its essence without the props and ephemera of a classroom. “The desk as a technology for learning is a contrivance aimed at controlling movement and attention in whichever setting it inhabits. As such, it points to the premise

underlying education in many cultures: to learn we must be still” (Kentel & Dobson, 2007). However, without reference to the screen and an ideal to copy or follow, there is the opportunity for the creation of original and personal movement vocabularies and through collaborative pedagogy the development of a group movement vocabulary and learning that is driven by a ‘we’ paradigm (Glăveanu, 2014).

Children sometimes resist dance because it disrupts a classroom culture in which they have excelled, especially when teachers focus on explicit teaching of dance elements; during which time they have to sit on the floor and do written work that would be easier done at a desk (Atkinson & Scott, 2014). The pedagogic strategy of ‘move first, talk later’ is powerful because many children seem to become engaged and excited by this sudden change from “business as usual’ (Torzillo, 2015). Allowing children to ‘play’ with dance ideas engages the mind as well as the whole body since play is a cognitive process (Vygotsky, 1978).

Dance is akin to the form of physical activity young people prefer outside the formal school curricula (Hunter & Macdonald, 2005). Research supports the view that students enjoy learning kinaesthetically (Sparkes, 2007). Because dance is fun, active, challenging and free, students gain skills and connect to an approach to dance with which they would not normally come into contact. Neuro-science has demonstrated the ‘importance of including physical learning in the classroom; to stimulate creativity, increase motivation and bolster social intelligence” (Grafton, 2009, p.1).

The structured school day may be the only period of time in a child’s life when she or he might be introduced to the sort of active unstructured play . . . [that] engages the whole individual. Rather than removing periods of free play from formal education, we should focus on preserving and extending this valuable time. (Kentel & Dobson, 2007, p.146)

Dance has the potential to be liberating and empowering because it is an opportunity for students to exercise agency and experience pleasure and control in physical activity (Wellard, Pickard, & Bailey, 2007). Children and young people have spoken of the fun, pleasure and experiences of the ‘superordinary’ that they get from dance (Bond & Stinson, 2000). This is because it is physical and so is able to engage the kinaesthetic learner, and increase all students’ understanding of non-verbal communication. There is evidence that children enjoy dance and it appears that “happiness also makes us more disposed to engage in creative endeavour, which is itself another source of fulfillment” (Scoffham & Barnes, 2011, [p.1). Students will engage in tasks they find interesting, challenging and important (Bond & Stinson, 2007; Holland & O’Connor, 2004; Zyngier, 2007; Fullarton, 2002).

### **Creative – connecting to the expressive**

Confidence in the movement of the body is enhanced in creative dance because it is based on personal and idiosyncratic movements and translations of movement. The teacher’s job is not to enforce a particular style or technique, but to encourage creative responses. This is not to say that the teacher at the same time should not encourage safe practice and incorporate movement tasks, games and activities that help children to develop fundamental movement skills, strength, balance, coordination and body awareness (Cameron,1986).

When teachers aim for creative teaching, tensions and dilemmas are inevitable (Chappell, 2007; Fraser et al., 2009). Qualitative research in the UK uncovered the teaching practice of expert specialist dance teachers working in primary/elementary schools. The findings show that the important feature of the teaching lay in its flexibility and the teachers’ ability to tune into the students and the context in order to establish the right conditions for creative learning; where students were provided with enough information and structure as well as enough freedom to create (Chappell, 2007). In Arts learning

contexts teachers are able to utilise pedagogical approaches as needed, without being limited to constructivist or teacher-centred methods. In a way, they are subverting the binaries of control or freedom normally associated with academic learning, as opposed to learning in the Arts (Resnick, 2007).

Choice, freedom and agency are important to children. Children gain self-esteem when they are empowered through “supportive statements” and “decision-making” (Burnard & Dragovic, 2014, p.354) and this enhances their well-being. Opportunities to ‘play’ with ideas in dance can contribute to positive self-perception, body image, and esteem (Hanna, 2008). They also enhance health and holistic well-being offering “agentic experiences” in supportive social contexts, as “crucial protective elements mediating children's socio-emotional well-being” (Kumpulainen et al., 2013, p.1). Nonetheless, children need support to handle the unfamiliar freedoms of the dance class. Creative dance and constructivist approaches to dance do not mean that teachers abandon their responsibility to protect and manage the dialogue and the interaction that results (Buck, 2003), as well as supporting their students to look critically at their own and others’ dance (Stinson, 2010).

### **Findings**

Teachers value the opportunity for creative expression, physical learning and collaborative problem solving. Students value dance for its difference to the rest of their schooling. In dance, students experience learning physically; they appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively, the choice and challenge of dance and the opportunity to escape from the strictures of the regular classroom. Observations of classrooms, along with collections of children’s words and writing, demonstrate what engages children and how teachers can design learning to engage them. Their words and anecdotes have been collated below, according to the three perspectives of the socio-kin-aesthetic framework; relating to the socio-cultural, embodied and expressive aspects of Dance education and the experiences of children and teachers.

## Socio-cultural

When three groups of children talked about dance and what was important in dance, choice and freedom were strong themes. This relates to notions of agency and the honouring of the dance in each child (Sansom, 2009). Buck and Rowe (2015) introduce the idea of threshold concepts, the foundation needed to build further understandings. In Dance education, threshold concepts include that everyone can dance; that there is no one truth about dance; and that every dance idea matters (Buck & Rowe, 2015) When children are allowed to create their own dance, working in self-selected groups they can connect to their life-worlds, experiences, cultural values and personal tastes, and reflect the group/class identity as a group of dancers collaborating and joining together using shared movement vocabularies, tastes and styles:

*What about choice?*

*Everyone has a choice, if there's no choice, its like the rules, you have to do it, but if there's a choice its easier,*

*You get to:*

*Choose your own group*

*Choose your own moves*

*Make up your own dance*

*Freedom, because when you're making up a dance you need freedom,*

*Because if you don't have freedom, like you're just doing something you don't want to do and if you like dancing you should be able to do it with freedom*

*This word 'freedom' is because all our dance moves that we did, to me it felt like we were free and we were doing such good dancing*

In dance the freedom 'comes with the territory', because children are released from the restrictions of the desk and the 'choreography of the classroom'

(Bresler, 2004). The physical, embodied nature of the learning appeals to them, as it is different to the sedentary learning they experience elsewhere.

A group of children, who were to do a creative dance program, were adamant that they did not want to, this was based on their last dance experience, in which they learned a traditional Australian social dance or 'bush dance'. After the first creative dance lesson, they rushed to tell their teacher about the experience, which was nothing like their expectations.

When talking about what was achieved in dance or what they learned first person plural is often employed to suggest that it was a group effort. Fun is had together:

*We spent so much time in the first couple of weeks learning variations and then at the end we did like our own dancing, so we didn't need as much time because we had better knowledge of what we needed*

*My group worked really well and we all worked as a team and came up with ideas and added to them and I enjoyed spending time with people*

*I liked making up the moves with my group*

Children appreciate the chance to work with friends, despite the difficulties that may present:

*You like working with your friends, everyone agreeing*

*Yeah cause you get to share ideas with each other*

*You can learn what other people do,*

*You make decisions by trying them out*

*One person says something and the other person adds on*

*It was really hard for my group, because we wanted to express what we wanted to believe, cause you couldn't talk you just had to do the moves*

*Sometimes you have to vote*

*It's hard*

*Dancing with people you don't used to dancing with*

*With people you don't know, like they're not comfortable like touching each other*

*The difficult thing about dance is that people might not like the comfortable moves of dance*

*People might not like the groups they are with*

A note in the research journal described the way that boys seemed to enjoy this opportunity to work with each other in a physical way. There was physical contact, but it was not competitive or aggressive. According to a female student in a Year Four class:

*Yeah, like most people in our class think that dance is just for girls, but it's for boys as well*

*Like Jo he wasn't too enthusiastic about dancing, but then once he added to a group of boys he was happy, he was happy being around boys.*

The researcher's journal describes how dance was an extension of friendship and camaraderie for one group of Year Four boys (9 year olds).

*The group of boys came to find me in the staff room, "can we practice again at lunchtime". The group had now grown, from its original 8, to include a couple of extra performers, some intending directors and a few side-kicks. The dance story they were creating was a narrative, but one created as it was being made. The story kept evolving, a movement or tableau looked effective or worked physically and so it was incorporated. These boys had plenty to do at lunchtime, they weren't the ones who would spend their time in the library reading or playing board games, but yet they kept coming back to practice and create their dance. Their usual lunchtime activity was sport, but this*

*was more than sport, because it allowed them to be expressive and to collaborate in a non-competitive way. It wasn't to be performed in a formal context, it was just for them.*

Collaboration, teamwork and sharing are important; children believe it makes the creative process easier and more enjoyable. Learning how to work together is also offered as a benefit of, or an instrumental value of dance.

*It would give you more encouragement in a group,*

*I liked working with a group and being active and physical and I liked learning more about dance, because me and my friends do dances and now we can use some of the ideas and the different words*

*Working in a team makes creating dance easier, too:*

*Teamwork, cause if you don't have teamwork you're 'gonna' collapse and you're 'gonna' get bored*

*Teamwork and sharing go together, because when you're doing something in a group you're sharing together If there are two really creative people in a group, they might both have a different idea, and then you could put that together, but if you are by yourself then you couldn't do that.*

### **Embodied**

The increasing limits on children's freedom of movement, at home and school, is one of the best arguments in favour of dance in schools, where all students can benefit from learning through movement, not just those whose parents have the wherewithal to organize and pay for outside classes. Students notice the difference:

*Learning in dance is different to learning in other subjects*

*Cause you physically do the thing you learn*

*Maybe cause you don't have to sit down so much and in Maths it's pretty boring*

*Sitting down and writing*

*You get to move more*

*You have more fun*

*You kind of, like if you feel embarrassed dancing helps, cos once you get into it, you're not embarrassed.*

*I've seen that happen actually*

*Can something that you do be fun and serious at the same time?*

*Yes, Yes, Yes*

*Dance can be an outlet*

*You could let your emotions out*

*Like if you're angry and you want to punch something just go boom boom (does a sort of punching gesture)*

*And that's fair like a dance battle*

### **Expressive**

Dance is based in the physical body and the physical world but yet like experiential learning it combines: experience, perception, cognition and behavior. "Learning is the process by which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2014, p.38).

The dances made by children might not fit the ordered or decorative aesthetic with which teachers are familiar (Message, 2009), and the final products cannot always be contained by outcomes statements desired by educational systems (Anttila, 2007a). A class of children made dances based on an initial stimulus of a poem written by a 12 year old, to interpret metaphors of reconciliation expressed as images of the Australian landscape. After much

playful exploration as a whole class they formed groups to devise their own dance, producing many variations each with its own 'take' on the original stimulus idea. One group had strongly connected to the theme of storytelling:

*We were sort of like aboriginals and we were making up the story and making up the dances to go with the story*

*Another just enjoyed the opportunity to work in a self-selected group:*

*My group worked really well and we all worked as a team and came up with ideas and added to them and I enjoyed spending time with people*

Another group evolved their own collection of personal and group narratives and images to tell a story about their relationship to 'being Australian':

*Well we were doing a story and we used our own sport football and we had to catch the ball, while the boys kicked it and then we made a whole bunch of waterfalls and hatched out of eggs like birds and stuff*

An anecdote from an accidental dance interaction is a micro example of what is possible using a creative dance approach. At present dance is rarely part of the day to day programs, fitted in here and there, to entertain or exercise children or to produce a dance event. An example of the latter is aerobic dance or bush dance taught as part of Smart Moves, a fitness program introduced into Education Queensland schools as a means of addressing obesity and physical inactivity in children (Macdonald, Hay, & Williams, 2008). In the case of the anecdote, a parent taught the lesson, while teachers focused on management and jollyng students along;

*We were part of a huge group maybe 300 children and some teachers learning and repeating a simplified progressive bush or folk dance. I was there as an observer, with a group of visiting student teachers from overseas, I had another relevant role, lecturer and tutor in pre-service Arts education. As a leftover I was called in to be the partner*

*of an unwilling child. He was looking very unhappy, limiting his participation to standing in more or less the correct spot and moving in more or less the right direction.*

*We started off together following the 'rules'. Then I started to sneak in a couple of little modifications to our partner dance, a high five here, a shuffle there, a little bit of taking the 'mickey', a bit of personal interpretation. He started to smile and put energy into the dance, adding his own touches and moves to the structure we had been given. He got the message, that just for us two at least, the rules could be bent somewhat, as long as we more or less ended up fitting in with everyone else. What was it that had engaged him? In the beginning he was only taking part because he had to. Then the relationship - the opportunity to add meaning to the dance - a small moment and not groundbreaking - **but yet** significant. His attitude went from avoidance and disengagement, expressed through his downcast body language and posture, to enjoyment and engagement expressed through relaxed posture, energetic movement, smiles and involvement.*

The significant idea here for Dance education, is that the student was positioned as the empty vessel (Tolonen & Sampson, 2014). The parent/teacher was the expert and the teachers the experts on how to behave while dancing. Once the child was “allowed” to improvise s/he began to play with and between the unknown (the bush dance) and the known (the variations we were making and adding). It reminded me of the comment of a Year Four student (9 yr old):

*Students might not know as much as adults, so they might have more fun than if they already knew it.*

This is the launch into the unknown that the arts invite (Eisner 2002); a dance between structure and improvisation. This opportunity transformed the experience for that child and showed what was possible beyond the reductive skills based 'social dance' program. The anecdote also illustrates the

connection between emotions, creativity and well-being (Scoffham & Barnes, 2011). Stories from teachers and my own observations show that dance supports children's wellbeing in many ways. Within the broader picture of the joy and engagement of children in a dance class, there are many small stories.

Of course dance is not for everyone (Gard, 2003) and things don't always go as the teacher or student planned; anyone might struggle with shyness or feeling inferior, or lack control over circumstances. Teachers aren't always able to skillfully manage everyone's feelings and fully support students in creative practice without their own bodily experience (Buck, 2003). The outside world of the class sometimes intrudes into the dance space and this brings management issues, embarrassment or shame. Emotions are a little considered aspect of teaching and learning. Emotion has also been a neglected dimension of the process of educational change, as it influences teachers' resilience and willingness to implement curriculum reforms (Hargreaves, 1988).

The teacher observed over two terms, found support from the researcher to allow some space for children's' own ideas and was able to moderate her expectations, producing pleasing and often unexpected results. She described the solution of one group of boys who usually struggled with literacy and learning:

*T-But they came up with that by themselves, they couldn't think of an idea so what they decided to do was they played a follow the leader game and taking turns at doing moves and the other would copy, but he was strong and the other two were copying him*

*R –they came up with a solution*

*T – yeah all by themselves, I didn't help them and they're so proud of themselves, proud that they did all this*

When teachers take time to really attend to what is going on when their students are creating dance, they notice all sorts of things. They are often surprised and pleased at what they see:

It is possible to see the difference between the management of the learning by this teacher, new to dance and the more open and relational quality of compelling Dance education. Yet some key themes appear in both settings: the enjoyment of the physical, the appreciation of choice, the importance of collaboration and the recognition of creativity in regards to dance making.

Creative and open-ended approaches offer opportunity for diverse responses and individual and collaborative engagement, compared to the singular vision or prescribed skill set found within a commercial dance package or 'one-size fits all' technological application (Anttila, 2010, p.16),

### **Conclusion**

The benefits of teaching dance as creative practice are many. Dance education goes beyond just aesthetic education or skills and concepts, but includes "concentration, focus, self-discipline, working hard to achieve a goal, being your own teacher, being fully alive and present, problem solving, making connections, seeing relationships, collaboration" (Stinson, 2010, p.142). The words and movements of children demonstrate that through dance they learn in varied and important ways (Anttila, 2010).

A creative dance approach does not require costly resources, only space and possibly some music. The teacher does not need to be a dancer to teach dance, but given the experience of creating dance themselves, using basic choreographic tools, they can collaborate with children to create dances (Ashley, 2005). Teaching dance will be more achievable for teachers if they understand that it can be based on the students's own ideas (Ashley, 2005). Dance does require energy on the part of the teacher to participate enthusiastically, and a willingness to share responsibility for idea creation with

children. However a modest approach using simple improvisational structures based on copying and accumulation of movements provides freedom within a supportive scaffold.

Dance can be more than just an opportunity for physical fitness training; more than just aesthetic education; more than just team building; more than just learning how to fit in. In dance, engagement is visible when students are active, challenged and energized and their own creativity is being fostered. Dance could be a means of discovering more about the self, wrapped up in an expressive, physical, collaborative and enjoyable package. Children value relationships and the acceptance of their own dance ideas. If teachers hand over the responsibility for teaching dance to an outside provider or interactive whiteboard, they also miss out on the opportunity to learn with and about their students, and to make connections to learning in the broader sense.

Dance has been the least taught of all the art-forms, in Australian primary schools. At a time when the curriculum is being constrained by the pressure of performative agendas and the movement of children restricted, it seems even more necessary.

*With so much environmental degradation, human isolation, and body-numbing technology in our lives, why not recognize and employ dance as a part of the positive, healing, embodying side of the world's equation. (Enghauser, 2007, p.89)*

## Reflecting – STAND BACK

Chapter 10 - Trust and Witnessing: Lessons for Dance Education  
/Professional Development in Community

The author experienced the work of the community-based dance company Dance Exchange during a summer institute in the United States in 2013. For a teacher of dance in a relatively isolated regional town, taking part in the summer institute was a rare opportunity to nourish creative inspiration and a reminder of the importance of the collaborative creative process and the embodied experience within Dance education. It also enriched my understanding of dance as research, an important inspiration for my pedagogic framework.

This chapter is a reflection of that experience and on the broader possibilities for professional development available within the community cultural development and participatory arts sector. Community cultural organisations and projects use inclusive models of teaching and facilitation (Amans, 2008). This has implications for the teaching of Dance education in classrooms in Australia that are characterized by diversity.



## **Chapter 10 - Trust and Witnessing: Lessons for dance education/Professional development in community**

*The paper 'Trust and Witnessing: Lessons for dance education' was published in Learning Landscapes in 2015*

### **Introduction**

I work as a dance specialist teaching creative dance in primary schools in regional Queensland, Australia, a geographical area with few Arts specialists. I also teach the Arts in pre-service teacher education and am a postgraduate student myself. Operating very much in isolation in my area of study means there are limited opportunities to network with colleagues and develop my professional practice. While there are many successful secondary dance programs here, there is very little Dance education occurring in primary school education and rarely does it align with the curriculum, which actually foregrounds critical and creative thinking by positioning children and young people as artists (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2016a).

Generalist classroom teachers who teach the arts do so often with limited or no knowledge of arts pedagogy. When there are no possibilities for professional development within the school (Hardy, 2012; Lowrie, 2014; Mockler, 2015; Thompson & Harbaugh, 2015), and what is provided by education systems is limited to online digital objects, teachers might have to undertake their own professional development in the community. When teachers elect to challenge the system by choosing their own professional development path, it can become a political act (Kincheloe, 2003).

Under performative agendas, professional development for teachers in Australia has become a means of satisfying external accountability measures and enforcing systemic priorities (Lingard, 2011), and may be implicit in the narrowing of pedagogic possibilities (Tuinamuana, 2011). As an arts educator, however, it is important to nurture the self, to apply aesthetic values “to one's

life, one's existence” (Fornet-Betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Muller, & Gauthier, 1987, p.362), and therefore to move beyond accountability to responsibility (Leonard, 2015).

In 2013, I took the opportunity to strengthen my own professional values and skills and to refresh my passion for and commitment to dance, by participating in the Dance Exchange Summer Institute as a student. The experience highlighted for me the relationship between the various roles I play. All of these roles, whether as dance educator, pre-service educator, community artist, dancer or researcher, support each other. I was keenly aware during the Summer Institute of all these roles, their different impacts on my practice, and the importance of both practice and research to teaching (Beauchamp, Clarke, Hulme, & Murray, 2015). I have spent many years teaching and learning in Community Arts settings, where I witnessed its transformative effects on adults and children alike, due in large part to its collaborative and inclusive nature (Buys & Miller, 2009; Selkrig, 2011). This is in line with the commitment of leading Australian and international dance scholars and practitioners to a socially just pedagogy in dance (Meiners, 2014). In this chapter I explore the experience of the summer institute as artistic, professional and research opportunity that would contribute to the design of a pedagogic framework for teaching dance in the primary school.

### **Professional development – Arts Education**

A study of the professional development experiences of arts educators led to the design of a matrix as a tool for analyzing and predicting the impact those experiences would have on teacher transformation (Upitis, Smithrim, & Soren, 1999). The matrix describes the features of professional development experiences at three levels. The third level is suggested as meeting the conditions for profound and long-lasting change. The first level is all about feeding the self, becoming part of a community of artists, making art and taking risks, exactly what we ask of our students. The second level comes into

play when teachers develop enhanced or changed images of the value of the arts to children and in the curriculum. The third level has an impact on the teacher's personal and professional life, such that major changes are made to their own involvement in the arts and a more pro-active approach taken to consolidating and renewing their teaching practice (Upitis et al., 1999).

The Dance Exchange Summer Institute was not designed for teachers, it did not deal directly with pedagogy, curriculum and assessment relevant to school teaching. However, it provided a high level of input at the first level: the nurturing of the self. While I have a strong artistic core around which my personal and teaching life is grounded, it is this first level - the nurturing of self, where I am lacking. As well, the summer institute awakened "a feeling of community, encouraged the taking of personal risks and the "the creation of public artifacts" (Upitis et al., 1999, p.27). It was a rich experience because of the way that practical movement work was driven by an aesthetic of inquiry, in which dance is seen as a social and political act that "dissolves binary categories and in its place creates new room for art-making that incorporates "tolerance, generosity [and] nimbleness" (Cash, 2011, p.1). Therefore the ways of working were in line with a view of Dance education that values communal creativity and is based on a 'we' paradigm, rather than a competitive skills based model (Chappell, 2008; Glăveanu, 2014).

### **Dance Education in the Curriculum**

Current meanings of 'Dance education' in Australian primary education are diverse. This is because the way dance is taught in primary schools, or whether it is taught at all, varies enormously across and within states and school systems. It is timely to consider the value of dance in education and the meanings it could have within the new Australian National Arts Curriculum (ACARA, 2016c). The curriculum makes clear the primacy of the creative process in arts learning, with two key organizing strands 'making and responding' (, 2015). This is in line with the philosophies and frameworks that

first inspired the development of most dance curriculum and syllabi in Dance education throughout the world (Laban, 1988). How dance can and should take its place within Arts education more generally, and in the curriculum as a whole, is the subject of much discussion and debate among dance educators, researchers and practitioners (Dundas, 2015). When this chapter was being written the curriculum materials had gone online, but implantation lagged behind. ACARA has set an “entitlement” that The Arts should be taught but not necessarily in every year. In this way, so it is ultimately the responsibility of schools acting within jurisdictional requirements to decide when, how and what Arts will be taught (Queensland Studies Authority [QSA] (2011).

In Queensland, Australia, generalist classroom teachers of primary school (years 1-6) and music specialists will be called upon to enact this intended curriculum. This may ultimately favour a more inclusive approach to Dance education. Whereas an artist in residence model gives precedence to the ‘gifted and talented’ by apprenticing them to a ‘gifted dancer’ the remit of the classroom teacher is to ‘seek the potential in each person” (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2009). The national curriculum makes clear the relationship between making and responding, and the possibility of collaborating with children to co-construct dance.

*Making and Responding* are intrinsically connected. Together they provide students with knowledge, understanding and skills as artists, performers and audience and develop students’ skills in critical and creative thinking. As students make artworks they actively respond to their developing artwork and the artworks of others; as students respond to artworks they draw on the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired through their experiences in making artworks. (ACARA, 2015)

A social constructivist approach is a suitable framework for authentic and productive learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Dance, if taught as intended by the curriculum positions children as artists and audiences; foregrounding the

primacy of making dance (Schiller & Meiners, 2003) . Dance empowers, when it is taught as a creative process, incorporating student’s unique ideas and expressions and taking account of their life worlds and experiences (Meiners, 2014). According to state and national quality frameworks, teachers in Queensland are bound to foster inclusive practices in their classrooms (Berlach & Chambers, 2011). Community dance could therefore provide a source of inspiration for Dance education because it is based on “‘process-oriented values’, including: “a focus on participants; collaborative relationships; inclusive practice; opportunities for positive experiences and celebration of diversity” (Amans, 2008, p.10), It is therefore an accessible and relevant site for professional development of arts educators in the absence of any face to face learning offered by systems. For teachers, it is an opportunity to experience the embodied expression of dance and collaborative creativity for themselves and an insight into what the process could be like for the children they teach (Buck, 2003).

### **Methodological Approach**

In this chapter, narrative accounts drawn from diverse settings were selected to assist in a discussion of issues of professional development for teachers in Dance. Furthermore I wanted to use my own community dance experience to consider how such settings could be of value to generalist teachers seeking to expand their understanding of arts and specifically of dance relevant to the primary school classroom.

The ontological stance of the researcher privileges the body as a site of meaning making, whereas education generally is being reshaped by technology to repel the real or physical world and distance us from relationships (Thwaites, 2011). The embodied perspective seeks to bridge the divide between body and mind and emphasises the interaction between the inner perception of movement and the outward expression (Bresler, 2004). ‘Embodiment’ entails the union of the mind and body in action or the act of

using knowledge produced by the body. Epistemologically there is a recognition that there are different, integrated ways of knowing and being (Fitzgerald, 2012). According to Liz Lerman founder of Dance Exchange, because learning is an embodied process, teachers need to utilise the bodies understanding and awareness in order to teach holistically (Lerman, 2011).

### **Research informed by Practice**

Any approach to pedagogy must be based on context, on the real situations of students and teachers. Its credibility will be based on its authenticity. Readers will judge how, or if, it resonates with their situations and experiences. It is not just to literature that one could look for models and frameworks for Dance education but in the real world of the practitioner. In 2013 I had the opportunity to attend a Dance Exchange Summer Institute in Washington, U.S. and to experience firsthand their approach to dance making, which until then I had known only from the company website and Youtube.

The experience led me to think about the possible application of their approach to an Australian primary school setting, and, in particular, its relevance to non-specialist teachers, primary generalists and classroom music teachers. In line with the methodology of my post-graduate research, which is grounded in self-study, is an approach that regards research as an extension of the researchers' life (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010). I used this experience to enrich my own understanding as I develop a pedagogical framework for teaching dance in primary school classrooms. Schon used the term 'reflective practicum' to describe a process of professional learning that integrates theoretical learning with practice such as found in a design studio, and therefore emphasizing 'reflection in action' (1987).

### **Dancing as Research**

Dance Exchange is an intergenerational company of artists whose mission is "to create dances that arise from asking: Who gets to dance? Where is the

dance happening? What is it about? Why does it matter?” (Dance Exchange, 2015a). At the heart of the work of Dance Exchange, or of my experience of their work, were the concepts of trust, witnessing and a creative process involving both making and responding. Dance Exchange is committed to initiating the creative process in communities and ecosystems? “How and where we live should affect the ways in which we come together to make art” (Meador, 2013). The experience of co-creating dance with children can help to change teachers’ foundational understandings of important threshold concepts, including more inclusive definitions of dance and the dancer (Buck & Rowe, 2015). In Dance education, threshold concepts include that everyone can dance; that there is no one truth about dance; and that every dance idea matters (Buck & Rowe, 2015) When children are allowed to create their own dance, working in self-selected groups they can connect to their life-worlds, experiences, cultural values and personal tastes, and reflect the group/class identity as a group of dancers collaborating and joining together using shared movement vocabularies, tastes and styles.

Trust within the Dance Exchange model is based on their methods for drawing ideas and inspiration from people and place: “Each of us has the right to move through our lives, to travel great and small distances with the power of our own bodies” (Meador, 2013). I looked for resonance in my own experience as recorded in my research diary at the end of a dance session with a class of eight year olds (their first creative dance class).

The teacher who had been observing asked, “Can anyone tell me what they learned?” Two students named elements of dance such as time or space and then a student put up her hand and said, “I learned that you don’t have to be perfect”.

I prized this comment because it highlighted the importance of an inclusive creative process and the need for teachers to trust in that. Arts education should be an opportunity to explore open-ended and complex problems

(Eisner, 2002) and to engage in problem finding as well as problem-solving (Craft, 2008). When children don't have to 'get it right' as they do in much of the rest of the curriculum, "playfulness and invention is enhanced" (Fraser et al., 2007, p.63). If this were to happen, teachers would need to trust in the children's ideas and be willing to build on them to develop dance in the classroom. This has been borne out by my observations of a classroom where a teacher was attempting dance classes for the first time. The following images and researcher's diary document the developing relationship and trust between teacher and students in my first research site.



Figure 10 Developing relationships and trust in dance

Students seem to take seriously the dance problem they had been given to solve and were willing to practice as a group to get it right. Even though they lacked strategies for refining and rehearsing, they stuck at it. For her part, the teacher was learning to let go at times. The nature of the class set up, with groups working in different areas of the large space, eased a transition into a more relaxed management style. Approval or support could be given at a distance, with a thumbs up or nod of the head. Positive interaction between the teacher and students was apparent when she took an interest by watching attentively; praising their concentration or persistence; commenting on their movement choices and encouraging further development of ideas. This was evident when a student responded to the teacher's encouragement by smiling, turning to his dance partner and taking him in hand to return enthusiastically to dance making. This same student had spent the first few lessons with his head bowed and one arm crossed behind his back holding the other arm; hardly making eye contact.

The nature of the dance event described above, and the teaching and learning that took place, found its structure and some of its meaning from the dance strand within the then Queensland Arts Essential Learnings curriculum (QCAA, 2016b). To some extent, it was constrained by this, as it was by the need to manage behaviour and maintain control. Yet in comparison to the pedagogy used in generalist classrooms it was collaborative, provided an element of choice in creating dance, the freedom to 'be' in the body (Stinson, 1997) and involved a change in the relationship between teacher and students (Atkinson & Scott, 2014).

Students responded to these differences and seemed to adjust to the degree of self-control, persistence and cooperation it required. My classroom observations documented what was possible, given willingness on the teacher's part to try and to not be afraid of making mistakes, in a non-

judgmental space. In addition, there seems to be something in the nature of creative dance that itself is empowering. Bannon and Sanderson argue that improvisation “encapsulates the essential nature of dance” (2000, p. 18). Despite struggles with behaviour management on the teacher’s part and struggles with self-consciousness or uncertainty on the children’s the project resulted in new understandings of the possibilities for dance and the creation of a more relational space (Sunday, 2015).

In my own work as a dance specialist, the students I teach, helped shape the organisation are usually accompanied by their classroom teacher. I have observed how the teacher’s response to what was happening, expressed in body language, physical distancing or involvement or classroom management discourse, could influence the children’s engagement. In my journal I recalled a ‘critical’ teaching moment, in my first full-time contract as an arts specialist, and what happened when a teacher imposed her own perspective about dance, as the realm of the expert and her own performative and gendered dance aesthetic.

*The children (eight and nine year olds) had been making small dances, by combining individual movements chosen by them to represent their name. The movements were simple, some of the boys, chose martial arts moves, or gestures inspired by super heroes. This was their first ‘dance’ experience, some were not long in Australia. Each of them, with a little help from me, had to choose a movement, teach it to the rest of their group of four and then practice performing all four movements in unison.*

*Some more confident kids, were making some more changes to the dance sequence, by adding a canon or doing one of the movements in slow motion, but for many, especially one group of boys, the simple version was a big challenge. At the end of the lesson, each group stood up to perform their sequence to the rest of the class. That group of boys, were having their turn. They were looking proud of their achievement, but as they struck a finishing ‘pose’ their expressions*

*turned to one of embarrassment and there were a few nervous giggles as they ran off to the side. I could see most of the students looking toward the small space on the side, next to the stairs. Standing there was their teacher, who had arrived to collect them at the end of the class. She was a young, I knew her to be a local 'private dance studio' dancer and teacher. She stood elegantly, her feet in the turned out position of the ballet dancer, arms folded, glaring, mouth in a disapproving moue. She was clearly not impressed by the simple dance she had just seen, destroying the achievement of the lesson with a look.*

Part of the answer is to equip teachers with a basic understanding of the verbal language of dance elements, what they mean in practice and some basic choreographic tools and might be the key to getting them started in Dance education (Ashley, 2005; Buck, 2009; Gross, 2011; Warburton, 2008). The other is for a shift in attitude, to imagine doing the activity themselves, or to actually have that experience. My research journal documents the positive affect on children's engagement, when teachers literally get down to the students level: by sitting in the warm-up circle, joining in with the warm-up, moving alongside their children as they create or encouraging them by physically moving their bodies as they describe what they see or suggest a possible development of a movement idea. A shift in thinking about dance from skills training to a form of bodily research might help to ameliorate teachers' fears and help to understand the learning as a process. This might be an easier leap for a non-specialist, who could then become a co-learner, rather than an authoritarian expert.

### **Trust and Witnessing**

On the first day of Dance Exchange Summer Institute, we spent the day at the Anacostia Community Museum, at an exhibition based on the histories and ecologies of the river, and at the Anacostia River itself. This was to be the inspiration for the work that we would make in the following week.

Provocations, improvisational tools and scores were used to develop work that drew from stories and physical places. Many small dances were created, arranged and performed on site. It was an exhausting but inspiring experience. The combination of museum and river meant that we were drawing on multiple meanings and sensations. The work was site specific. The philosophy and way of working echoed in the axiom “gathering, moving, making”; signifies trust in each individual’s creative abilities and process, and trust in the choreographic processes they use as the foundation of their work. Feeling like a dancer again and part of this community was important.

Trust and an open approach to movement exploration are also woven through daily dance practice in classes conducted by the company. Weekly open movement classes for the entire community are based on “the rich possibility of exchanges when people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and levels of experience come together in a creative process” (Dance, 2015b). Mathew Cumbie, one of the dance artists and teachers in the company, encouraged everyone in daily class to “get what you need from the class”, describing the movement material taught as a container for individual and group exploration (personal communication, June 2013). Choreographic passes (movement from one side of the room to the other, using a movement rule or score, such as pouring weight into the floor or seeing and falling) were used in daily class as part of each dancers ‘research’. Further, there was no pressure to ‘perform’ by using recognizable dance vocabulary or focus on technical proficiency.

This reaffirmed my own experience of seeing children absorbed in the process of making dance where there is an open approach to the exploration of a movement image. My journal documents a dance moment with some previously disengaged students (ten year olds)

*We were moving in and out, mingling in the space, fitting our shapes around each other’s shapes. It was getting close to the end of the class, this class would normally be champing at the bit to get out, even*

*before the bell rang. I wondered aloud, "what if you were invisible?", and then "what if you could suck yourself out of the space and then reappear somewhere else?" What happened then was a first for that class. Everyone was so thoroughly engaged with that movement image, the boys in particular, the ones who were too cool to dance, with all sorts of wonderful body thinking going on. They were individuals all bent on their own 'research' and at the same time a group, with a united purpose. The bell rang and kept ringing, everyone kept dancing and still kept dancing. At some point I had to draw it to a close, when the hordes of students arrived at the sports shed for lunchtime play. I guess I just got to see a real example of 'flow', or dance as research?*

Dance education is said to be an opportunity for "the expansion of our perceptive powers and therefore apprehension of the world that goes beyond surface to expressive and symbolic meanings" (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000, p. 13). For Dance Exchange, witnessing is important in the gathering of movement ideas, and the process of moving and making of dance. The use of witnessing here is related to the structured form of movement called Authentic Movement involving a mover and a witness, in which the witness provides non-evaluative verbal feedback to the mover, however in this instance the roles are not so clearly defined because both may be involved in moving and the witness may provide feedback through touch and partnering as well as verbally (Whitehouse, Adler, Chodorow, & Pallaro, 1999). Witnessing is a key element in Dance Exchange classes, and in dance making where, as a class or in pairs or groups, dancers act as witnesses to another's dance. It is a collaborative act; collaboration that entails responsibility and attention to the other, "allowing oneself to receive messages, to surrender weight into the floor, into your partner, the witnessing, the receiving, the sourcing, the creating and the sharing of ourselves" (Willard, 2015).

In Dance education relationships are central to the experience of children. Collaboration is part of the enjoyment and the value of the process. An exercise in which the whole group moved in the space and then attempted without any cues to pause and then to start moving again in unison, was used as part of warm-up for the performance at the end of the Dance Exchange summer institute. Such an exercise builds awareness and empathy among performers, a valuable skill in a group performance. I have used similar exercises with children to enhance empathy and enhance their interpersonal awareness. Asking children to move together using the same movement image or idea such as 'moving as if you are invisible' or imagining the space as something with varied properties that you can play with, encourages children to look at each other and share ideas rather than a competitive atmosphere when 'getting it right' is favoured. I have found that asking children what they notice, or think or wonder about each other's dance can elicit more genuine and positive responses than asking them to critique or comment. Modelling the language of appreciation empowers children to give such responses. I did not instruct them in the use of this language explicitly or in a didactic way. Rather it was a continual part of the conversation, about what we were doing. As I moved around the class, I observed, interacted and thought aloud, about what I was seeing to help students clarify and develop their own ideas. In one class children were asked to name moments that stood out for them after viewing each other's short dance sequences. This came at the end of the second lesson in a sequence of four

This request elicited interesting responses including from one child who noticed the "signature movement when they spiraled their arms and then their whole bodies". This kind of keen observation acts as positive feedback to the other group and reinforces the child's pride in their own developing understanding.

Generalist teachers may be concerned that as they are not dancers themselves they are unable to teach dance (Buck, 2003). The tools and processes of Dance Exchange would be a wonderful starting point for teachers. They resemble in some ways games and activities they may have experienced or used in teaching, in particular, strategies that help teachers structure cooperative learning such as jigsaw, think-pair-share and expert groups (Bellanca & Fogarty, 1994). The frames, provocations and scores are meant to be used and explored in use. It is through use that they could become a part of the repertoire of a teacher (Dance Exchange, 2015c). The Dance Exchange tools are flexible such that teachers would be able to use their own personal practical knowledge of teaching and understanding of their students in order to work with and adapt the tools.

In the tool 'equivalents,' each word in a text is assigned a corresponding movement. The tool could be used as a whole class activity where each student around the circle offers their equivalent, followed by students in small groups combining selected movement choices to make movement sentences. Alternatively selected movements could be combined as a whole class dance. In my experience children enjoy the freedom of the many options for interpreting a word, including: literally, as a pun, associatively, sound or shape-based or arbitrary ways and show interest in and an appreciation of the variety of responses from their peers. The repetition of some or all responses could extend students' understanding of the movement elements and the ways in which movements can be extended and elaborated, for example, by repeating a gesture at different levels or speeds or by exaggerating it. I have used this tool in classrooms when developing dance sequences to interpret poetry. There are no wrong answers in this activity. The explicit nature of the process acts as a scaffold; this gives both students and teacher confidence to explore and create, when they aren't expected to model a dance style or teach choreography. The process of copying and repeating all the variations also

develops attention, movement memory and a shared movement vocabulary they can draw on.

In the classroom, the process of dance is mostly a collaborative activity (Bresler, 2004; Buck, 2003). In the social constructivist classroom as envisioned by Vygotsky, the interaction between adult and child is like a dance (Berk & Winsler, 1995). In the dance classroom, this interaction is stripped back to its essence without the props and ephemera of chairs, tables, whiteboards or electronic gadgetry, which even for the committed constructivist could be confronting. Yet where teachers had the opportunity to co-construct dance with their students, they believed creative problem solving, which is an important component of all dance curricula, was the key to its value in the classroom (Buck, 2003).

Research in the US has demonstrated that a hands-off approach to creative Dance education can empower students in the middle years to collaboratively create dance to communicate an intended meaning (Giguere, 2011). Teachers in primary schools in Australia, faced with the imperatives of curriculum and reporting, may feel more secure with the support of teaching materials such as the Dance Exchange toolkit, which would help them scaffold teaching and learning, and a framework or model as a basis for including Dance education in their classrooms. The Dance Exchange tools are not prescriptive but offer open-ended challenges, a figurative 'container' for the ideas they inspire. The choreographic or dance-making tools of Dance Exchange are like the best cake recipe, endlessly adaptable no matter what movement ingredients you use. They can be followed very literally or modified and varied as teachers gain more confidence. They might provide a bridge for the unsure, or the teacher new to dance, to begin co-constructing dance with their students; helping them develop their own movement ideas, rather than teach pre-ordained steps.

The Dance Exchange model is not relevant to a practical skills approach often used in schools because it appears to be less demanding on teachers (Fraser et

al., 2007). This may have potential instrumental value, such as keeping students busy, increasing their fitness, producing a performance for the entertainment of parents or the rest of the school, and reinforcing social skills. However, teachers may not have access to the requisite professional development or have the training to deliver dance skills and repertoire. The Dance Exchange model is based on a pedagogy that informs and supports more productive, engaging and user-friendly ways to engage young children in dance in a classroom setting. “Doing it, making the mistakes, reflecting and learning what works for you, is more important than learning more content knowledge” (Buck, 2009, p.3).

The Dance Exchange model, with its emphasis on trust, witnessing, collaboration and communication of meaning and a set of tools that are generously offered might be a source of empowerment for teachers. In schools, all children should get to dance, not just those deemed ‘gifted and talented’. Further, students should be able to communicate their ideas, feelings and stories through dance that is about something. Dance should occur in schools so that all students can experience it. This is important because all children have bodies and should have the opportunity to learn in and through movement in a collaborative, expressive and non-competitive environment.

Creative learning needs to be ‘experienced’ through active involvement, and enhanced by collaborative reflective processes (Resnick, 1987; Schön, 1987; Uppitis et al., 1999). Teachers need to be involved as learners, so that they can experience the process of art making as their students do. This experience will also help them to appreciate the expressive and creative products of children. “Unlike traditional school-based approaches” and the individualistic and competitive nature of much of the learning taking place in schools “community arts initiatives may naturally foster social capital by emphasising the value of collaboration, the respecting and valuing of diversity, extending networks, and prioritising the sharing of cognitive, emotional, social and

physical resources” (Buys & Miller, 2009, pp.3-4). Practical professional development that is based on participatory, inclusive art-making such as that of the Dance Exchange Summer Institute is a reminder that the embodied experience of making dance is what is most important in Dance education, for teachers and students alike.

## Reflecting – LOOK FORWARD

### Chapter 11

Towards a pedagogic framework for teaching dance. Look forward is also part of the process of creative reflection. It is part of the iterative process of art-making, when the artist asks the question, where will I take this idea, or what next?



Can a teacher become a fervent nurturer of dance who reaches beyond with arms of imagination?

*pushing* **full-tilt**



**risk**

**submission**

**Disrupting school**

because

*because it BREAKS RULES of how to move*

*Neat? NO*

**vivid and felt**

**maybe**

the body as 'the material'

*The body entangled with a new realisation of space*

*Complicated with*

*ideas*

*other bodies*

*set-ups*

*materials*

*the imaginary*

*established ways of interacting and behaving - become solid as air - disappearing into*

*movement*

**body**

**un-mediated**

felt through skin

**vivid<sup>11</sup>**

**muscle**

**bone**

*touch*

**weight**

**emotion.**

**sight**

**sound**

**vibration**

As fast as you make it, it disappears

relying on memory

**mind** memory **body** memory **spatial** memory

**Moment to moment creation - in 3D**

**Seeing and being seen**

## **Chapter 11 - Towards a pedagogic framework for teaching dance**

The title of this chapter indicates its purpose, which is to arrive at a pedagogic framework for teaching dance. The chapter interrogates relevant pedagogic philosophies and frameworks through the lens of the socio-kin-aesthetic perspective. The aim is to distil elements pertinent to the design of my framework. The introduction to this chapter describes the place and conceptualisation of Dance education in the curriculum. Key theoretical perspectives and frameworks are explored and implications for teachers identified. The chapter concludes by outlining the structure of my pedagogic framework.

*\*\*Please note that following each section of this chapter practical applications for teaching are presented in coloured text boxes.*

### **Dance in the Curriculum**

To justify the place of dance in the curriculum it has to be ‘taken for granted’ that it has value for students. This thesis is based on the assumption that dance has something to offer students and teachers, but recognises that its value and meanings are not universal or fixed, but rather contextual, constructed according to “social, cultural, historical contexts”(Buck, 2003, p.10). In classrooms these meanings are re-constructed by students and teachers through “shared understandings, practices, languages and dances” (Buck, 2005, p.7).

### **How is dance taught?**

Since 1990 there have been attempts to introduce dance into the primary curriculum in Queensland, Australia. All of these attempts have been based on a ‘creative dance’ model of curriculum. In this expressive form of dance, developed from Laban’s theories, the cognitive domain was always secondary to the value of the experience (Butterworth, 2004). Laban’s gift to education was the idea that the dancer could be a creator as well as an interpreter, by using the notation and interpretive systems he designed to communicate through dance and describe dance (Laban, 1950). Redfern (1982) and then

Smith-Autard (1994) adapted Laban's psychological therapeutic model into more formal and aesthetic conceptions of dance as an art form (Fleming, 2008). These ideas helped shape the organisation of teaching and learning in Dance education into the strands of choreographing, performing and appreciating (Smith-Autard, 1994), until now the basis of most existing syllabi in Australia and overseas. The identification of assessable skills and processes in Dance education using a model for analysing dance, gave it more respectability in the school context (Bannon & Sanderson, 2000).

In Australia, the two main approaches to teaching dance in primary school align with the orientations of Dance education first identified by Bresler in the 1990s in the United States: the 'little-intervention orientation' and the 'production orientation' (Bresler, 1993). The former, which is unique to early childhood programs and primary grades, is similar to a 'free for all' approach (Dinham, 2013) in which students are given a piece of music and told to make up a dance. The latter, or production orientation, (more common in the upper grades of primary school) is an approach in which dance lessons are used to learn and practice teacher-choreographed dances for eisteddfods, concerts and events. This model has now been outsourced to some extent, using private providers to create dance events for consumption, and thus satisfying some of the social purposes of schooling, without impinging on the formal curricula goals (Hall, Thompson, & Hood, 2006). The pedagogy used is a transmission model, whereby the teacher (or an external provider) teaches a folk or social dance, or a teacher-choreographed dance, intended for performance or display.

Traditionally Dance education in Australia, and elsewhere, has been part of the health and physical education curriculum [HPE] and therefore "resulted in dance being taught with a performance focus that saw students engaging in learning set dances that were based primarily on social and cultural dance" (Stevens, 2010, p.12). In the HPE National Curriculum, the strand of movement and physical activity still includes critical and creative thinking in

movement and one of the focus areas is rhythmic and expressive movement (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA], 2016f). However, anecdotal evidence supports the persistence of more traditional approaches such as the teaching of social dance (Stevens, 2010). In the latest iteration of curriculum, The Australian National Curriculum: The Arts, there are only two organising principles - making and responding, for all Arts subjects or art-forms, including dance (ACARA, 2016g). If anything this gives a stronger focus on dance as a process, rather than product. With no guidance about pedagogy or assessment, teachers might be forced to fall back on strategies they know or have used before (Ewing, 2012). Pressures on teachers and the lack of face-to-face and practical professional development could see dance relegated to specialist, one-off programs taught by visiting artists or private providers. These sources mainly teach dance according to the HPE curriculum, rather than with an arts orientation (Multisport, Dance Fever, 2014).

### **What theories inform this framework?**

The ‘Dance Any Way’ framework is informed by theorists who have called for: more relational (Fraser, Price & Aitken, 2007; Glăveanu, 2011, 2014; Moran, John-Steiner & Sawyer, 2003); contextual and embodied (Ashley, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2012; Hickey-Moody, Palmer, & Sayers, 2016; Meiners, 2014; Melchior, 2011; Nielsen, 2009); and expressive learning (Chappell, 2007, 2008; Craft, 2008; Craft, Cremin, Hay, & Clack, 2013, 2014

#### **Relational learning**

Relational learning in the Arts refers to the establishment of relationships between student and teacher, among students, with the art medium, and with the self (Fraser, Price & Aitken, 2007). The term also refers to a change in those relationships that leads to a distributed view of learning and a broadening of possibilities for creativity, ideas development and cognition. Brownlee describes “relational pedagogy as validating respect to the learner as a knower, supporting learning experiences that correspond to one’s own

experiences, and encouraging a constructivist approach to learning by demonstrating meaning-making rather than knowledge-making” (cited in Harris, 2015, p. 10).

The idea that learning is constructed through interaction is a fundamental principle of a creative approach to dance (Bresler, 2004; Hanna, 2008). A wealth of evidence from around the world attests to the empowering effect on both students and teachers when the students’ own movement ideas become the material for dance making, rather than dance copying, and where the learning is distributed or shared between students and teacher (Anttila, 2010; Buck, 2003; Bond & Stinson, 2000; Chappell, 2007b; Gard, 2003; Minton, 2007).

According to Glăveanu, the focus on the individual student needs, or an ‘I’ paradigm, creates an awareness of creativity and attends to the differentiation of teaching and cultivation of each individual (2010). “However this ‘democratisation’ of creative expression in education was not matched by a ‘socialisation’ of this phenomenon” (Glăveanu, Sierra & Tanggaard, 2015, p.365). As an alternative, a ‘We’ paradigm is offered; “a view of creativity not as a mental process but as a form of (inter)action in and with the world”(Glăveanu et al., 2015, p.365). Any pedagogy that operates within this paradigm “needs . . . to account for the simultaneously social, material, and temporal distribution of creative acts” (Glăveanu et al., 2015, p.365). It would be a pedagogy that creates opportunities for collaboration and interaction, rather than individual creation emphasising ‘teacher-student collaborations’, learning as process, and art-making as an everyday life practice.

Interaction with the teacher involves trust. When students are involved in creative meaning making in the arts, their ‘emotional world’ may be exposed; therefore an atmosphere of trust is important (Fraser et al, 2007, p. 43). The classroom needs to be a safe space where students can come into their own as expressive agents. In dance, ‘performative’ and instructive conceptualisations of dance and dance pedagogy have tended to maintain the traditional power

balance, which installs the teacher as expert (Buck, 2003). Trust in the learning relationship in dance will require a shift in that power balance, giving students' choice, and leading to distributed group learning. In my experience, students have expressed the fear of being singled out in dance, because of the association with performance and talent. Collaborative activities can ease that fear (see Figure 11).

- In the circle of movement each child contributes a movement that is then reflected or echoed back and translated into each dancer's body.
- Children should be given the opportunity to choose whether or not to contribute. Forcing children to do so is often counter-productive, as is insisting that each student's contribution is unique.
- The activity encourages and values both diverse responses and sharing of

Figure 11 Choice in collaborative activities.

During group work in dance, students collaborate to choreograph dances and solve dance problems. While this is going on, teachers will need to vary the distance or proximity to students and groups of students, based on numbers in a class, and this action stretches the amount of students' creative freedom. The teacher can offer scaffolding and support when needed as they move between groups, giving students space to make mistakes and play with ideas (Chappell, 2007b). The pedagogic 'frame' (Bernstein, 2004) can be varied according to student needs, such as: moving away to allow students more control over their creative decisions or moving closer and providing teacher direction when necessary to help with problems of collaboration or ideas development (Cremin, Burnard, & Craft, 2006). In so doing, the teacher is "more responsive to students' actual needs rather than instructive about their perceived needs" (Fraser et al, 2007, p.44). Therefore, teachers should move around and respond when needed; students may or may not use the teacher's ideas, but have the choice. The teacher does not have to be the one to model or demonstrate; Figure 12 shows some ideas for shifting the balance in favour of students.

- Ask for student ideas for varying movements during warm-up, for example, “could we do that action at a different level?” Movements generated in response to a stimulus or inquiry could be varied in different ways.
- Ask four students to perform a set movement, in four ways (using dance elements) e.g. one performs the movement by changing level, one by changing the timing, one by changing the movement quality and one by adding a turn or a jump.

Figure 12 Shifting the balance – using student ideas.

The initial stimulus for the dance may be teacher initiated, such as an integrated inquiry question (Nayler, 2011). Teachers can still provide a structure (the length of the dance or the inclusion of a set beginning and ending), but allow choice by way of a pick and mix<sup>2</sup> structure of movement ideas, elements, or forming devices (Chappell, 2007b). Clear reference points and scaffolding when needed are preferable to pre-determined endings or prescriptive outcomes. Showing exemplars can pre-empt students’ playful risk taking, whereas starting points frame the movement inquiry more equitably. This changes what is important, not the end product, but the process. The implications of relational learning for dance pedagogy are that practical and relatable teaching strategies are needed. Simple improvisational structures provide clear guidelines based on student movement ideas. Teachers should encourage sharing, copying and translating of movement to build a shared vocabulary (see Figure. 13) and make time for student feedback, reflection and shared response to the dance-making process.

Conversations can be had in movement, using different relationships such as mirror, shadow, echo and call and response (Cone & Cone, 2012).

- Follow the leader games can be varied in different ways, to encourage sharing and varying of movement ideas, and development of movement empathy while moving as a group (flocking).

Figure 13 activities to encourage sharing and collaboration

More equitable relationships can be forged between students and dance; students and teacher; and amongst students. The role of the teacher is important in building students' confidence. I have found through experience that something similar to what Chappell calls a "praise-based democratic approach" (2007b, p.48) is effective. Stepping back can be combined with what I call 'active noticing', similar to the close attention early childhood teachers employ for pedagogic documentation (Sansom, 2009). Active noticing in dance requires teachers to become more attuned to the body language of students and to exhibit a positive regard for their efforts (Nielsen, 2012). Stepping back can become a supportive strategy, because it implies trust and gives agency to students in the development of ideas.

### **Embodied learning**

Learning in the body represents a challenge to the domination of education using text, and proposes alternative ways of engaging with the world through the body (Bresler, 2004). The prevailing culture of school privileges the mind and language as the constructor of meaning. Embodied learning builds on theories of experiential learning (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 2013; Kolb & Kolb, 2012) in recognition of the body as the primary means of interacting with the world (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008; Sheets-Johnstone, 2011). Meaning is conveyed through the events, actions and interactions of dance, not just as in social constructivism through "discourse or symbolic order" (Anttila, 2015, p.1). In this reading of pedagogy the social interaction is "relational-material, associative, and affective" where "meaning rises as thought-in-action" (Anttila, 2015, p.2).

Bodies 'matter'; they "are discursive practices themselves" (Hickey-Moody et al., 2016 2016, p.216). A dance movement or phrase does not need to become a text to be read. See Figure.14:

- Children could experiment with different ways to communicate, by making dance silently using movement, gesture and body language.
- Children could give feedback or feed forward to their peers in movement rather than words (Fraser, Price, & Aitken, 2007). Practice this process, in the first instance by asking: could anyone show me a movement they noticed, found interesting? Could anyone show me something they saw, noticed, wondered or thought, but show me in dance?

Figure 14 Non-verbal strategies.

Dance is also an ideal vehicle for trans-mediation, allowing students to dance, talk, write and develop greater understanding of texts through embodying the stories and ideas (Leonard, Hall, & Herro, 2015).

Five ‘cornerstones’ of embodied learning, from a dance perspective, are based on the idea that the body and mind should work together in learning.

- Movement and concepts are connected
- Action and thinking take place simultaneously
- Science and art influence and support each other
- The physical and the ideal discuss with each other

Reality and imagination are intertwined (Svendler Nielsen, Anttila, Rowe, & Østern, 2012, p.2). This idea is exemplified by the anecdote in Figure 15.

A class of 8-year-olds had been given the element of ‘air’ to explore through dance. At the beginning of the class we were sitting in a circle in a building open on all sides, so there were quite a lot of leaves scattered about. I picked up a leaf and wondered aloud, about how it would move if I dropped it and why. The children then wanted to join in and rushed to find their own leaf. We tried dropping them in different ways, and again I thought aloud, about whether we could imitate the way the leaf moved, twisting as it dropped, dipping and turning. The children responded by trying that out and then again in response to my question as to whether we could reverse the movement like reversing a film. This expressive physical problem, engaged them in detailed embodied investigation. A certain freedom to follow the leaves as they blew and tossed and fell in the space, encouraged a freedom of movement exploration.

Figure 15 A story of embodied learning

Embodied learning in the arts values experience through the body. When action and thinking take place simultaneously, the body and mind work together. This breaks down a hierarchy, based on the view that experience is only a stage in a developmental process that subsequently moves “through forms of mediation to reflection” (Sefton-Green, 2008, p.18). Embodied learning through dance improvisation is said to develop skills, capabilities and dispositions for creative practice, such as; persistence, physical alertness, spontaneity, concentration, responsibility and observation (Lord, 2001). The implication for dance pedagogy is to put the emphasis back on the body as a means of learning. Minimising teacher exposition at the beginning of a dance class, and allowing students to learn first by doing, shifts the power back to the students and to the body, as in Figure.16

In a recent project, students created body sculptures based on environmental features. I asked them to think about the shapes, levels, textures of the feature. After they had created 4 of these, I drew their attention to the use of levels, connection and focus, but not in a didactic way. Throughout the exercise after each sculpture was made children were invited to use their peripheral vision to see the diversity of responses produced.

Figure 16 Learning by doing.

### **Creative learning**

The tensions arising from teaching for creativity were identified in detailed observations of the practice of expert dance teachers in primary school settings in the United Kingdom (Chappell, 2007a). The research showed clearly how the teachers mediated these tensions. Three of those tensions are particularly relevant to generalist teachers in primary schools in Queensland. They are:

- Individual – Collective
- Verbal – Embodied
- Product – Process

How a teacher deals with these tensions will depend on their own experiences of teaching, their beliefs about classroom management, the role of the arts in their own lives, and their relationship to physicality generally (Russell-Bowie, 2012). External pressures however cannot be discounted, such as a crowded curriculum and mandated hours for literacy and numeracy (Christie, Heck, Simon, & Higgins, 2015). Locally and regionally the imposition of more prescriptive teaching frameworks have tended to dissuade teachers from relational, active, creative teaching approaches (Polesel, Dulfer, & Turnbull, 2012).

If teachers new to dance change their practice to favour collective and collaborative, as opposed to individual creativity, it could liberate them from having to be the expert. Basing the dance making on student movement material releases the teacher from the requirement to teach steps. The process of exploring movement becomes student centred when students have the chance to “play around with ideas” (Chappell, 2007b, p.48).

Communal creativity includes the ordinary, disparate, collective student voice and emphasises the creation of the group, rather than being a vehicle for the gifted and talented. Valuing what each individual brings as well as what the group creates, is more in line with the collaborative social and street dance generated by young people themselves (Heath, 2001). On the other hand, an individualist pedagogy could privilege the already trained dance students, who can easily recreate the polished aesthetic they bring with them to class (Meiners & Garrett, 2015).

Verbal, language-based ways of teaching will be more familiar to teachers than physical, embodied ways. Teachers may elect to work from the verbal to the physical, for example to brainstorm words, before exploring them, because this pedagogy is more familiar (Atkinson & Scott, 2014). Once teachers become better at understanding their students (Richard, 2013) and develop their practice through repetition of selected strategies, they will build confidence and utilise more embodied ways of teaching.

Where the focus is on the process, the time for exploration can be stretched (Chappell, 2007a). Teachers and students have time to reflect; to take advantage of mistakes and serendipitous creativity, with no pressure to complete a more finished dance, but perhaps with the time to produce something outstanding and of high quality. Documenting the engagement and learning throughout the process is also a more equitable form of assessment. Structured forms of dance making and responding can be delivered in different ways to best suit the situation and context. Some examples are shown in Figure 17.

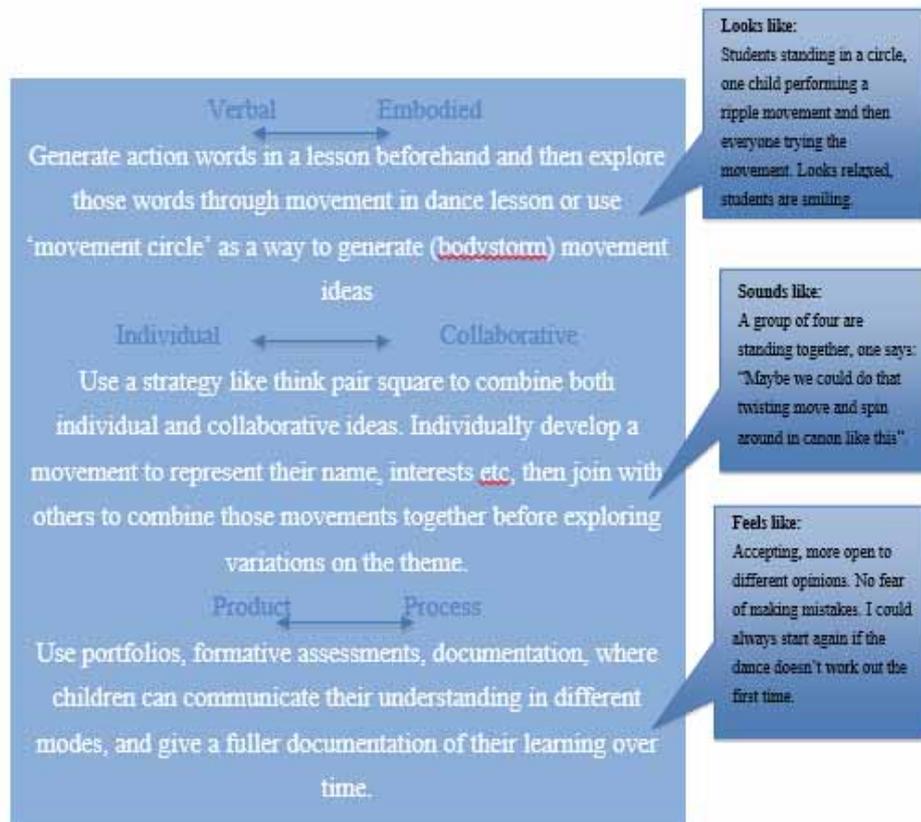


Figure 17 balancing the tensions of creative teaching in dance

There is evidence that teachers are concerned about the speeding up of teaching (Mills, Keddie, Renshaw & Monk, 2016). Teachers and students have become used to the need to complete all the required units for a term or year. The use of centrally designed units in Queensland state schools has resulted in more attention being given to timely completion of those units and completion of summative assessable outcomes (Hardy, 2015a). This impacts on Arts education, because arts learning is subject to the same ‘learn and move on’ culture, with no time for reflection or immersion in the process (Fraser et al, 2007).

Schools may also adopt a “strategic rhetoric”, whereby dance is included in the program, but is actually taught as social dance, or taught for a minimum time, so that they can ‘tick the arts subject box,’ as required by the curriculum (Curtner-Smith, 1999). In schools, time is stretched as much as it can be without breaking. Often dance is taught at the end of a term, so teachers are keen to have a product they can evaluate to include in reports. Therefore, if teachers amend their practice to concentrate on the process of dance and not just the product, they will still need to assess the subject based on curriculum outcomes. Figure 18 shows examples of suitable forms of assessment of dance that can happen in the flow of the learning, including self and peer assessment.

In dance education, during and after the learning children can

- Be observed—memos, photos, video.
- Observe—drawings, blogs, recorded conversations.
- Create—dances, mind-maps, reflective responses.
- Perform—to familiar and un-familiar audiences.
- Reflect—artwork, blogs, presentations, journals, manifestos

Figure 18 Formative assessment opportunities in dance.

Creative practice in dance can be infused with reflection as a means of making the learning visible. Teacher questioning can be in the form of “question

clusters” for “focused criticisms” (Chappell, 2007b, p.48). Teachers could alternatively practise a more open-ended approach using ‘visible thinking tools’, by asking students what did they see, think or wonder (Ritchhart, Church, & Morrison, 2011). Decentering the process of performing or sharing allows groups of students to share with peers without waiting for the teacher to direct their thinking or give a tick of approval. When teachers give up some of their power over the end product, a conversation about the diversity of creative solutions can begin. In pedagogic terms, the reflecting process or stage of a lesson should be about more than identifying and analysing the use of elements; it should also give voice to the experience and value student opinion (Meiners, 2014) as in the anecdote in Figure 19.

I asked a group of 9-year-olds after their first dance class, “what did you wonder?” My own response to the question was to wonder what they had been expecting from dance. Released from the requirement to know something particular, students offered their thoughts and were able to generate a conversation about what they had expected and what had actually happened.

Figure 19 Teacher as co-learner

The implication for pedagogy, is for the teacher to take a role as a co-learner, willing to share their own curiosity and open the conversation about dance and dance making to diverse ‘puzzlements’ (Cordeiro, 2011). Students have to “unlearn their drive to find the right answer, as this suppresses their own ideas and the alternative possibilities that they might come up with” (Hickey-Moody, Palmer & Sayers, 2016, p. 223), but teachers also have to unlearn expecting or demanding that right answer.

### **What is pedagogy?**

Schooling comprises the three message systems of: pedagogy, curriculum and assessment (Bernstein, 2004). Thinking about pedagogy brings the focus back to the relationship between teacher and learner and to learning as the purpose

of school. Pedagogy is “any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another” (Watkins & Mortimore, 1999). This pared- back definition allows for many meanings, contexts, influences and, emergences. The jury, while still out, is working overtime on the definition of learning and what counts for learning. The standardising agendas of today might aim to reduce education to “appropriate, acceptable, or productive formats” but the way learning is delivered or managed is always “tested anew each time” (Ellsworth, 2015, p.64). Ellsworth (2015) further notes:

What is set up in a pedagogical design and what students and teachers actually take up are neither scripted nor linear. To think pedagogically is to think in terms of, and in the midst of, situations and the highly particular . . . Pedagogy does not follow rules, nor does it rule - but pedagogy also is NOT antagonistic or chaotic. Pedagogy is a living form. (p.65)

### **Pedagogic frameworks**

Pedagogic frameworks are the link between theory and practice, between thinking and action. Frameworks can be “theoretical, conceptual, empirical or practical” (Masters & Freak, 2015, p.15). Because of the concepts chosen, the definitions given to them and the way they are organised, they are contextual and part of wider meaning systems. Any framework is validated if it aligns or can be illuminated by everyday experience and observation (Masters & Freak, 2015). Emergent or responsive pedagogies aim to activate pedagogy as “knowledge-in-the-making” (Ellsworth, 2015, p.67). The teacher, especially in the arts, needs to maintain flexibility, and be open to changing tack, using ‘reflection in action’ (Schön, 1987). In dance one is moving anyway, so necessary changes can be woven into the flow of the dance, as shown in Figure 20

A number of students in a class of 9-year-old students were having difficulty cooperating in a small group, to create a dance based on the idea of a web and being connected. I called them to sit, and described what I had noticed, “I notice, that it seems to be a bit hard today, to work in a group, so how about I take a step back from my original plan . . . how about we just work with a partner, just with one friend”? I then explained the ‘mirror’ exercise, which we practiced and eventually used as the basis for the class contribution to a whole cohort presentation.

Figure 20 Reflection in action in a dance class.

My design of a pedagogic framework was informed by practice and by literature, including the systematic literature review of Davies et al. (2013). The researchers reviewed over 200 studies to conclude that creative teaching should be based on “positive relationships, modelling of creative behaviour, a balance between freedom and structure, understanding learners’ needs and learning styles, opportunities for peer collaboration and assessment” (Davies et al., 2013, p.20).

In a recent large-scale study of Arts education, researchers from five countries (including Australia), used national pedagogic frameworks to evaluate key processes or aspects of quality arts learning from exemplary arts classrooms in Australia. The collaborators confirmed that in general, the frameworks and standards did not take account of the embodied and multi-modal learning typical of arts classrooms. These findings suggest the need to develop pedagogical frameworks designed specifically for the learning processes in arts classrooms and relevant to each art form (Gibson et al., 2015).

### **Designing a framework**

I used the socio-kin-aesthetic framework developed in my research as a lens through which to consider the relevance to my own pedagogic design, and of various teaching models and frameworks. The Dance *AnyWAY* framework, unpacks these frameworks, to find things that are useful. Therefore, it is made possible through bricolage (Kincheloe, 2003), re-using, borrowing, re-

purposing what comes to hand (Niven & Grant, 2012). To make sense of the varied frameworks and models I have grouped them together as:

- Transformational
  - Productive Pedagogies
  - Age appropriate pedagogies
- Inspirational pedagogies
  - Possibility thinking
  - 8 ways framework
- Pragmatic pedagogies
  - Common framework
  - Multiliteracies
  - Design thinking
  - Tools for thinking

#### **Transformational pedagogies**

Transformational pedagogies aim for transformation of teachers' existing practice through reflection.

#### **The Productive Pedagogies**

The Productive Pedagogies [PPs] framework was the outcome of a large-scale research study of 24 schools in Queensland, Australia. The aim was to provide a lens “through which educators [could] see existing teaching practises with a view to reconceptualising them in ways that increase[d] the academic and social outcomes for all students” (Lingard, Hayes, & Mills, 2003, p.410), thus upping the ‘intellectual ante’ of education in Queensland schools. The authors adopted a critical stance, by acknowledging difference, as opposed to taming and regulation in prescriptive pedagogies that emphasise “high- stakes testing as the major policy steering mechanism” (Lingard & Keddie, 2013, p.430). The study responded to a need to broaden pedagogy rather than thin it

out, in line with the accountability agendas of curriculum and assessment, where pedagogy is conceived of “as mere technology” (Lingard et al., 2003 p.416). The authors defined change as a “continuum of practice, moving toward” (Lingard & Keddle, 2013, p.430).

PPs validated the process of critical and collegial reflection. Reflection has been shown to play an important role in experiential learning (Kolb & Kolb, 2012), and it contributes to the intellectual quality of learning experiences. From the four productive pedagogies of: intellectual quality; connectedness; supportive classroom environment; engagement with and valuing of difference (Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig, 2001), a set of questions were designed as a tool for pedagogic consideration and reflection. Those questions gave teachers the means to design more agentic and challenging experiences, and to reflect on what took place. It was intended to begin a transformation of teaching that would render learning visible and equitable (Luke, Woods & Weir, 2013).

#### **Age-appropriate pedagogies**

Standardised curricula and performative agendas have had an impact on pedagogic practices in early childhood education. Concerns have been raised about the use of formal instructional approaches in early childhood classrooms following the introduction of the Australian Curriculum (Kilderry, 2015). In an endeavour to clarify the distinction between “the curriculum (what is taught) and the pedagogy (how it is taught)” one state education department commissioned an “age appropriate” pedagogic model (Department of Education and Training [DET], 2016, p.6). The aim was to provide an evidence base and departmental support for active and play-based learning in the early years. Students would be “re-positioned” at the centre of teaching and learning decisions (DET, 2016, p.6), if teachers and school leaders had space to focus on the “factors that underpin good teaching in early years classrooms” (DET, 2016, p.6). The model is based on teaching and learning that is: active, agentic, collaborative, creative, explicit, language-rich and dialogic, learner focused, narrative, playful, responsive and scaffolded (DET,

2016). The support materials scaffold teachers' planning with questions, to "guide their personal reflections" as they consider the balance "between opportunities for planned and spontaneous learning . . . adult-initiated and driven and child-initiated and driven learning experiences" (DET, 2016, p.6). These transformative frameworks demonstrate how reflective questions are developed from guiding pedagogic principles to act as a decision-making tool for planning and reflection on teaching. Reflective questions provide options rather than prescription. They support teachers' professional and contextual decision-making judgments. The aim of these questions is to guide teachers toward more embodied ways of teaching and learning and a process model of creativity in dance. In the Dance *AnyWAY* framework, reflective questions are based on the pedagogic principles outlined in Figure 21.

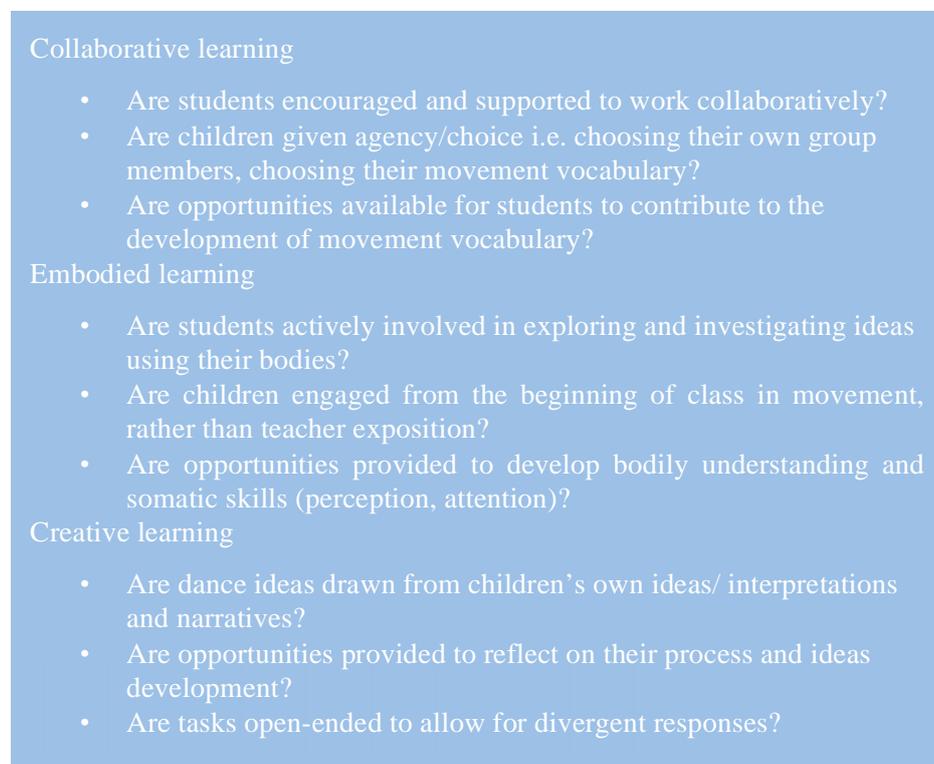


Figure 21 Reflective questions based on pedagogic principles.

### **Inspirational pedagogies**

These frameworks are inspirational because they envisage change in the interpretation of learning or in the roles and relationships of teacher and learner.

### **Possibility thinking**

Creative education in recent years has shifted its interest and focus away from the individual creative genius to small 'c' creativity. Craft (2005) has provided a democratic and everyday conceptualisation of creativity as opposed to one that is elitist and rare. Individual creativity has been aligned with a 'universalising' or marketisation of creativity, as in the concept of creative nations (Harris, 2013). Craft argues that we need to develop a better understanding of collaborative creativity and of 'being in relationship' as part of creativity (2005). Central to this collaborative creativity is 'possibility thinking', student choice and agency (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015). When the focus is on art-making, relationships between teachers and learners can be transformed; they become co-creators. Dance education can be an opportunity for choice: of group, of movement material, of interpretation.

If students are allowed choice of group membership in the dance-making process, they find their own solutions to working in groups and creating dance. Giguere (2011) observed the use of different organisational, improvisational and collaborative methods, similar to "parallel play" (Bakeman & Brownlee, 1980). Students took on roles in a more fluid way, moving between: facilitator/organiser; compliant follower; critic and loner, taking on one or more of them and swapping throughout the process as needed (Giguere, 2011).

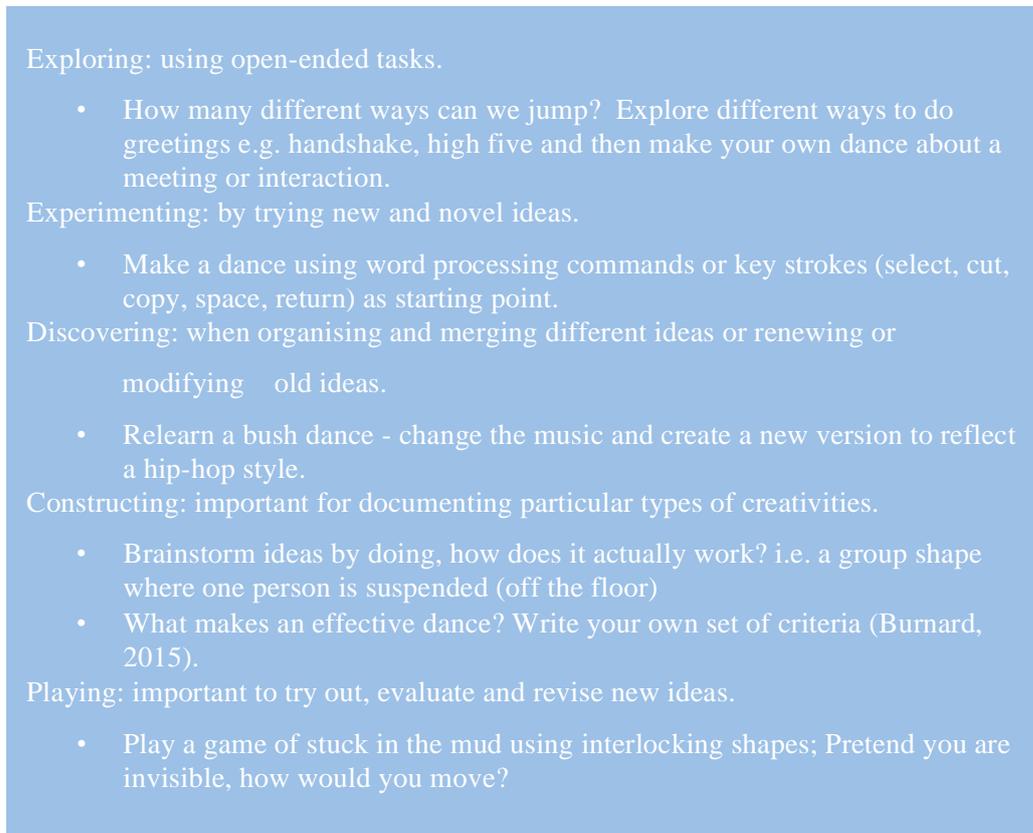
In possibility-thinking classrooms the role of the teacher changes, and they become resources – not just for dance or choreographic ideas –but for the

sometimes difficult task of collaboration, becoming “agents of possibilities” (Cremin, Burnard & Craft 2006, p.8). As a teacher, I influenced students’ dance making by communicating what I know: about forms and elements of dance such as repetition, pattern, stillness; by offering suggestions and asking ‘what if questions’ to support rather than modify student’s creative ideas. I was able to “model ways in which differences could be allowed to co-exist rather than necessarily be resolved” (Hempel-Jorgensen, 2015, p.544). For example, I suggested that a student who was unable to perform a ‘breakdancing type’ spin on the floor, might move in and out of the other dancers circling his arms above each of them, as if to cause them to move and using ‘directional focus’ by using the arms to draw attention to the movement of his peers, while at the same time taking on an important role in that ‘dance moment’.

A factor in creative teaching is the making of ‘time and space’ for creativity, stretching it according to learners’ agendas (Cremin, Burnard & Craft, 2006). The latter will be the most difficult to achieve in the primary classroom, where time is a contested resource. In my experience, students often find ways to stretch the time themselves, by requesting space for lunchtime dance sessions. Teachers might find ways to enrich, rather than stretch, the time in lessons by closely attending to the collaborative process, valuing the contributions students make, documenting the process and by relinquishing, even slightly, the need to finish the lesson, deliver ‘content’ and produce a ‘product’.

The threads for teaching creatively are “a culture of creative opportunities; watching and listening; building learning environments of enquiry, possibility and trust; and fostering learning through imaginative play, exploration and experimentation” (Burnard, 2015, pp. 256-257). In order to move toward more relational, shared, embodied and expressive learning, teachers should also aim to create opportunities for the processes of exploring, experimenting, discovering, constructing and playing; building trust through watching and listening and encouraging possibility thinking and tangential inquiry. Figure.

22 gives examples of learning activities in dance that provide such opportunities.



Exploring: using open-ended tasks.

- How many different ways can we jump? Explore different ways to do greetings e.g. handshake, high five and then make your own dance about a meeting or interaction.

Experimenting: by trying new and novel ideas.

- Make a dance using word processing commands or key strokes (select, cut, copy, space, return) as starting point.

Discovering: when organising and merging different ideas or renewing or modifying old ideas.

- Relearn a bush dance - change the music and create a new version to reflect a hip-hop style.

Constructing: important for documenting particular types of creativities.

- Brainstorm ideas by doing, how does it actually work? i.e. a group shape where one person is suspended (off the floor)
- What makes an effective dance? Write your own set of criteria (Burnard, 2015).

Playing: important to try out, evaluate and revise new ideas.

- Play a game of stuck in the mud using interlocking shapes; Pretend you are invisible, how would you move?

Figure 22 Teaching creatively in dance.

### **8 ways Indigenous Education Framework**

When Indigenous content or themes are introduced into western curricula, it is often limited to tokenistic reference to, or the addition of, Indigenous content, which serves to “marginalise” Indigenous thought” (Yunkaporta, 2009, p.xv). The ‘8 ways framework’ is recognition that there are “multiple knowledge systems” with their own meta-knowledge (Yunkaporta, 2009, p.xv). In my experience as a pre-service arts educator, when students are required to incorporate the cross curricula priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures (Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013) into their teaching plans

for Arts education, their first choices are tokenistic. Typically lessons on 'Indigenous art, are lessons on 'dot painting' or teaching of 'indigenous dance' or song where students are asked to recreate a 'legend'. In effect, rather than being a means of connectedness and accounting for diversity, it sets up an "oppositional framing of aboriginal and western knowledge systems" (Yunkaporta, 2009, p.xv).

The great strength and innovation of this framework and the "eight interconnected pedagogies" is the connection between cultural symbol, pedagogic principles, and practical and versatile teaching strategies. These strategies based on the eight pedagogies can be integrated into daily classroom practice, thus breaking down the division between knowledge systems "previously considered dichotomous" (Yunkaporta, 2009, p.xv). The specific pedagogies are: narrative-driven learning, visualised learning processes, hands-on/reflective techniques, use of symbols/metaphors, land-based learning, indirect/synergistic logic, modelled/scaffolded genre mastery, and connectedness to community ("8 Ways - Home"). From these pedagogies strategies were derived for practical application in classrooms: Tell a story; Make a plan; Think and do; Draw it; Take it outside; Try a new way; Watch first, then do; Share it with others ("8Ways – Project plan").

Within the 8 ways framework the focus is on pedagogy not content. "Not looking at what we learn, but how we learn it . . . learning through culture, not about culture" (Yunkaporta, 2009, p.4). This echoes Buck's admonition that students should learn through a dancing body, not train for a dancing body (Buck, 2003). The social, physical and expressive parts of dance embrace a more connected, respectful and slow pedagogic practice. The 8 ways framework has informed my own understanding of the connections between culture, symbol and pedagogic principles. Therefore, I have revised my framework around the symbols of the mirror, the kaleidoscope and the loupe, as shown in Figure 22.

Mirror- the social	Kaleidoscope –physical	Loupe – the expressive
• Copying	• Physicalising	• Noticing
• Reflecting	• Translating	• Going deeper
• Sharing	• Including	• Connecting

Figure 23 Three symbols for a pedagogic framework.

### **Pragmatic frameworks**

Currently in the state of Queensland, the common teaching models are pragmatic, in response to the accountabilities of national and international testing regimes. The once favoured constructivist approaches having been declared ‘past their use by date’ (Rowe, 2007). Highly prescriptive models of pedagogy have been employed and even mandated in some jurisdictions (Hardy, 2015b). An emphasis on assessment as the main message system of schooling has led to a thinning of pedagogy, and this has flowed over into Arts education (Lingard, Hayes & Mills, 2003, p.416). Any pedagogic framework would need to be integrated into classrooms in “schools that are circumscribed by standardised curriculum and the demand for higher literacy and numeracy scores” (Wien, 2015, p.2). I consider the following frameworks to be pragmatic because they provide a process for selecting and organising learning tasks and activities to facilitate learning.

#### **Common Framework**

The ‘Common Framework’ developed in the UK from the work of Conole (Preisinger-Kleine & Attwell, 2010) enables teachers to select and organise learning resources according to the dimensions of context, learning approach, and task, along three interrelated continua:

From:

- Individual – Where the individual is the focus of learning

To

- Social – learning is explained through interaction with others

From

- Reflection – Where conscious reflection on experience is the basis by which experience is transformed into learning.

To

- Non-reflection – Where learning is explained with reference to processes such as skills learning and memorisation

From

- Information – Where an external body of information form the basis of experience and the raw material for learning.

To

- Experience – Where learning arises through direct experience, activity and practical application. (Preisinger-Kleine & Attwell, 2010, p.43)

A framework should make possible theoretical reflection as well as practical action. Theoretical concerns or pedagogical principles should be considered as part of the process of selecting and mapping tools, activities, tasks, and resources for teaching and learning.

Using a set of dimensions or a continuum, as shown in Figure 24, enables teachers to contextualise the learning by picking and mixing tasks (Chappell, 2007b) appropriate for their context to scaffold and provide challenges for diverse students.

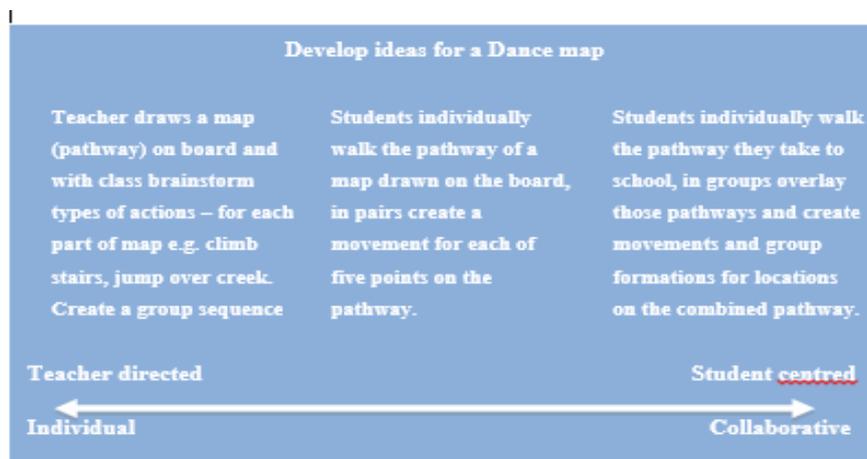


Figure 24 A continua of task type for a dance activity.

Pedagogies of multi-literacies and design thinking pedagogies are pragmatic in

that they provide a structured process for the organisation of learning experiences. They are also aspirational in aiming for intellectually challenging, student driven, authentic learning.

### **Multi-literacies**

The pedagogy of multi-literacies involves “pedagogical acts or ‘knowledge processes’ of Experiencing, Conceptualising, Analysing and Applying” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005, p.69). The multi-literacies pedagogy re-imagined what it was to be literate. It expanded the conceptualisation of the text to include modes and presentation of learning not limited to the linguistic, visual and auditory, but including the bodily, gestural and spatial (Kalantzis & Cope, 2005). Dance could be one of those modes, even acting as a means of ‘trans-mediation’ (Leonard, Hall & Hero, 2015).

### **Design Thinking**

Design thinking is an inquiry model, based on the processes used by ‘real world’ designers. The stages of the model are:

- Inquire: exercises related to research.
- Ideate: exercises related to brainstorming, experimentation and play.
- Implement: exercises related to testing prototyping and communicating (IDEO, 2012).

Design as a process is embedded in the rationale and learning statements in the Australian National Curriculum: The Arts (ACARA, 2016e). It involves collaborative, active and iterative creative problem-solving processes, and offers “an antidote to boring, rigid verbal instruction that most school districts are plagued by. It’s hands on, in your face and requires active engagement that applies core subject learning in real ways” (Philloton & Miller in Anderson, 2012, p.48). Dance also offers an antidote to verbal instruction, as it is hands-on and requires active engagement.

A design workbook for teachers (IDEO, 2013) identifies four categories of challenges to a design project: Curriculum; Spaces; Processes and Tools; Systems. The four categories could also be applied to the context of implementing dance curricula or pedagogy. Curriculum refers to the interaction with students around content, and the challenge of connecting content to student interests and backgrounds using a design process. If dance is taught only as social dance, it may conflict with student interests, as well as impose particular socialised and gendered ways of moving and relating. On the other hand, students can be given the tools to tell their own stories, using their own movement material.

The design and use of the spaces or physical environments of the classroom are part of the hidden curriculum of schools; they “send a message about how students should feel and interact in the classroom” (IDEO, 2013, p.12). In dance, the re-design of the space goes with the territory. In the dance classroom, the teacher can invite students to connect to their bodies as well as minds, to enjoy the physical expression and to interact in making dance.

Physical tools and processes are in place in schools, they are often imposed by systems, but impact on classrooms. Teachers need new tools to manage the different realisation of space in the dance class. Systems are often designed at a distance from the school and stakeholder needs. Curriculum expectations in the form of standard schemas and achievement statements can come to dominate teacher decision making and put the focus on skills development not idea development.

Any pedagogic framework should aim to contribute something to the conceptualisation and realisation of a more equitable, productive and responsive system. At the same time, it should provide teachers with practical actions they can take immediately. I drew my framework from a socio-kin/aesthetic theoretical perspective, grounded in the real-life experience of teaching dance, and realised in the form of flexible and practical strategies.

### **Tools for Thinking**

Other frameworks and tools have been developed that incorporate, or are based on, the empathetic, body based and creative learning typical of the arts. Tools for thinking are skills or tools common to creative problem-solving (Roots-Bernstein, 2014, p.584). They include understanding developed through intellectual knowledge as well as types of experiences typically associated with arts practice such as “sensual experience” and “emotional feeling” (Roots-Bernstein, 2014, p.584). Complete freedom to create can be daunting. Structured creative tools designed for other contexts, such as think-pair-share or brainstorming can be adapted to support imaginative idea development in dance. The take-home message confirms that active, creative and collaborative learning does not have to be antagonistic to the strictures of classrooms, rather it can be considered and intentional.

These models clarified the connections between the stages of learning. A clear structure for a lesson, made of a set of components or phases, would be useful for teachers, notwithstanding the value of art making or design thinking as an iterative rather than linear process (Andrews, 2015). The components of a lesson will always include: an orientation/preparation/introduction, an opportunity for exploration or inquiry, and a time for sharing and reflection, illustrated in Figure 25.

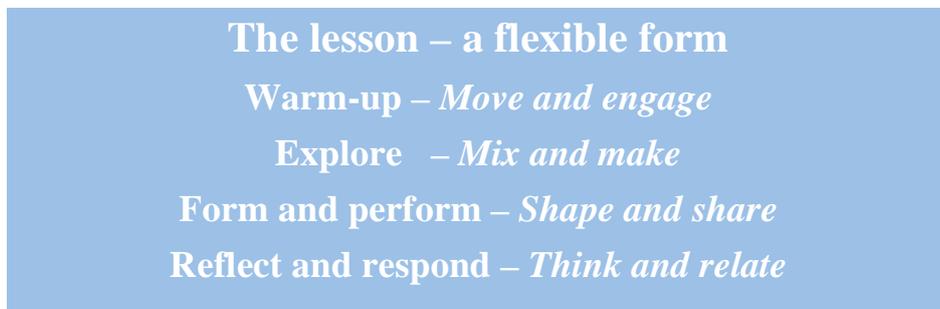


Figure 25 Lesson phases

### **The design of the Dance AnyWAY framework**

The title of the framework refers to the idea that there are many ways to dance, and many ways of being a dancer. It also refers to the idea that teachers and students should have the opportunity to dance, despite lack of recognition or appreciation of its value. Students and teachers should have the chance to dance, because it provides enjoyment, physical activity, collaboration and a chance to be expressive. Dance should happen anyway, wherever it can fit, wherever there is an opportunity; it doesn't need to be highly skilled, extraordinary or available only to the 'gifted and talented'. Dance AnyWAY is based on the relational, embodied and creative theoretical perspectives informing and informed by my research.

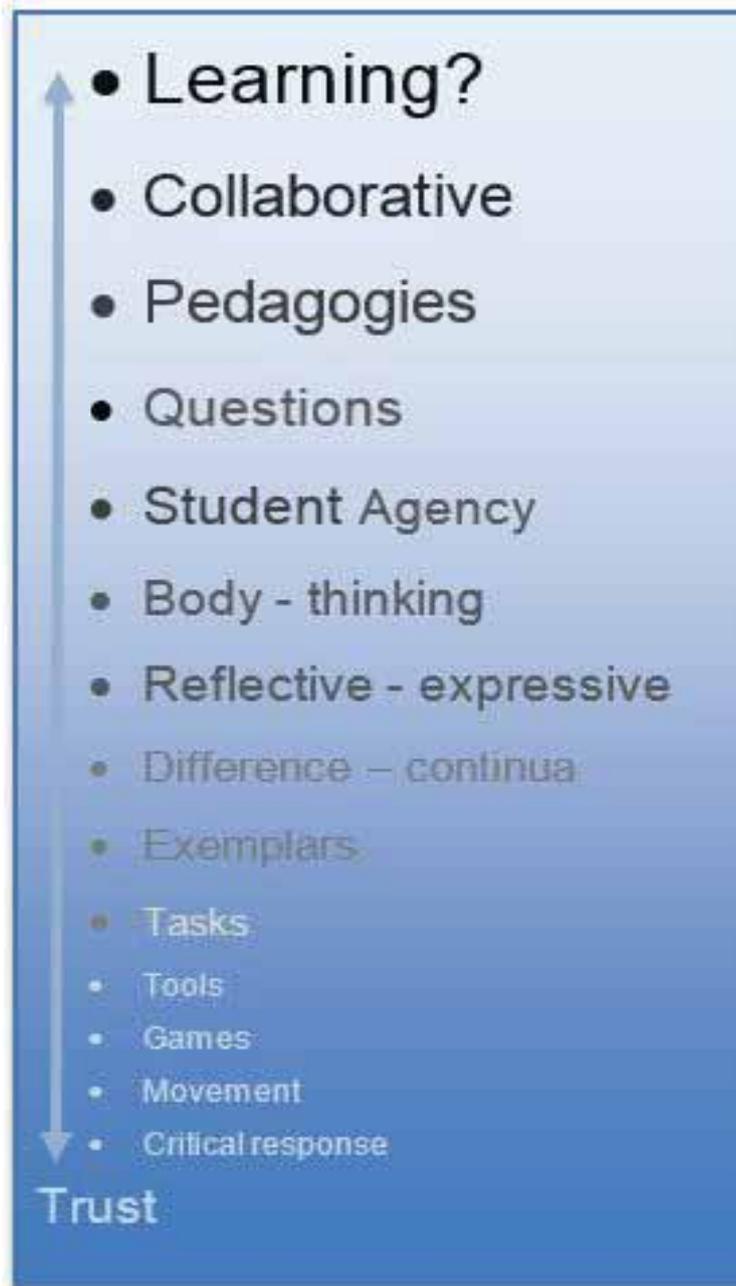
Guided by the common themes in the chapter, I constructed a graphic to represent the themes as seen visually in a word cloud (See Figure 17).

The elements of the framework were developed from these themes, which could act as set of reference points, for a 'good enough' pedagogy (Wien, 2015) a place to start. The elements are: A set of guiding principles embedded in metaphor. These are connected to the lesson structure and pedagogical values for teaching and learning in dance.

- A reflective guide - questions for teacher planning and reflection, which are linked to teaching approaches and specific strategies for classroom use
- A clear structure for a lesson –components/steps, linked to the guiding principles and metaphors
- A way to map activities/tasks/strategies as continua
- Strategies for each stage of lesson
- A mind-map of suggestions/ideas for cross-curricula dance projects.

My aim was not to privilege one form of knowledge, or one value or meaning of dance. I hoped to challenge the roles of teacher and learner, and make a space for students' life worlds, experiences and local dance knowledge and

tradition. The approach is socio-kin-aesthetic, rather than a creative dance approach; it values context and child culture, with the aim of opening and broadening students' understandings and their ways of seeing and moving (Gard, 2003; Meiners, 2014). The framework will enable teachers to connect with dance and relate to students, using simple dance strategies that can build to complexity through familiarity and practice.



**Figure 26**  
**Themes as**  
**represented**  
**in word**  
**cloud.**

## **Finale - RESOLVE**

### **Chapter 12 - Dance any way – a pedagogic framework.**

The finale brings together all the performers, with glimpses and highlights of the whole show. Among the highlights of this show are the gift: the unique moving bodies and expressions that children bring to dance, and the promise: the opportunity for teachers to learn with and about their students in a different way through Dance education. Both of these are prime considerations for the design of the framework. In this thesis I explored how learning can be designed and what pedagogic principles should be considered, to bring a resolution to my process and my research journey.



# Dance ANYway

A pedagogic framework  
socio-kin/aesthetic

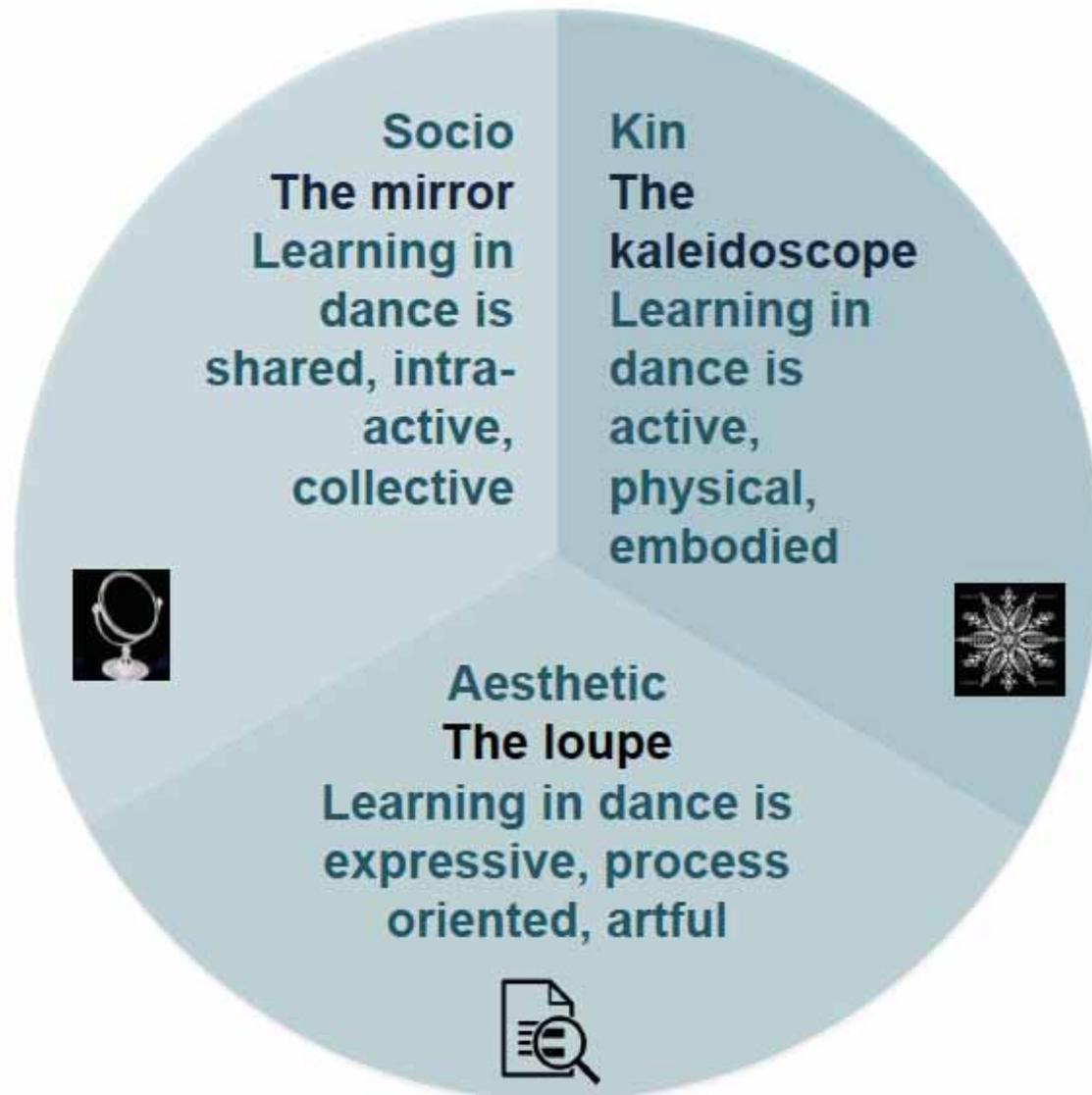
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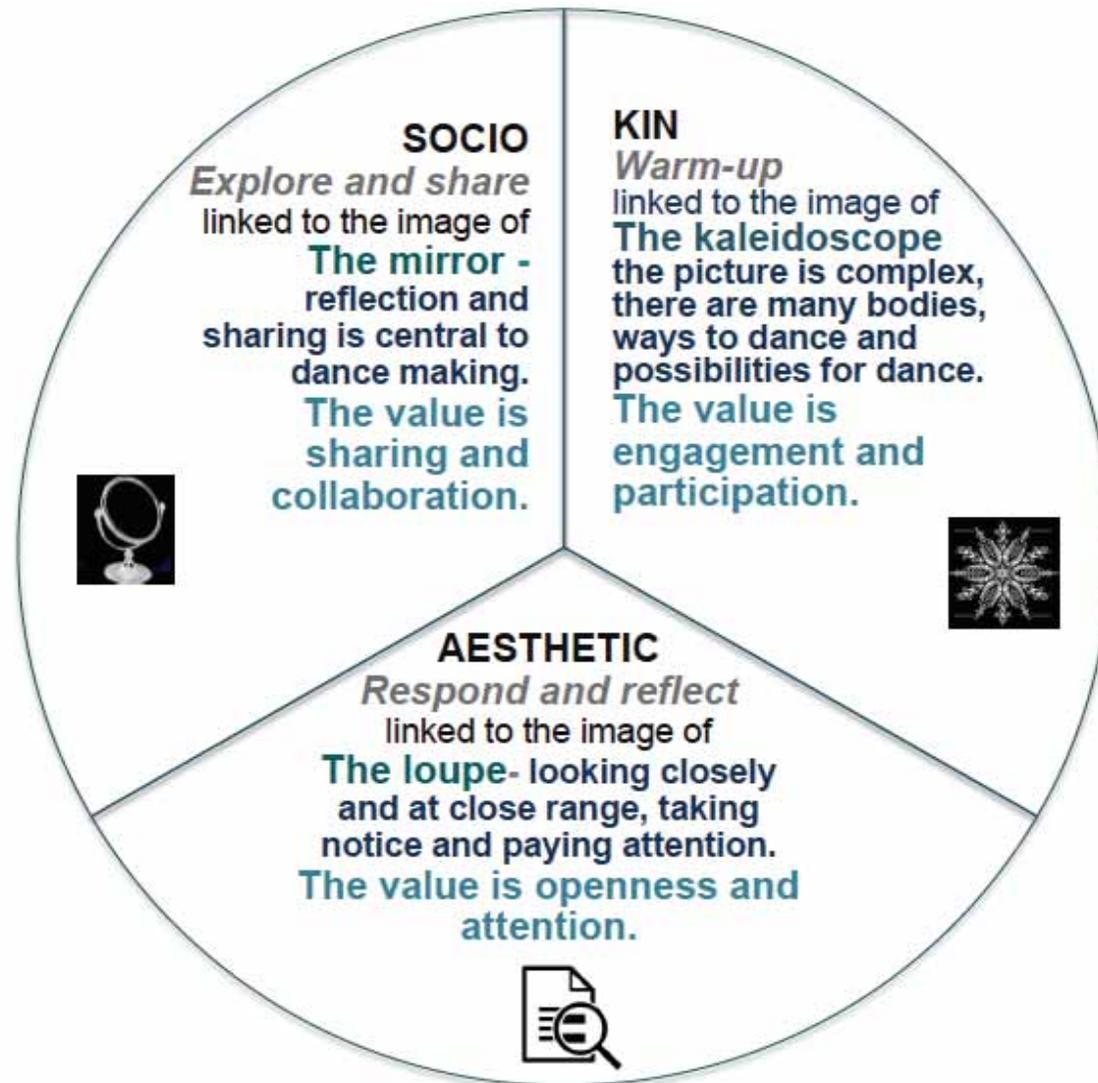
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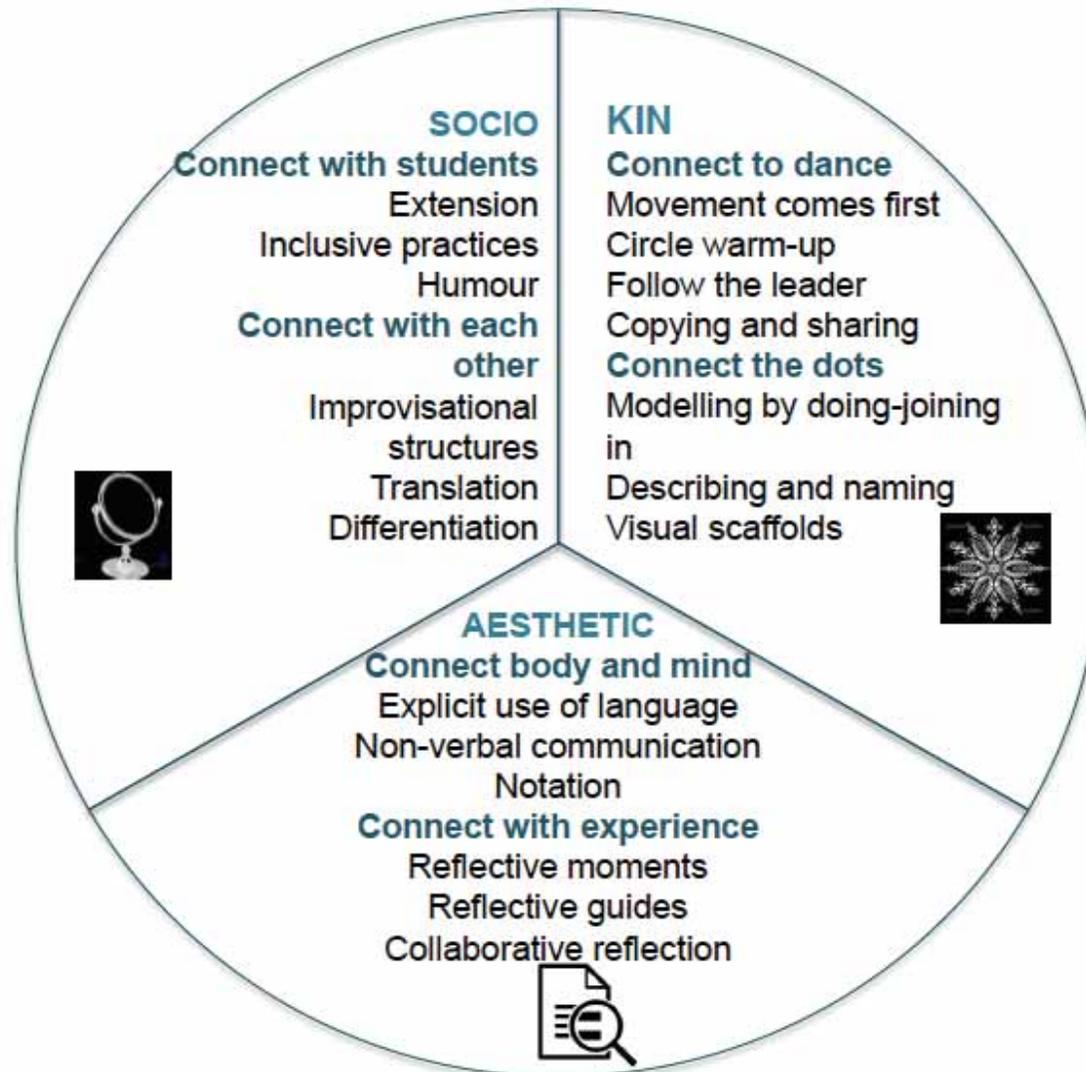
Slide	CONTENTS
3	<i>THREE PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES</i>
4	<i>PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES and relationship to lesson phases</i>
5	<i>PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES and learning connections</i>
6	<i>PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES AND teaching strategies</i>
7	REFLECTIVE pedagogy – questions for consideration.
8	CONTINUA of pedagogic approaches
9	TWO approaches to dance making; convergent or divergent
10	FOUR lesson phases and strategies
11	WARM-UP strategies – menu
12	•HOW TO IDENTIFY curriculum content in warm-up activities.
13-20	•Warm-up strategies - Move and engage
21	EXPLORING activities - menu
22	•HOW TO IDENTIFY curriculum content in exploring activities
23 - 35	•Strategies for exploring/dance-making - Mix and make
36	Task card examples
37	FORM AND PERFORM strategies - menu
38-39	•Strategies for form and perform – shape and share
40	RESPOND AND REFLECT strategies - menu
41-42	•Strategies for respond and reflect - Think and relate
43	HOW to use creative teaching strategies in dance
44-45	HOW to use elements of dance for dance making
46-47	PLAN a lesson or unit.
48-50	Glossary of dance terms



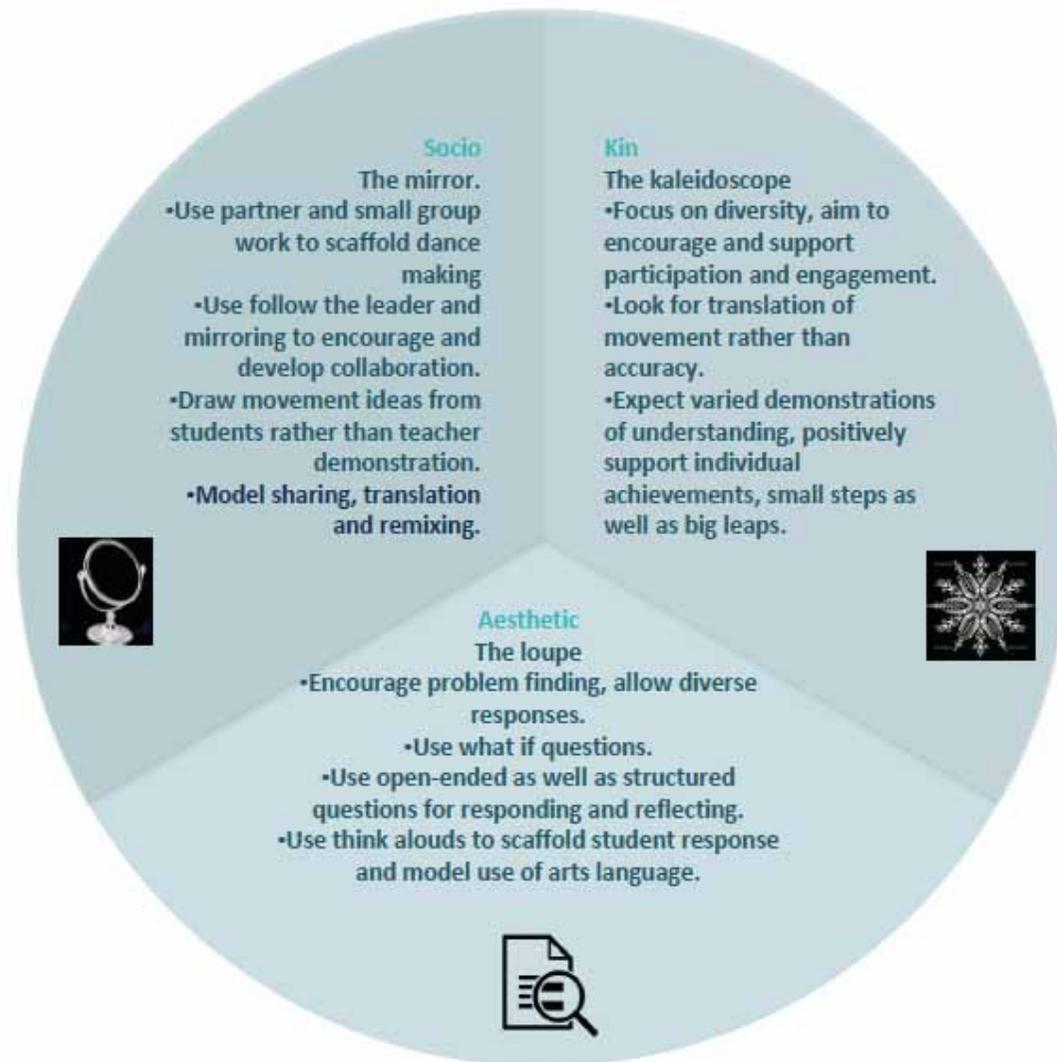
## ***THREE PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES***



**PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES** and relationship to lesson phases



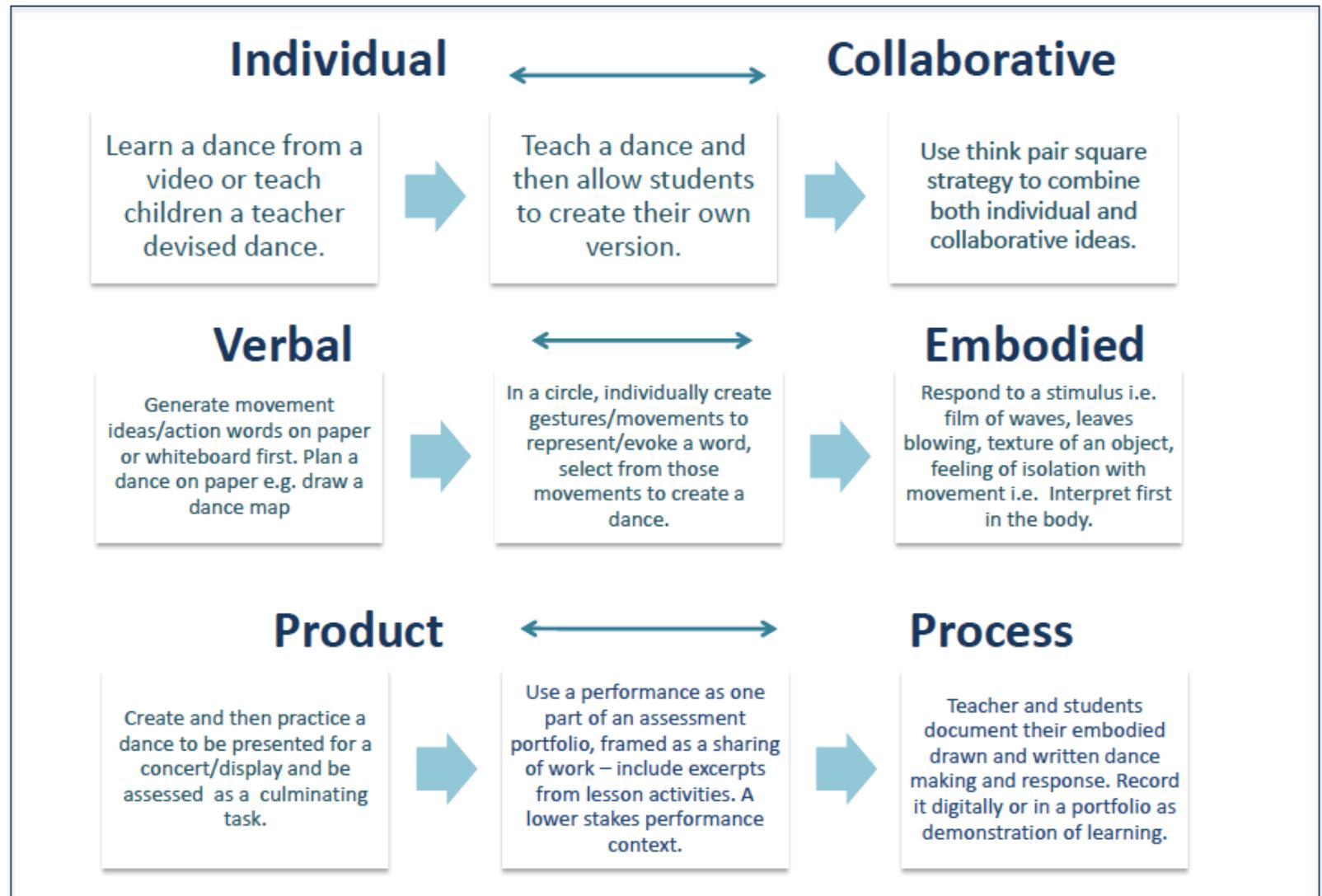
***PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES and learning connections***



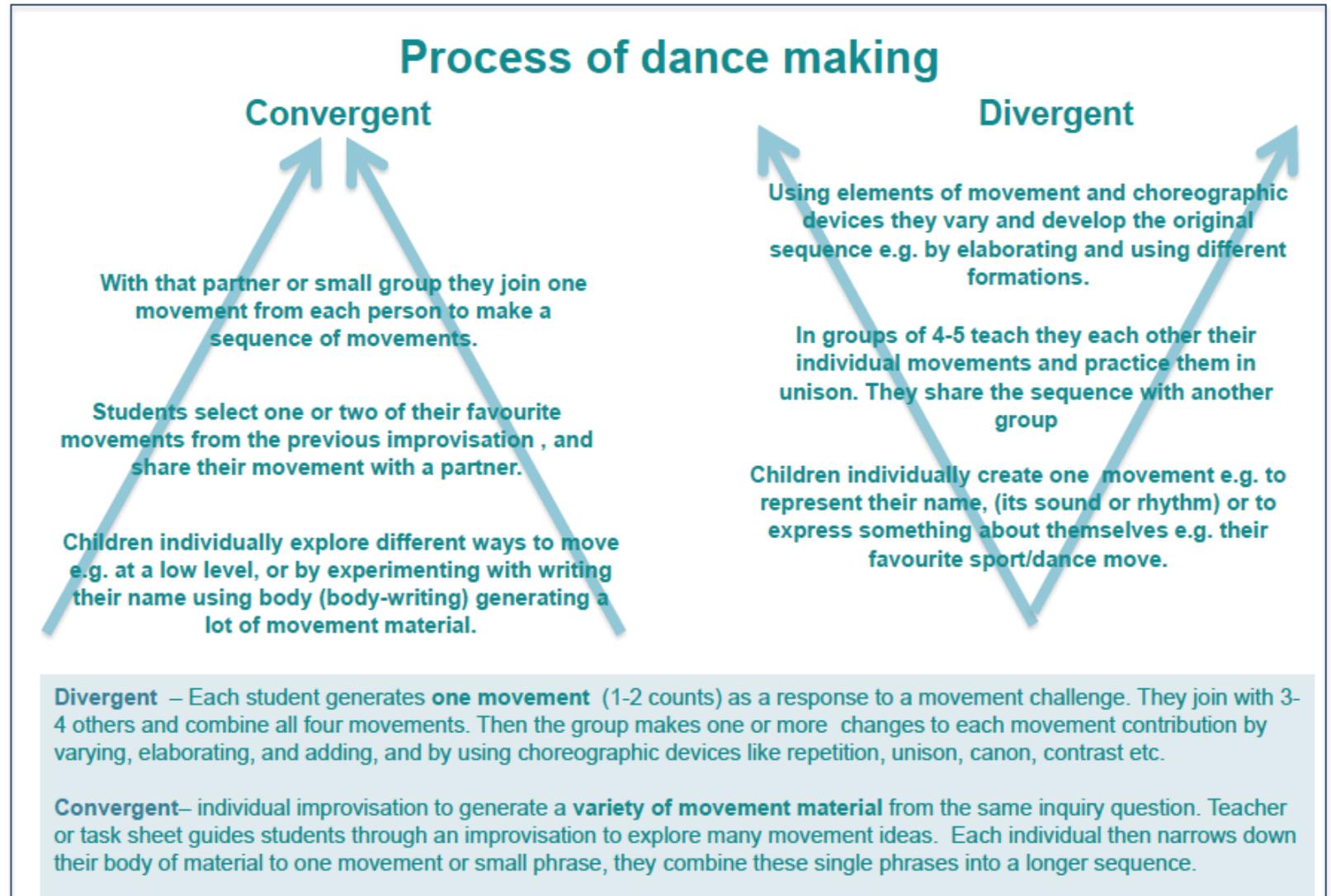
## ***PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES AND teaching strategies***

	Questions	Approaches	Strategies
Socio	Are students encouraged and supported to work collaboratively?	Use structured tasks, games activities, that allow them to develop familiarity with collaborative strategies. Work in pairs first before small group work.	Puzzling shapes Object games Pass it on
	Are children given agency/choice in dance?	Provide a clear structure for dance-making, with structural requirements, but allow flexibility in movement style or quality.	Follow the leader Mirror variations Rewire -remix
	Are opportunities available for students to contribute to the development of movement vocabulary?	Use a divergent dance-making structure where each student devises individual movement in response to theme/topic/inquiry before combining with a group.	Circle of movement Going somewhere Dance recipes
Kin	Are students actively involved in exploring and investigating ideas using their bodies?	Use games and playful approaches. Structure tasks clearly to foster engagement. Encourage diverse responses.	Puzzling shapes Object games Body writing
	Are children engaged from the beginning of class in movement, rather than teacher exposition?	Start with movement from beginning of class via warm-up. Emphasise learning first through practice, then collaboration and lastly theory. Encourage children to reflect non-verbally by using gesture	Circle of Movement Mingle and move Space controller
	Are opportunities provided to develop bodily understanding and somatic skills (perception, attention)?	Play games and use activities that are based on paying attention, body and spatial awareness, sensing of body weight. .	Watch out. Mirror variations Space controller
Aesthetic	Are dance ideas drawn from children's own ideas/ interpretations and narratives?	Use content based stimulus and inquiry questions with clear structure, but allow diverse responses. Allow children to incorporate their own movements drawn from play and popular culture	Mingle and move Body writing Rewire-remix
	Are opportunities provided to reflect on their process and ideas development?	Use reflective guides, multi-modal forms, digital documentation, playful and games based reflection	Group to group Reflective games Body responding
	Are tasks open-ended to allow for divergent responses?	Use a divergent dance-making structure where each student devises individual movement in response to theme/topic/inquiry before combining with a group.	Three is not a crowd Moving cooperation Dance story

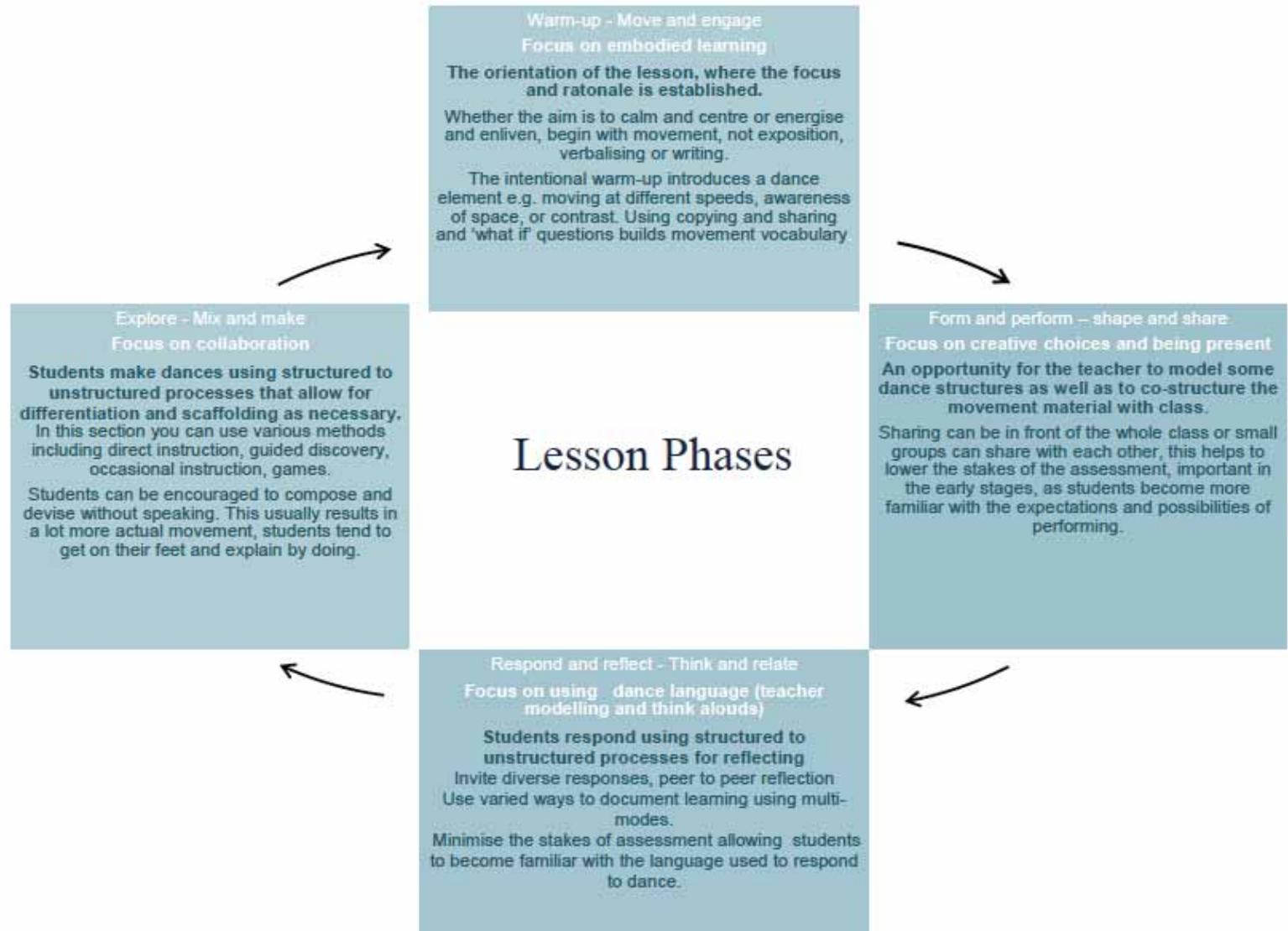
***REFLECTIVE pedagogy – questions for consideration.***



## ***CONTINUA of pedagogic approaches***



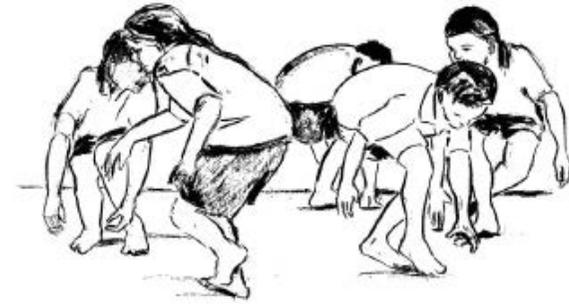
***TWO approaches to dance making; convergent or divergent***



## ***FOUR lesson phases and strategies***

## ***Warm-up strategies - Move and engage***

- [Movement circle](#)
- [Mingle and move](#)
- [Space controller](#)
- [Puzzling shapes](#)
- [More shape games](#)
- [Watch out](#)
- [Pass it on](#)
- [Ritual](#)



## Warm-up – *Movement circle* – whole class

How do the learning activities demonstrate the content statements and elaborations?

260

2. Experimenting with and using dance elements

- 1) Bring students into a circle.
- 2) Start performing a simple repetitive action (i.e. clapping hands, walking on spot, swinging arms) and invite children to join in.
- 3) Ask students for variations e.g. who can think of a different way to walk, clap hands etc. And then invite all students to join in (copy, reflect back, echo back). E.g. Lets all try that movement on for size? E.g. "after marching on the spot at normal speed, try fast running, or dodging side to side.
- 4) After a few ideas have been shared suggest a pattern i.e. Lets do four walks at normal speed, four counts of fast running, four counts of normal speed and four counts of fast running moving side to side. Making sure everyone has enough space to move safely.

3. Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.

4. Developing understanding of practices.

2. Working cooperatively

Offering own and accepting other's ideas

### VARIATION

- 1) Use movements from popular culture e.g. 'the dab'. Explore many ways to perform this favourite movement. Or find movements in dance videos, or from sports.
- 2) Each student thinks of an everyday or favourite action that takes 1 count e.g. kick a ball, brush hair out of eyes, clap hands, swat a fly. The first person performs their action, then everyone repeats, the second person performs the first action and their own, and everyone repeats. Add on in that fashion till you get all the way around the circle. Encourage the class to help each other if movements are forgotten.
- 3) Each student makes a movement to go with their name (number of syllables, favourite movement etc, they say their name as they do the movement and then everyone copies

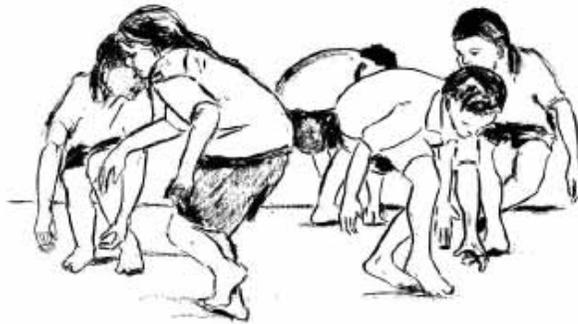
4. Exploring and practicing fundamental movement skills  
Becoming aware of safe dance practice

**IDENTIFY** curriculum content in learning activities.

## Warm-up – Movement circle – whole class

*A circle warm-up in which the teacher initiates but then shares the generation of movements and movement ideas around and back and forth across the circle. The movements are explorations of dance elements and forming devices.*

*\*The circle is a more inclusive way to organise the warm-up, movement can be collaboratively generated, shared and explored. It is important to allow students the option of contributing a movement when taking turns around the circle, especially at first when they may be shy, uncertain or embarrassed to move in front of others. The activity is not based on exact copying or replication, but on joining in (translating the movement according to each bodies ability).*



261

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

- Exploring and practicing fundamental movement skills
- Becoming aware of safe dance practice
- Experimenting with and using dance elements
- Working cooperatively
- Offering own and accepting other's ideas

- 1) Bring students into a circle.
- 2) Start performing a simple repetitive action (i.e. clapping hands, walking on spot, swinging arms) and invite children to join in.
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- 3) Each student makes a movement to go with their name (number of syllables, favourite movement etc, they say their name as they do the movement and then everyone copies

## Warm-up – Mingle and move – whole class

*An opportunity to learn about: pathways, formations, paying attention; self space/general space/ moving safely with others.*

*\*the image of moving in a bubble can help students to move safely. Have a signal that everyone recognises to indicate 'stop and listen'. Keep a smooth and swift pace, 'read the room' its energy and tensions and adapt as needed.*



262

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

- Exploring and practicing locomotor and non-locomotor movements
- Becoming aware of self and others in the dance space by moving with care and respecting others dancing in the space
- Developing awareness of the boundaries of the dance space;
- Experimenting with and using dance elements
- Exploring movement ideas in response to a stimulus
- Thinking imaginatively and using the body to express ideas

1. Ask students to move in the classroom space, you could provide a guide e.g.

- Find the empty spaces and keep moving into those spaces.
- Imagine there was a centre pole in the middle of the room, try and balance all the moving bodies equally around that pole.
- Walk only in straight lines ( curved lines, zig zag pathways) change from one to the other whenever I clap.
- Make sure you don't touch anyone else, as if there is a force field around you.
- Find a space to stand that is away from furniture and other bodies, imagine you are inside a bubble, reach out and touch the insides, move around the room as if you are inside that bubble, be careful not to burst.

2. You could side coach with instructions e.g.

- Walk in different ways – on toes, heels, outside of feet, with big steps, small steps, down low, up high.
- Move as if you are in water, are water, moving through mud, outer space, are invisible etc
- Choose an environment, movement theme related to the dance making context such as through a rainforest) think aloud e.g. you are ducking under a branch now climbing over a fallen log.
- Pause music, ask students to hold their shape, (use this to develop a bank of shapes for later exploring stage). Ask students to select shape, copy shape and paste shape somewhere else (variation: flip, slide and turn shapes).
- After creating a few shapes, combine travelling (locomotor) movements and shapes into a whole group sequence e.g. "Choose a starting shape, think about your next shape, when the music starts, move your starting shape for 8 counts into your next shape. I will help you by counting out loud". Repeat this for a number of times.

## Warm-up – Space controller – whole class

Combine the circle (or other formations: lines, clusters etc) and free movement together. Alternate moving freely in the space and making formations, circle-space-circle .



263

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

- Exploring and practicing locomotor and non-locomotor movements
- Becoming aware of self and others in the dance space by moving with care and respecting others dancing in the space
- Developing awareness of the boundaries of the dance space;
- Experimenting with and using dance elements
- Exploring movement ideas in response to a stimulus
- Thinking imaginatively and using the body to express ideas

1. Bring students into a circle, explain that they are going to try to change from standing in the circle and moving freely in the space, to see how quickly and smoothly we could move between them.
2. Direct students to move freely in space and then call them back to circle e.g. "make a circle in 5,4,3,2,1"
3. Once back in the circle teacher or student devised movements/gestures/actions can be sent around the circle in a canon or wave (like a mexican wave). e.g. Teacher performs a movement in a single count and, directs each person in turn to perform the movement round the circle till it returns to the beginning. Then return to moving in the space.

### VARIATION

- Perform a movement that takes more than one count e.g. shrinking whole body into a small shape. Each student follows the next as soon as the previous person has begun their shrinking movement. The effect is something like a ripple. The same movement could then be reversed going back the other way around the circle e.g. Growing up into a stretched out shape.
- Ask for student ideas for movement canons, or play it like a game of Zap, where a movement travels around until the movement and the direction is changed by someone.
- Experiment with other formations, lines, circles, diagonals, clusters, squares etc.
- Students may be nominated to call the return to the circle.

## Warm-up – Puzzling shapes – Whole class – in revolving pairs

*In this game, the whole group becomes a moving three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle. An opportunity to work in a practical way with irregular shapes, positive/negative space and angles.*



264

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

- Being aware of self and others in the dance space; awareness of the boundaries of the dance space; awareness of their bodies' needs,
- Developing technical skills of body control, understanding and demonstrating movement and stillness
- Experimenting with the dance element of space (shape, level, direction)
- Displaying energy and involvement in the dance activity

1. Bring students together in a circle.
2. Ask for a volunteer to make a shape in the middle of circle
3. Draw students attention to the empty space around the shape, ask whether someone else could make a shape that fits into part of that empty space.
4. Ask the first person to then remove themselves and someone else to make a shape to fit into this new (second) shape.
5. Now play the 'game', half the class start by making a shape, the other half move amongst them to unfreeze them by making shapes, around/through/ complementary to/next to their shape.
6. Once the second shape is made, hold both shapes for a moment and then the original person moves off to unfreeze someone else.
7. Call students attention to the movements between shapes, by asking how we could smooth the transitions from shape to shape e.g. by using focus/ moving with intention/attention, maintaining focus between shapes or moving with the music.

### VARIATION

- For younger children you could ask " who could make a shape to go with this shape?" or "if this shape was in a jigsaw puzzle, who could make the shape that fits next to it?"
- Partners could choose a number of interlocking shapes that they could make together and find different ways to join them with 'transitions' to create a dance sequence.

## Warm up – *More shape games - Whole class/groups*

*Creating shapes to represent different ideas is a good warm-up for dance making.*

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

- Exploring the elements of dance to communicate ideas clearly
- Practising combinations of fundamental locomotor and non-locomotor movements
- Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movements and shapes using choreographic devices such as canon and unison

### 2. Shape up

- Groups make shapes in the centre of the circle, adding on one by one into a whole group shape, specify number of counts to move in and make shape, instruct group to move on the spot in the shape for 8 counts to music, use a variety of music. The shape then undoes in the reverse order with the last person moving back to the circle first.
  - Call letters of the alphabet, if that letter is in your first name you have to run to the centre of the circle and add to/form a group shape
  - Shapes can be made by the whole group with consideration of formation eg asymmetric, symmetric, two-dimensional or three-dimensional, in order to communicate a theme, or depict a setting etc. Walls create good backdrops to make shapes against also then to push off from, be drawn to etc. as in a city skyline, a coral reef or a rainforest canopy, add unison movement e.g. to push off / be repelled by the wall.
  - Guess the shape game, in pairs create the shapes of objects in the room, and show to another pair who has to guess the object.
- “Slinky” a continual line of changing shapes is made when a dancer makes a shape and one by one dancers add on to the previous shape and creating a long line of shapes. The line is being made and unmade and can move around the room. Variations could take it around the room and through and over furniture, up stairs etc.

## Warm-up – Watch out – whole class in pairs

*A game that makes a skill connection with sport, particularly field sports, in which peripheral vision is a useful skill.*



266

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

- Demonstrating safe dance practices, by using peripheral vision to move with awareness of others
- Building confidence and resilience through practising technical skills

1. Ask students if they know how sportspeople can move around so fast, e.g. a footballer senses someone running up from behind – peripheral vision.
2. Direct them to identify one person they will keep in their peripheral vision while they travel freely in the space, once they can do this ask them to add another person and keep both in their peripheral vision, always be aware of where they are.
3. Go back to following one person start mirroring that person's movement, and then shadow them.
4. Finally try moving together as one, like twins.
5. Try moving between those different movement ideas, ie. Move away from your partner and back together.
6. Add changes of level and other movements like turns, jumps, rolls etc.
7. Discuss: how easy/difficult are each of those tasks.

### **VARIATION**

Try moving in the space with the idea of keeping as far away from one person as you can while simultaneously keeping as close to one other person. The aim of these activities are not to get it right the first time, but to experiment and explore the possibilities, how does it change the way we move?

## Warm-up – Pass it on - Whole class

*Students move freely in the space, movements are generated and shared through contagion.*



267

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

- Becoming aware of self and others in the dance space, moving with care, respecting others dancing in the space;
- Building confidence and resilience by practising technical skills
- Building fundamental movement vocabulary
- Recognising that people have different and unique ways of moving
- Developing empathy and awareness of other dancers and ability to tune into the movement of the group

1. Students move freely in the space, moving into the empty spaces.
2. Vary this movement by exploring an idea e.g. find different ways to travel at a low level; move according to character traits based on a story being read; move as if you were heavy, light, moving on hot coals, moving under water etc.
3. Students select a person to copy, imitating and translating their movement.
4. Gradually the movement gets picked up by others.
5. Students choose when to change their movements or copy someone else's movement.
6. Movements/gestures are thus copied and move through the group like a rumour. Multiple movements are happening at once.

### **VARIATION**

- Return to a unison and basic movement i.e. walk, jog, run – move for a while until one person initiates a pause, the aim is for everyone to stop at the same time and then start at the same time after someone begins to move again.
- Do the opposite – when you see someone move at a low level then move at a high level, when you see someone jump, drop to a crouch, when you see someone turn, move in a straight line.

Adapted from 'Rumours' game (Spurgeon, D. (1991). *Dance moves: From improvisation to dance*. Sydney: HBJ)

## Warm-up – *Ritual- Whole class/groups*

*An excuse for everyone, teacher and students, to contribute, prior learning, skills and body knowledge to the rest of the group.*



268

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

- Developing technical skills of body control, posture, strength, balance and coordination,
- Learning to move in sync with other dancers.
- Practicing a learned sequence of movements
- Exploring known movements to find alternative ways of performing them e.g. performing a known set of warm-up exercises to music

1. Students individually contribute a stretch or warm-up move from:
  - *Sports*
  - *Dance*
  - *Martial arts*
  - *Gymnastics*
  - *Drama*
  - *Yoga*
2. A combined sequence is created from movements contributed from the class, practiced and learnt, and then performed at the beginning of each lesson as a starting ritual.
3. Alternatively small groups could create different types of sequences i.e. stretching, aerobic, isolations, balancing etc, which are written on cards. These are posted up as work stations. The class in small groups then move around and spend a set number of minutes at each station.
4. Use the ritual warm-up as an opportunity to develop movement and body skills, such as belly breathing, balance, safe knee bending and jumping using correct alignment etc.

## ***Strategies for exploring/dance-making - Mix and make***

- Follow the leader
- Body writing
- Shape up
- Recipes
- Object games
- Mirror variations
- Re-wire-re-mix
- Dance story
- Three is not a crowd
- Moving cooperation
- Going somewhere
- My first dance



## Explore – *Follow the leader* - Whole class/groups

How do the learning activities demonstrate the content statements and elaborations?

270

2. Developing understanding of practices.

3. Varying and modifying movements to represent a story, character or idea.

1. Teacher or nominated students lead the class/group/partner around the space, according to instructions/stimulus ideas e.g.
  - different ways to move at low level
  - ministry of silly walks
  - with sustained energy
  - as if moving through the rainforest a cave or a tunnel
  - based on sporting movements
2. Add moments of stillness e.g. making a shape at a low level along a wall.
3. select some of your favourite movements, combine with the movements of a partner and then a small group (dance-pair-square), adapt the movements by using at least two different formations,, experiment with use of canon and unison.
4. Re-interpret your dance, how would you change the timing, dynamics, movements or expression to communicate a particular mood/character.
5. Using a prop i.e. hats, umbrellas etc or use a variety of music to see how that influences the movement, or take your dance into the school yard to see how you could perform the movements e.g. going around poles, walking along benches.

1. Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.

4. Using expressive skills of projection and focus to communicate dance ideas.

5. Exploring stimulus to devise a variety of ways to use an outdoor space to perform your dance

**IDENTIFY curriculum content in learning activities.**

## Explore – Follow the leader - Whole class/groups

*There are many variations of follow the leader, that are useful for generating movement ideas e.g. as a whole class; with a partner –one shadows the other; in a group of four – all facing the same direction in a diamond shape, when the leader turns to face a different direction that person is then the leader, leaders are responsible for their followers keeping up and not running into other groups.*



271

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

- Experimenting with elements of dance in student-devised dance
- Varying and modifying movements to represent a story, character or idea?
- Exploring stimulus or analysing other dances to devise a variety of ways to use an outdoor space to perform your dance e.g. going around poles, walking along benches

1. Teacher or nominated students lead the class/group/partner around the space, according to instructions/stimulus ideas e.g.
  - different ways to move at low level
  - ministry of silly walks
  - with sustained energy
  - as if moving through the rainforest a cave or a tunnel
  - based on sporting movements
2. Add moments of stillness e.g. making a shape at a low level along a wall.
3. Select some of your favourite movements, combine with the movements of a partner and then a small group (dance-pair-square), adapt the movements by using at least two different formations, experiment with use of canon and unison.
4. Re-interpret your dance, how would you change the timing, dynamics, movements or expression to communicate a particular mood/character.
5. Using a prop i.e. hats, umbrellas etc or use a variety of music to see how that influences the movement.

## Explore – *Body writing- Whole class/individuals*

*Using the improvisational strategy of body-writing provides students with a starting point for discovering, developing and selecting movements and movement phrases to convey their personal movement style*



272

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

- Exploring known movements to find alternative ways of performing them
- Selecting and combining movements with a partner and a small group
- Exploring stimulus to devise a variety of movement possibilities, for example, different ways to perform your movement tag when in a close formation
- Exploring character and mood by experimenting with elements of dance to express a different mood/feeling.

- 1.Students standing on their own spot in the space, or in a circle
- 2.Ask students to write their name or initials with their hand as if on a large sheet of paper in front of them.
- 3.Introduce other variations and developments of the original and allow students to explore more structured or more open-ended tasks. E.g.

- Write the name with different body parts, write it as big as you can, as small as you can, in slow motion, as fast as you can.
- trace or walk it on floor, write as if on a giant 3D whiteboard, as if writing with a giant sparkler, sky writing
- Use different fonts
- Mirror the body writing of a partner
- Draw a partner's dance in the air as they move
- Create your own movement tag
- Write a happy letter/sad letter
- Select some of your favourite movements, combine with the movements of a partner and then a small group (dance-pair-square)

## Explore – Shape up – a whole class dance and a partner dance.

*Shapes/patterns in the environment can be used as a starting point. The bank of shapes can then be joined with transitions and moved around the space. An ideal dance to perform in the environment (site specific dance).  
Creating and connecting*



273

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

- Exploring the elements of dance to communicate ideas clearly
- Practising combinations of fundamental locomotor and non-locomotor movements
- Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movements and shapes using choreographic devices such as canon and unison

*'Surprising shapes' adapted from an activity in Joyce, M. (1973). First steps in teaching creative dance; a handbook for teachers of children, kindergarten through sixth grade. Photos. by Patty Haley. Palo Alto, Calif.: National Press Books.*

### 1. Shapes in Nature

- 1.Students move in space freely (or with instructions) to atmospheric music e.g. Move as if through different environments. Teacher directs students to freeze at certain points and form groups of a particular number, or with members of a pre-selected group. Eg form groups of five and make a square.
- 2.Ask students to creating shapes ( group sculptures) to represent/symbolise specific items/concepts/natural features E.g. groups of five create a waterfall.
- 3.Create a bank of shapes as a group. Number the shapes and move between them in different ways according to teacher direction or student suggestions e.g. cross-fade from shape 1 to shape 2, shatter and twist from shape 2 to shape 3 , collapse one by one like dominoes and roll to shape 4.
- 4.Brainstorm/bodystorm action words for each of the features/concepts, i.e. what movements are associated with each feature. E.g. waterfall - rush, landslide - collapse
- 5.As a group choose one of these actions/locomotor movements for each 'transition' between shapes. Transitions are like the conjunctions of dance.
- 6.Place the shapes around the space and connect the shapes with the selected transitions. Draw a map diagram to notate your dance.

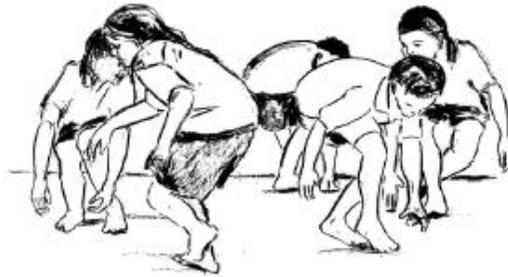
### 2. Surprising shapes

As a whole class, students choose shapes they consider interesting at high and low levels. They move between the shapes at different speeds and experiment with percussive and sustained movement quality. (Students might decide on a metaphor or image for each of the types of energy). They move as a whole group between their shapes a few times, choosing when to change and how, trying to surprise those around them. They then work in pairs to combine six shapes (three shapes each) and perform them in unison, contrasting timing and levels to convey the idea of surprise.

N.B. cross-fade shatter etc are not dance terms, allow students to experiment and come up with their own and diverse solutions.

## Explore – Dance recipe/task cards – Small groups

*Dance recipes are a more structured dance-making method. At each stage/step of the dance recipe, students are given specific tasks. Teacher can direct this by side-coaching, writing the recipe on the whiteboard, or by using Task cards. Task cards give students students autonomy to decide on their own interpretation, within guidelines, and release the teacher to work more closely with individuals, groups.*



274

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

- Practising ways to combine movements in a group collaboratively
- Altering movements in a student-devised dance using the elements of space, time, dynamics and relationships to express ideas, for example, personality, favourite sports
- Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movement using choreographic devices such as repetition, contrast, canon and unison
- Exploring personal style and devising ways that a movement can be performed by differently abled and bodied dancers

1. Each student individually creates a movement e.g. to represent their name, favourite sport etc. They do this :
  - in a circle, each student creating a movement that everyone copies/reflects
  - while standing on their own spot in the general space.
2. Four or more students then join together and teach each other their movement, so they have a sequence made of up four movements. Help them to make sure each person's movement can be performed safely and effectively by all members of the group.

1. Students complete instructions and then share their dances.

### VARIATIONS

4. The group then makes specific changes to the movements and adds specific choreographic devices. These can be listed on the board or on task cards. Students can choose which or how many variations they make to the original dance sequence.
  - e.g. Make one movement slow, repeat one movement, add a turn or jump to one movement, add a still shape somewhere, change the formation of the group at least once, perform at least one of the movements in canon. The task can be easily differentiated by writing the steps in the task as graded options.
5. Groups decide how they will vary their dance to communicate a chosen idea, mood, story or style.

## Explore –Object games - Whole class/pairs

*Students in pairs, students take it in turns to manipulate an object, while the other becomes the object - mimics the movement of the object.*



275

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

- Experimenting with dynamics of movement
- Exploring movement possibilities in response to a stimulus,
- Using contrast and repetition to explore and generate new movement
- Improvising movement using a prop or costume to communicate meaning. meaning in this dance?
- Developing empathy and collaborative skills

1. One student has a square of plastic or fabric (something with weight that can hold its shape is best (e.g. plastic sheeting).
2. Partners take turns to be:
  - a. The leader who manipulates the plastic into different shapes and movements or
  - b. The follower who becomes the plastic (has to mimic or echo the movements of the plastic).
3. The leader should experiment with contrast of qualities e.g. percussive and sustained ways of moving the plastic, as well as combinations of movements on the spot (non-locomotor) and movements that travel (locomotor).
4. The movements generated can then be selected, varied, combined and refined in a number of ways. Students could select one or two favourite movements. In pairs or small groups they could then combine a selection of movements into a dance phrase.

### VARIATION

- One of the group could take on the role of conductor/magician directing the movement of the rest.
- use different props e.g. ball, cane, hat, rag doll

Adapted from Zombie-Magician activity (Green Gilbert, A., & Smith, H. (1992). Creative dance for all ages: A conceptual approach. Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance).

## Explore – Mirror variations- pairs/small groups

*Students in pairs, or small groups, experiment with variations on mirroring their partner; such as mirror, echo, shadow, mirroring at a distance, in different planes, while travelling or in a small group.*



276

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

- Developing body awareness and refining technical skills of body control, accuracy and tuning into dance partners
- Exploring and improvising with dance elements using a task based structure (mirroring)
- Develop collaborative skills by working with a partner first and then a small group
- Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movement using choreographic devices such as canon and unison

1. Students in pairs take turns to be the leader, their partner mirrors their movement. The aim is to move in sync, so that it is impossible to tell who is the leader.
2. Explore variations:
  - Echo partner, ie. Move just after them.
  - Shadow partner i.e. face the same direction, one standing slightly behind and to the side of the other.
  - Mirror at a distance.
  - Mirror in a different plane, one lying one standing.
  - Which variation is more difficult? Why?
  - A real or imaginary line (line of symmetry) is drawn in middle of room (or between partners, partners stand either side, mirror each other while travelling along the line.
3. In groups of four combine some of the movements of the pairs into a dance with one or more lines of symmetry.
4. Look at images of buildings, objects that have 2 lines of symmetry to get ideas.

### VARIATION

- Mirror words as well as movements
- Mirror but change one element e.g. size/level/timing.

## Explore – Mirror variations- pairs/small groups

*Students in pairs, or small groups, experiment with variations on mirroring their partner; such as mirror, echo, shadow, mirroring at a distance, in different planes, while travelling or in a small group.*



277

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.

- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

•Developing body awareness and refining technical skills of body control, accuracy and tuning into dance partners

•Exploring and improvising with dance elements using a task based structure (mirroring)

•Develop collaborative skills by working with a partner first and then a small group

•Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movement using choreographic devices such as canon and unison

1. Students in pairs take turns to be the leader, their partner mirrors their movement. The aim is to move in sync, so that it is impossible to tell who is the leader.
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3. In groups of four combine some of the movements of the pairs into a dance with one or more lines of symmetry.
4. Look at images of buildings, objects that have 2 lines of symmetry to get ideas.

### VARIATION

- Mirror words as well as movements
- Mirror but change one element e.g. size/level/timing.

## Explore - Rewire/remix- Whole class/small groups

*Using a set dance i.e. a dance learnt in HPE, or a known social dance, is an accessible strategy for teachers and students new to creative*



278

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

- Develop collaborative skills by contributing a movement idea to the whole class followed by working with a small group
- Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movement using dance elements such as space, dynamics and time and choreographic devices such as canon and unison
- Developing understanding that dance can communicate ideas and stories using abstraction, therefore it is language like
- Exploring character and mood by experimenting with elements of dance and using the movement of the body used to represent a story, character or idea?

1. As a whole class learn or re-learn a social dance i.e. bush dance, bus-top etc and then:
2. De-construct the movements/formations/relationships in the dance, select a different style of music and nominate an event that a new social dance could be created for. Students create a dance for that event.

### VARIATION - examples

1. Teach the dance and then play new music, ask students in groups to re-create the dance using the new music, e.g. they have to keep at least 2 elements of the original dance, but can change any other elements to make a dance of 16 counts, therefore less confident students can re-create the dance using as much of the original as they need.
2. Keep the same patterns, e.g. eight counts facing partner, eight counts going around partner, eight counts to change partner, but use new movements e.g. hip hop style.
3. Keep original movements but improvise to make changes e.g. Use the written instructions of the macarena, and create the dance from those. Or learn the dance and then slow down and exaggerate the movements, add one other whole body movement such as turn jump, twist, spin to each of the actions, to create a new dance.

## Explore – *Dance talk/dance story- Whole class/small groups*

*Creating movement or gesture equivalents of words/phrases is a useful way to connect dance to language/literacy*



279

### **ACARA content description**

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.

- Developing understanding of practices.

### **Content Elaborations**

•Develop collaborative skills by contributing a movement idea to the whole class followed by working with a small group

•Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movement using dance elements such as space, dynamics and time and choreographic devices such as canon and unison

•Developing understanding that dance can communicate ideas and stories using abstraction, therefore it is language like

•Exploring character and mood by experimenting with elements of dance and using the movement of the body used to represent a story, character or idea?

1. Students individually or in groups create movements to represent words/phrases from stories/poems/lyrics or related to subject content.
2. With a partner or in a small group, students combine movement to create descriptive movement sentences, paragraphs, stories, experimenting by performing movements in unison, canon and by contrasting dynamics and time qualities.

### **VARIATIONS**

- In a movement circle, students individually create movements and gestures to represent key words/words in a phrase, one by one around the circle. Other students reflect echo the movement back. Take the opportunity to suggest and try variations e.g. repeat the movement to right and left, do the movement in slow motion, perform the movement as you turn on the spot.
- Spread out in the space, students individually create movements and gestures to represent key words/words in a phrase/verbs or descriptive words from a poem. Teacher can side-coach to lead improvisations with each of the movements i.e. could you repeat the movement but exaggerate it, repeat it but make it as small as possible.
- Students form a line along one side of room, and perform their movements as they travel from one side to the other.
- Students could physicalise a basic sentence e.g. 'he walked a few steps and then turned to look back'. Gradually add colour to the movement sentence e.g. 'he crept away like a shadow, suddenly he looked back furtively'.

## Explore – *Threes not a crowd* - groups of three

*Working in threes creates new possibilities for movement*



280

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

### Content Elaborations

- Develop collaborative skills by playing a movement game to develop material for a group dance sequence.
- Selecting, combining, arranging and refining movement using dance elements such as space, dynamics and relationships
- Developing understanding that dance can communicate ideas and stories using gesture, movement and dynamics
- Exploring character and mood by experimenting with elements of dance and using the movement of the body in relationship to communicate a concept.

1. In threes play 'lift doors' a chasing game where one dancer is always trying to get through the space between the other two.
2. Develop the movements used in this game by improvising different ways for one dancer to move between the other two e.g. leading with different body parts, changing level by sliding through, changing direction or timing of the movement as you move through, one being lifted/carried by the other two, or use an image such as moving through into another dimension/portal etc.
3. As a trio work on the idea of moving or helping the other to go through e.g. with touch, by turning, lifting, helping or extending their movement.
4. in groups of three, create three shapes or still images to depict e.g. conflict, negotiation, agreement.
5. Use the movement explored in the lift-door improvisation as transitions to join the still shapes together and create a movement sequence to represent an idea e.g. being trapped/escaping.
6. Refine the movement sequence by experimenting with different sorts of energy e.g. swinging, percussive and by expanding and contracting the space used by the dancers e.g. moving away from and back together in between the shapes.
7. Optional – learn movement material based on counterbalance and giving and taking weight, students have to incorporate at least two counterbalances into sequence.

## Explore – Moving cooperation – three borrowed strategies

### Three cooperative strategies reworked for dance



281

#### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.
- Developing understanding of practices.

#### Content Elaborations

- Selecting, combining and arranging movements using a task structure, and develop collaborative skills using a task scaffold.
- Practice collaborative dance-making by considering and accepting other ideas – meanings and interpretations
- Making connections to learning in other subject areas through use of cooperative scaffolds.

#### 1. Body-storming instead of Brainstorming

- Individually, In groups or as a whole class.
- Students and teacher generate movement material based on an idea, stimulus, movement inquiry question. E.g. How many movements could we create to represent . . . ? Accept all ideas, build on others ideas etc.
- Photograph or video the results. Use later for dance-making.

#### 2. Think pair square move instead of Think pair square

- Each student individually creates a movement in response to an idea, stimulus, movement inquiry question.
- They join with a partner and decide how to combine the two movements, i.e. they could join them with a transition, modify them in order to join them, or combine them into one movement.
- They join with 2 others and repeat this process. Combine together original movements and the combined movements in ABA form
- A – the combined sequence, followed by B – each person performs their own original movement, and then return to A – the combined sequence.

#### 3. Expert dancing groups instead of expert groups

- same process as expert groups, a class of 28 divides into 5 groups of 7 and each group improvises around a single idea e.g. they create a movement to represent either – earth, air, fire, water, metal.
- The groups reform as 7 groups of five and the new group practises a sequence made up of one movement based on each element, performed in a canon.

## Explore – Going somewhere – whole class dance

*This dance begins as a warm-up or improvisation exercise based on moving in different pathways e.g. only in straight lines or only in curved pathways. An idea image can then be added e.g. of escaping or going somewhere in a hurry. Pathways, gestures and movements suggest a narrative. The pathway structure is easily adaptable to different stimulus ideas e.g. my journey to school/around my neighbourhood etc.*



282

### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.

- Developing understanding of practices.

#### Content Elaborations

• Improvising new movement to communicate ideas in response to stimulus within a set structure

• Exploring character and mood by experimenting with elements of dance in a range of set, teacher-directed or student-devised dances

• Rehearsing a range of learnt and devised dances with an awareness and appreciation of their body capabilities

1. At the end of warm-up teacher invites students to walk in the room, avoiding furniture and finding the empty spaces, with a series of instructions, e.g. making curved, zig zag or angular right angle pathways. Choose one of those pathways to focus on. Each student finds a pathway they can repeat, and practise a times.
2. At this point pathways can be drawn, filmed, notated.
3. Each dancer, chooses at least two of the following.
  - Adds three freezes/pauses, ( at least two levels) into your pathway.
  - Add changes of speed, different ways to travel, 'locomotor' movements into the pathway.
  - As a group decide on a location, and suitable gestures (e.g. in a city, in a jungle etc. Include at least one unison movement that everyone has to include and a movement or sound cue for it.
  - As a class co-create a score that determines when the pauses happen, how many counts for each section etc.
  - As a class, contribute movements to co-construct a whole group phrase to add on to the end.

#### Variation

- Partners work together to combine their pathways, they move apart for some of the time and together for the rest.
- Students draw their pathway to school or around the neighbourhood, add in movements to symbolise represent locations on the pathway i.e. jump over a creek, climb stairs. Join with a partner or small group to combine your movement ideas into one dance.

## Explore – My first dance – whole class dance

*"In dance education for young children, performing is used in the dictionary definition sense of the word: the performer as 'the one who does'. To understand dance, it is necessary to engage in the physical activity 'dancing'". (Schiller & Meiners, 2003, p.107).*



### ACARA content description

- Exploring ideas and improvising with ways to represent ideas.

- Developing understanding of practices.

#### Content Elaborations

• exploring fundamental movements safely to improvise dance ideas, for example, floating like a cloud.

• experimenting with the elements of space, time, dynamics and relationships through movement.

• developing awareness of and taking responsibility for safe dance practices, for example, being aware of self and others in the dance space.

Adapted from ideas in, Shreeves, R. (1990). *Children Dancing*. London, Ward Lock Educational Practical Guide Series.

1. Provide opportunity
  - 'Our dancing time' or a 'dance space' with a sound device, instruments and props for children to explore.
2. Support their learning
  - Be available to notice their dance, to describe what you see, to dance with them or to scaffold their movement exploration
3. Set up a focused learning time for dance.
  - Begin with a warm –up using a simple structure such as moving and pausing to music. Use props or objects to inspire their exploration, a scarf that floats, a toy that jumps, images or sounds to dance to.
  - Use dance language to encourage movement development. Focus on the contrasts of fast/slow. High/low, move and pause. Think aloud "I see so many interesting shapes, how fast can you move from shape to shape? How slow could you move" Could melt like ice-cream melting on a hot day into a low shape? Can you run and run and run and stop?
  - Use interesting words as "How could we dance that idea?"
4. Support them as artists
  - Create a simple dance at the end to share your explorations using the framework:

- Shape

- Movement

- Shape

Ask the children to create a beginning shape, to hold that shape and to use any or all of their movement ideas when the music or percussion plays and to make an ending shape when the music ends.

Document or invite them to document their dances in photo, video, drawing or writing.

Swerve  
Reach  
Slide  
Jump  
Dodge  
Hide  
Escape  
Melt

1. Each group member should choose one action word from the list, or the group can decide together on four actions.
2. Work out four counts of movement for each one.
3. Work out the order and how to space them
4. Do two of them in unison and two in canon
5. Add a beginning and ending shape

<i>Make one of the movements very slow</i>	What's in a name? Dance	<b>DO ONE MOVEMENT IN CANON</b>
<i>Pause or freeze for four counts during the sequence</i>	Create a movement to go with your name of 1-4 counts, Join with three others and teach each other your movements. Join all movements together in a sequence. Then make some changes	<b>Choose At least Two formations e.g. circle Line or random</b>
Add a turn or jump to one of the movements	<b>REPEAT ONE OF THE MOVEMENTS</b>	<b>Do one of the Movements At A Different LeVeL</b>

## *Dance experiment.*

**Organise the movements your way**  
Use the following checklist to think about, decide on and record alterations to the original sequence using the Elements of Dance

*Form*

- Repeat the movement
- Perform in unison
- Perform the movement in canon
- Create strong contrasts between the movements

*Space*

- Change the direction
- Change the level
- Move in curved or angular pathways
- Perform the movements in one or more formations.

*Time*

- Make the movement as slow as possible
- Make the movement fast
- Move continuously fast or slow
- Make sudden changes

*Dynamics*

- Move with a little or a lot of energy
- Try swinging, percussing, sustaining or collapsing one or more of the movements
- Change the energy from soft to hard

*Action*

- Change the body part
- Move only on the spot or make the movement travel
- Turn or jump the movement
- Exaggerate the movement

Task card examples

## Form and perform – shape and share

- Four strategies
  - Venn Dances
  - Overlap
  - Tag team
  - Wave master
- Pass across



## Form and perform – four strategies for combining/sharing small groups

Four ways to share dances in class, a low stakes preparation for performing for more unfamiliar audiences.



286

### ACARA content description

Collaborate to make and perform dances  
Use the elements of dance to perform dance sequences using expressive and technical skills.

### Content Elaborations

Rehearsing and presenting a learnt or devised dance

Presenting a learned sequence of movements

Respecting other students' dancing when dancing and being an attentive audience member

Selecting, combining and arranging movements using a task structure, and developing collaborative skills using a task scaffold.

Selecting and combining movements using forming devices like overlapping, canon or call and response

### First decide on the order of groups for a shared performance

1. Share and share – small groups are paired up. They perform their sequence for the other group, who give feedback and/or film the sequence.
2. **Venn Dance**
  - Each group negotiates with the next group in the order to share the last movement from their phrase.
  - The two groups work out a way to perform the movement, including order, formation, sequence e.g. the first group finishes by jumping up and crouching down in a circle. The second group run in form a circle around them and repeat the jumping up and crouching down, the first group exit, running out between the spaces in the outside circle.
  - The combined movements create overlapped transitions between groups, moving venn diagrams
3. **Overlap**
  - All groups arranged in the space, numbered randomly
  - Group 1 starts their sequence. After a number of counts, the next group starts and so on, after each group finishes they hold the ending until all are still.
4. **Tag team**
  - A group performs their sequence, when they finish, each member of the group goes and tags someone from the next group who then perform.
5. **Wave maker**
  - All groups arranged in a diagonal or linear formation. A group at 'the front' of the formation starts their sequence and then each group in turn starts their sequence after 2/4 counts of the group in front, sending a wave or ripple of movements down the line.
6. **Dance on film**
  - Students film their sequences and then use digital software to choreograph/modify to create a new dance e.g. save still images and combine in a slide show; utilise effects such as tiling, slo-mo, reverse or fast forward; use green screen techniques to place dance in fantasy or real life backgrounds; add text and voice over; experiment with how to share e.g. on a large wall during a nighttime event, on multiple screens in the library or on the school intranet.

## Form and perform – *Pass across – individual phrase with shared vocabulary*

*Combines improvisation and a structured way to perform and share.*



287

### **ACARA content description**

Collaborate to make and perform dances  
Use the elements of dance to perform dance sequences using expressive and technical skills.

### **Content Elaborations**

Presenting a learned sequence of movements

Rehearsing a devised dance

Respecting other students' dancing when dancing and being an attentive audience member

Selecting, combining and arranging movements using a task structure, and developing collaborative skills using a task scaffold.

Selecting and combining movements using forming devices like overlapping, canon or call and response

1. Students in a line across one wall/fence/line on a court (whole class or groups depending on size of space)
2. All cross at once while improvising with movement idea e.g.
  - Writing own movement tag on a long wall.
  - Trying to be at different levels to everyone else
  - Performing an idea e.g. moving through gaps in the air
  - Performing an individual phrase based on an idea e.g. being blown by wind, climbing through cave, experimenting with contrasting movements e.g. sharp/fluid.
  - Whole class or  $\frac{1}{2}$  class in pairs, all pairs cross with the first line being shadowed by the second.
3. Add on group movement such as a freeze/stillness performed at different times, or on a cue, such as ; the middle person freezes followed by everyone else, aiming to move in unison.

### **VARIATION**

Divide class, half line up at each back corner.

- Starting with first student from one side walking across followed by first student from the other corner, continue alternately, the second always passing just behind the first.
- Once that is managed, increase speed till you are running across, and then add in other movements e.g. turns or jumps.

## *Respond and reflect - Think and relate*

- Modes
- Blog it
- Analog it
- Formats
- Body responding
- Strategies
- Reflective guides
- Just listen
- Reflecting games
- Group to group

?

**Respond**  
In groups present a dance element; define it physically and in words by: categorising, naming special features and giving examples.

?

**Reflect**  
Think? In what ways is making a dance, like playing sport and in what ways is it like writing a story? If it were a story what genre of story would it be?

What did you see?  
What did you think?  
What did you wonder?

?

?

**Respond**  
Pairs write the story of their own dance or that of another pair. Jointly construct a feedback sheet to give to your invited audience.

- How did we use our imaginations and our bodies today?
- What interesting ways did we use to discover new movements?
- What was something new that we tried or learnt or discovered about moving?

**Reflect**  
If you can make a dance about an idea i.e. surprise; what other things could you make dances about? (Ideas Toss)  
Write ideas on the whiteboard and categorise, what is the most popular?

?

## Respond and reflect – *modes for responding*



289

### **ACARA content description**

Respond to the meanings and interpretations of dances they make and perform.

Describe, discuss and explain how the elements used communicate meaning.

### **Content Elaborations**

Considering viewpoints – forms and elements, meanings and interpretations

Writing, talking and drawing about and discussing with others the meaning and intended purposes of their own dance

Presenting and evaluating their dance using internet-based technologies

### **1. Body responding**

- Children could give feedback or feed forward to their peers in movement rather than words (Fraser et al, 2007a). Teacher questions e.g. "Could anyone show me something they saw, noticed, wondered or thought, but show me in dance?"
- Children could demonstrate how an element was used in a dance they watched, and other students could guess e.g. which element.
- Play a dance version of "in the manner of" where children take turns to think of (or choose out of a hat) a dance element, they modify the movement e.g. by performing it in slow motion (time) and everyone else has to guess the element.

### **2. Analog it**

- Mind-mapping with words or images,
- Placemat strategy
- Y and x charts,
- Exit passes
- Graffiti sheets
- Drawings of dances/ dance maps/ student devised notations.

### **3. Blog it**

- Blogging is a flexible format for students to document their own work and start conversations about their artmaking.
- Students blog comments and responses during dance-making, back in the classroom or at home.
- Students use the blog to document their dance making, including digital recordings, photographs.
- Parents have an opportunity to be part of the process by adding posts/comments/asking questions on the blogs.

## Respond and reflect – *strategies for responding*



290

ACARA content description  
Respond to the meanings and interpretations of dances they make and perform.  
Describe discuss and explain how the elements used communicate meaning

### Content Elaborations

- Using structured or open-ended approaches to responding and reflecting on dance.
- Using collaborative processes for performing/sharing/responding such as self and peer assessment.
- Considering viewpoints, forms and elements, meanings and interpretations.
- Writing about and discussing with others the meaning and intended purposes of the dance they have made

### 1. Group to group

Two pairs or two small groups of students join and share their dance in progress, to get and give peer feedback. They each share at least one thing they liked before sharing one thing they think could be developed/modified to make the dance more effective.

### 2. Reflective Guides

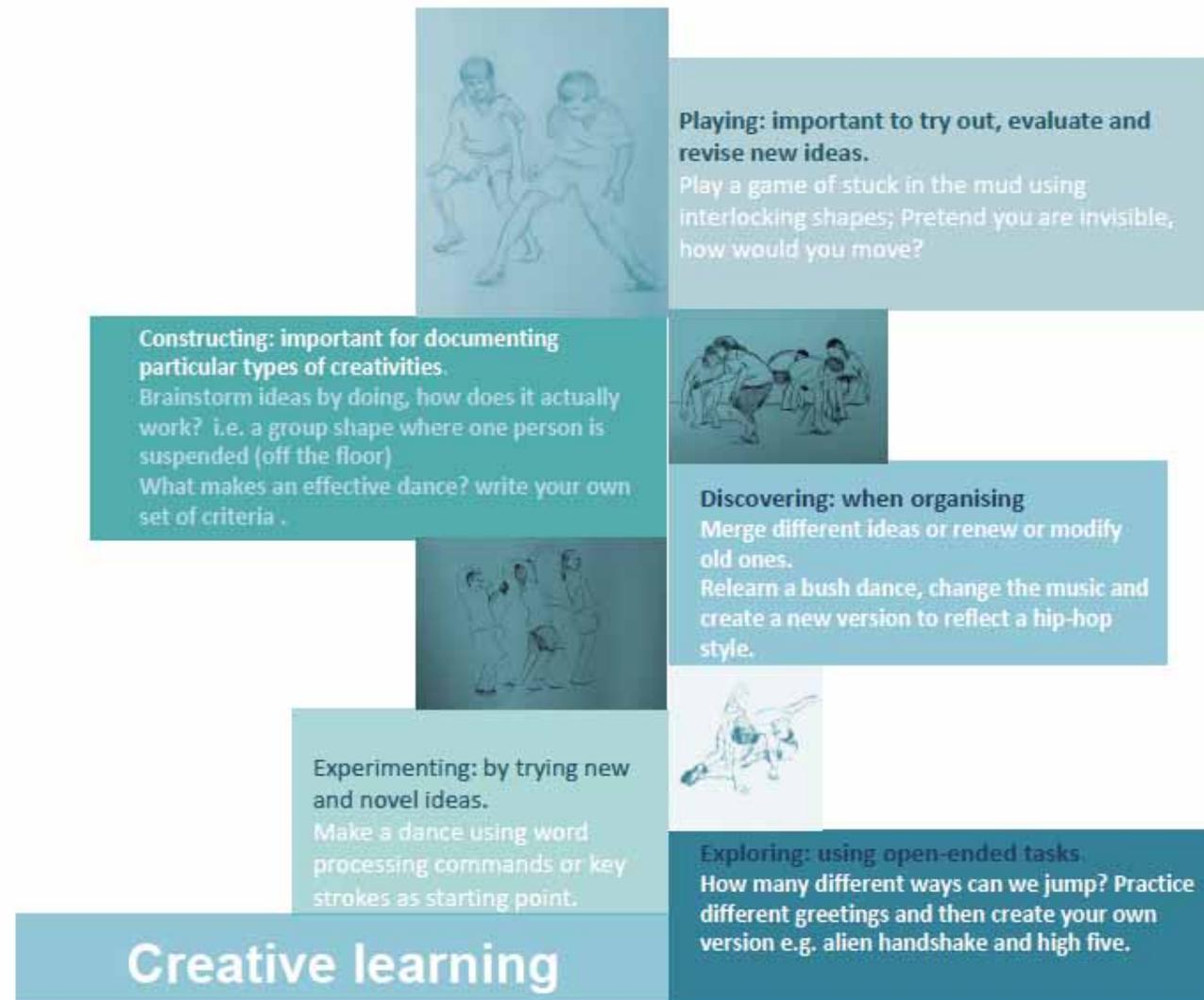
Using a guide like ‘what did I see, what did I think, what did I wonder’, provides a scaffold for response. The three questions also relate to levels of responding i.e. See - identify, describe explain what you saw; Think - how were the elements of dance used, what effect did it have; Wonder - what did I learn, what might I do next time, what did the dance remind me.

### 3. Just listen

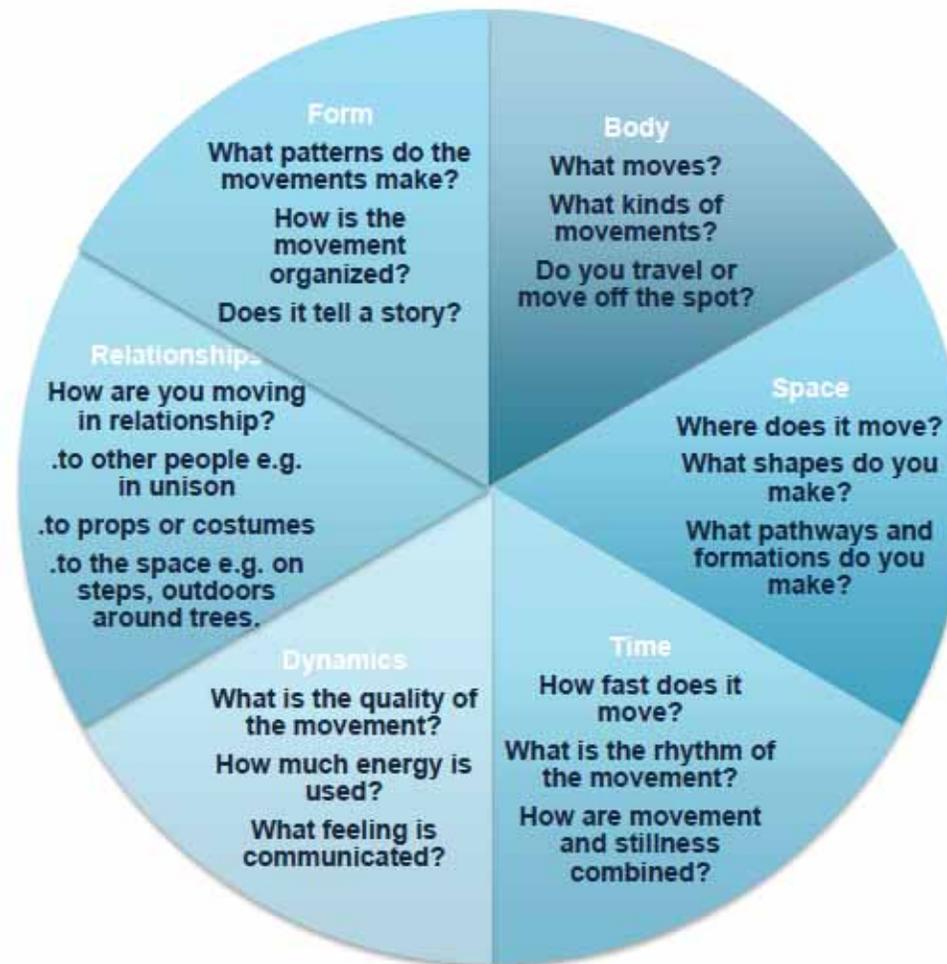
Teacher guides students to remember, describe, ask questions about what was just experienced in the class, by asking them to visualise i.e. using a think aloud method, talk through the process we have been through, the movements and dances created. Develops students familiarity with and understanding of the reflective process.

### 4. Reflection games

- **Snowball fight** – all students write something they learnt on a scrap of paper, they are tossed around for a designated amount of time (e.g. 5-10 sec), everyone then takes one scrap of paper and reads that comment out.
- **Gossip Mill** – using drama convention of gossip mill, share with one person something that you remembered, thought, saw, wondered about, on a signal (e.g. music playing) circulate and then on next signal find a different partner, and share what you just heard, repeat a number of times.



***What do creative learning processes look like in dance?***



## ***ELEMENTS of dance – and questions***

- You can use the elements of dance to:
- Make any movement into dance using abstraction
  - Develop one movement idea or motif into a dance sequence
  - Organise and give shape to your dance

Body/action	Space	Time
•Do the movement using a different body part – e.g. shake hands using feet.	•Do the movement at a different level or in a different plane, try the sequence lying down.	•How slow can you do the movement, and how fast.
•Do the movement to the left as well as right.	•Do the movement in a different direction e.g. diagonal instead of forward.	•Can you learn someone else's movement and do them in unison –in sync.
•Add detail e.g. add arm movements as you step.	•How small can you make the movement, how huge?	•Do your movements, but move only on the beat.
•Add other body actions e.g. turn, jump or travel while doing the movement.	•What path does the movement make on the floor or in the air?	•Do your phrase, but include stillness and pauses, move with the rhythm or the melody.
•Develop the movement e.g. start with a circle of arms – how many other circling actions could you do?	•Experiment with different formations and use of canon. Find ways to move between the formations.	•Find a piece of music and adapt your movements to suit the tempo, rhythm or expressive elements of the music.

***HOW to use the elements to make dance.***

You can use the elements of dance to:

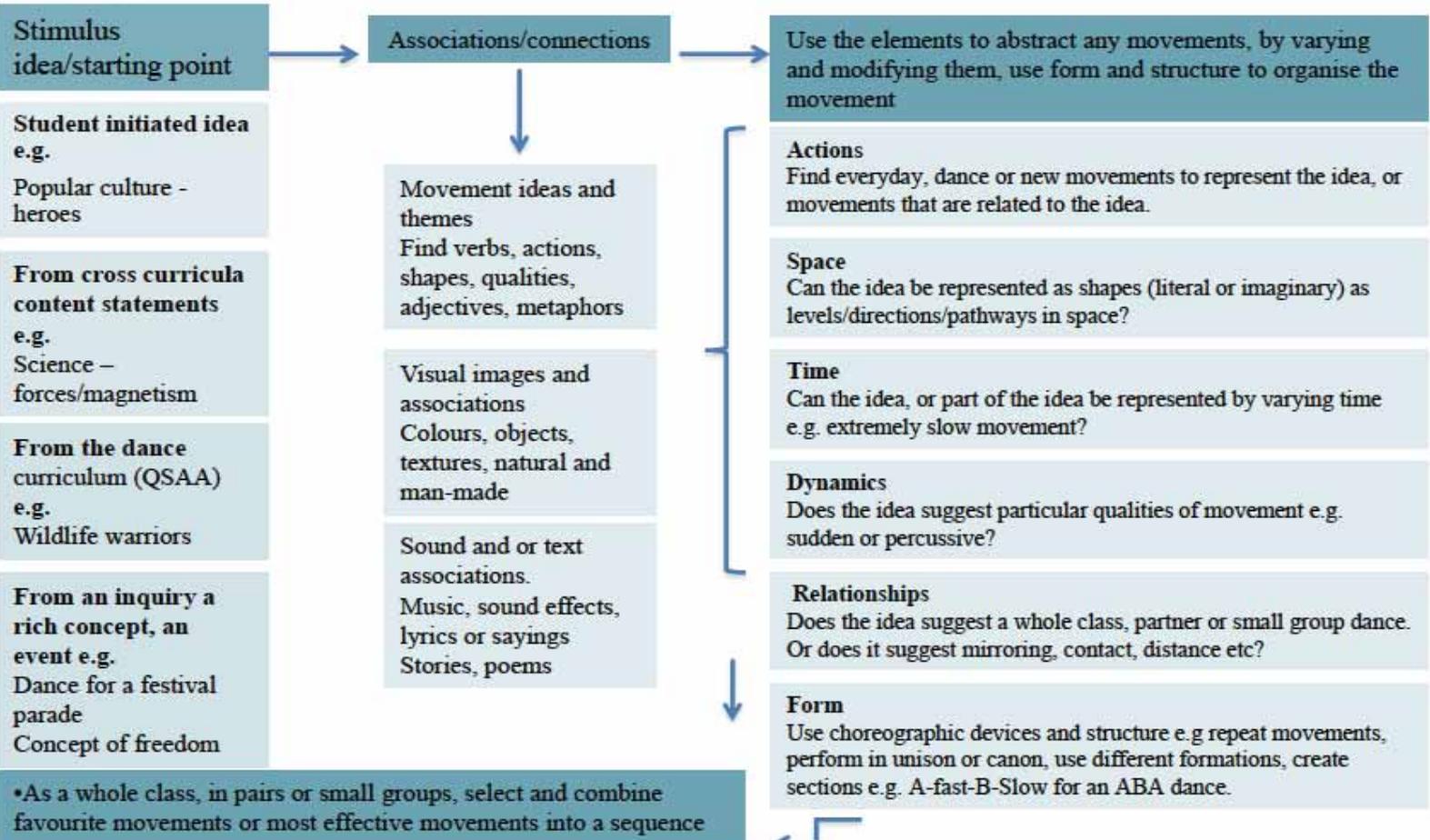
- Make any movement into dance using abstraction
- Develop one movement idea or motif into a dance sequence
- Organise and give shape to your dance

Dynamics/qualities	Relationships	Form/structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Do the movements with low energy, as if it were hot, do with high energy as if it were cold. You now have a dance in AB form.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Try doing a movement phrase, keeping all the actions, close to the body or the opposite, away from the body.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create a simple dance movement, use repetition to create a sequence by gradually changing or adding to the movement. E.g. grape-vine step repeated in different directions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create actions that are sudden and some that are sustained (continuous/smooth), put them together to make a contrasting dance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create a short phrase of movements with a partner, perform the movements close together, adapt to fit the new relationship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create a sequence of actions, join them together perform as a continuous canon.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Try doing your movement with a different quality e.g. a sharp handshake, a percussive run, a collapsing fall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Add moments of contact into a duet, e.g. find ways to counter balance/lean or push off your partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Create a dance of shapes, begin the dance in the first shape, move from shape to shape in different ways, end in a finishing shape.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Try doing your movements as if you were trapped inside a box, how does it change the quality?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Try adding a prop to a dance sequence. E.g. use follow the leader to generate movements and add e.g. hat, cane fan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Make a chance dance, where actions and elements are picked at random.</li> </ul>

***HOW to use the elements to make dance.***

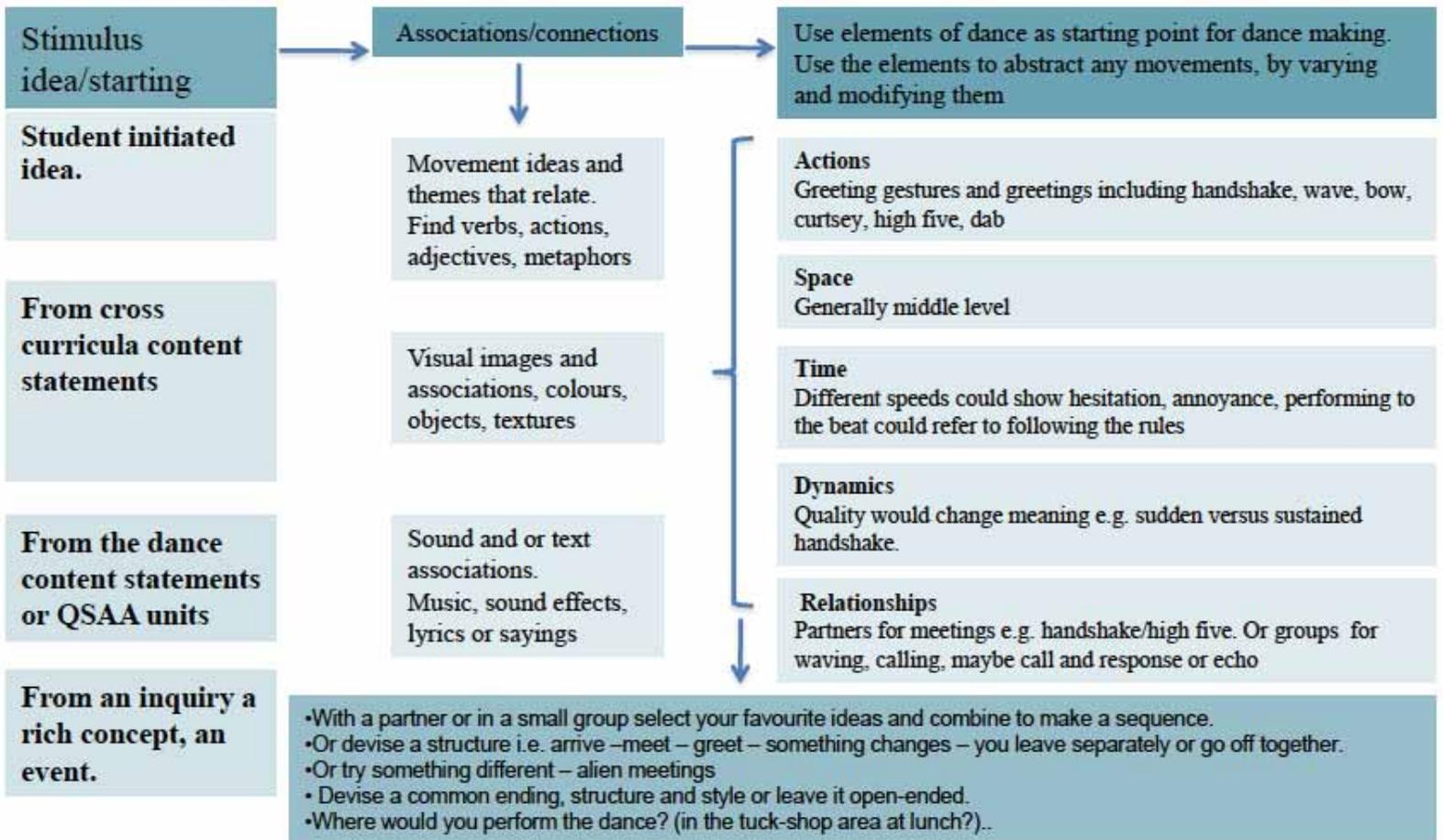
# Make a dance – start with a stimulus or starting point.

Brainstorm movement ideas connected to the stimulus idea. Look for related themes, issues, support materials, associations and connections



# Make a greeting dance — e.g. from elaborations. 'The Arts / Dance / Years 3 and 4 / ACADAM005'

With the class generate a list of greetings, discuss: Why we have greetings?  
e.g. handshake, wave, bow, curtsey, high-five.



# Glossary

## **Abstract movement**

Movement to represent an action - not mime. Any movement can be abstracted by modifying it e.g. a wave of the hand can be enlarged, slowed down, performed with a different body part

## **Asymmetry**

A shape made by a dancer or dancers that has no line of reflection (mirror line).

## **Body: an element of dance**

Body activity—weight transference, travelling, turning, rising, falling

Body base: the part of the body supporting a dancer in a balanced position (such as two feet, or one hand and one foot).

Body parts—legs, arms, head torso, hands, feet

Body shapes—curved, straight, open, closed, symmetrical, and asymmetrical.

Body shape: curved, straight, open, closed, symmetrical, and asymmetrical.

## **Canon**

A choreographic device or structure in dancers perform the same movement (or phrase of movement) at different times one after the other (think Mexican Wave).

## **Choreographic Device**

A specific way of manipulating movement to develop dance choreography (for example, repetition, unison, canon and contrast).

## **Counter balance**

A balance for more than one person, where each person relies on the others to maintain their shape.

## **Dynamics**

In Dance, refers to how movement is performed, and includes the weight, force, and/or energy that are applied to movement over time. For example, heavy to light weight, strong to gentle force. It also refers to the qualities of movement e.g.: floating, swinging, sudden, smooth, sharp, percussive, vibratory and explosive. Manipulating the energy in a creates certain qualities e.g. a light free flowing movement may create a dream-like quality, and constrained movement may create an aggressive mood.

## **Echo**

Where a dancer or group of dancers repeat a movement performed by another dancer or group. In this framework, echo does not have to mean an exact copy of the movement, but may be echoing the quality.

## **Elements of dance**

Space, time, dynamics and relationships.

## **Embellishment**

A choreographic device where detail is added to a move, such as a hand gesture or an arm movement.

## **Focus**

Where a dancer is looking, or where the body is reaching or indicating to; concentration on the task.

## **Form**

The way in which movement is organised and shaped to create a dance (for example, ABA, theme and variations, narrative).

## **General space**

Space in the overall dance area that is shared by all dancers.

## **Idea**

A visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic concept, or a combination of these, within an arts discipline.

## **Improvisation**

Spontaneous movement in response to a stimulus, it can be either free- form or structured, where certain decisions are set i.e. mirror your partner, but the form or choice of movement is unknown.

**Level**

The height in space at which a dancer is moving e.g.

Low: close to the floor with the intention downward.

Medium: the level of everyday walking.

High: any movement done with elevation, not necessarily a jump

**Locomotor movement**

Travelling movements, movement from one space to another such as walking, running, hopping, skipping, leaping or crawling.

**Motif**

A movement or gesture that can be elaborated upon or developed in a variety of ways in the process of dance choreography e.g. a rippling arm movement can be done at different speeds and in different directions, performed by one dancer or a group

**Movement phrase**

A series of movements linked together to make a distinctive pattern.

**Movement sequence**

A series of movements, longer than a phrase but shorter than a section of a dance.

**Narrative structure**

A choreographic structure that tells a story.

**Movement vocabulary**

The accumulation of movement, steps, gestures that make up a repertoire for physical expression of feelings or ideas.

**Non-locomotor movement**

On the spot movements. Also called axial movement, in which the body remains anchored to one spot by a body part. For example, bending, stretching, twisting, shaking, bouncing, rising, sinking, pushing, pulling, or swinging and swaying.

**Pathways**

Patterns created in the air or on the floor by the body or body parts as a dancer moves in and through space.

**Personal space**

The "space bubble" around the body, extending as far as the body and body parts can reach, without travelling.

**Phrase**

A brief sequence of related movements that make up the smallest and simplest unit of dance form

**Repetition**

A choreographic device in which movements or motifs are repeated.

**Relationships**

Might occur between body parts (for example, right arm to left arm, hand to face); the body and the floor (for example, close to, away from); the body and objects (for example, a chair, fan, stick, scarf); the body and space (for example, an expansive or limited relationship); and the body and others (for example, dance to one or more dancers).

**Rhythm**

In Dance, combination of long and short movements.

**Safe dance practices**

Can be defined as the practice of selecting and executing safe movement. The focus is on providing dance activities and exercises that allow students to participate without risk of injury. All dance movement should be performed relevant to an individual's body type and capabilities.

**Sequence**

The linking together of series of ideas, much like words are linked together to form sentences and paragraphs:

**Symmetry**

A shape made by a dancer or dancers that has a line of reflection (a mirror line).

**Space**

In Dance, where the body moves, including level, dimension, direction, shape, active space, positive space, negative space, planes, pathways, general space, personal space and performance space.

**Stillness**

Is not inaction, rather a waiting with a sense of readiness, an energized stillness?

**Stimulus**

The starting point or incentive for creative movement. Stimuli for dance compositions can be auditory, visual, ideational, tactile or kinaesthetic

**Technical skills**

Combination of proficiencies in control, accuracy, alignment, strength, balance and coordination in an art form that develop with practice:

**Time**

A dance element made up of rhythm, tempo, beat, and accent as well as stillness

**Transition**

A movement or action to join individual movements or shapes, or to join phrases or sections of a dance/work

**Translation**

When dancers copy movements of another dancer or a movement idea but modify it to suit their physical abilities by copying the essence of the movement e.g. a jump becomes a raising of the shoulders for a child in a wheelchair

**Manipulation**

Varying the movements using the elements. e.g.

Changing the size of actions - small actions can be done bigger and vice versa.

Changing the dynamics - A gentle movement becomes a strong movement, a sharp movement becomes rounded.

Changing the formation of a dance sequence by placing the dancers in different shapes e.g. diamond, lines, circle.

Taking a movement performed by one part of the body or side, left or right (e.g. legs) and transferring the movement to another body part (e.g. arms) and vice versa.

**Unison**

Dancers moving at the same time doing the same movements.

**Visual elements**

Include line, colour, shape, texture, space and form found in artworks, and incorporated in the design of performance spaces (including sets) for dance and drama.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Sample of Teaching Reflection

<p>4/11/14 Entering into the dance class with a buzz, I had found some new and really interesting music, been improvising, have a really new idea, feeling confident about this. Going to enjoy it</p> <p>I start pacing out the floor, turn the music on, stretching, limbering up, then I notice the kids are at the door all looking in, I change the music, more upbeat and walk towards the door, I motion to them to enter and walk back, in gesturing a circle and clapping to music/beat, till everyone has joined in, till the energy build up</p> <p>what do I notice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boys</li> <li>• boys concentrating</li> <li>• that little girl having so much fun</li> <li>• it's the boys that are the most interested</li> <li>• asking me where I teach so they can go to my classes</li> <li>• wondering why we only had 3 dance lessons,</li> <li>• me too</li> <li>• wanting more</li> </ul> <p>how excitement often looks like naughtiness</p> <p>even D. had a job I wanted more time to do more</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore ways to get to the floor</li> <li>• the space between</li> <li>• boys counter balance</li> <li>• building a dance from a score</li> <li>• a dream – boys dance group in PE time</li> </ul> <p>POME I can see through the innocent, playful, earnest simplicity of their dance. Enough of the Eisteddfod aesthetic. Pointing your toes precociousness I want to see their dance, see them dance. like a JAGGED crystal, complex and shiny with eager freedom otherwise, painted faces, lycra formidable those smiles killing me, maybe it's the lipstick and the hairspray, like botoxed babies they wait to turn it on, for the judges bring back the ordinary in praise of it when they make their own dance, no matter how banal, the making of it remains in the performance, and intelligence is laid bare. Think and dance together, what's the difference.</p>	<p>Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May Ah ha two So I am already trying this stuff and when I look back I will be able to identify it in what I did.</p> <p>-hyper-positivity being attentive to their developing ideas real contact energizing attitude atmosphere moving control withitness attentiveness attention humour</p> <p>Focus on moving not talking needs to be modeled. Maybe all the things you want from them need to be.</p> <p>You want them to be attentive, so you need to have eyes in the back of your head (because kids are moving, unpredictable possibility of tighter rein despite the above, tighter control of their use of space, allowing for 'silliness' (Buck, 2005)</p> <p>What does classroom management look like in this context? What is disruptive – in dance?</p> <p>This week confirmed even more that the "dance first, talk later policy" works Focus on the body not the verbal via teacher exposition.</p> <p><b>When the distinction between mind and body is evaporated, and we dance between them it encourages all kinds of children to find their place in that dance</b> When one interpretation of clever is not privileged One interpretation of an idea Dance is not just for the physically adept Dance is somewhere that those physically adept can enjoy being able to show their skill The creative task allows children deemed mind clever to solve the problem well.</p>
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Appendix 2

Sample of conversation from mindmapping exercise, wordle graphic and found poem.

We talked a lot about fun, but is there more to it, or more to the point, what does fun mean in this context? *An extract from a conversation about dancing and what was important.*

R - Is dancing important apart from fun?

You have fun and you teach us moves we didn't know'

Like words

Like thinking

The fun isn't all about it, it's a part of serious and it helps you in life sometimes and you are more social with people and you're more physical

When your dancing you're free

And when your doing work you're obviously not free

You just have to sit there

In dancing you think more about what you doing and how you are moving, thinking about your group and not just yourself having all the ideas

You have to be physical.

You need to have a choice,

Everyone has a choice, if there's no choice, its like the rules, you have to do it, but if there's a choice its easier,

You have the choice to do it or not to do it

When your making up a dance you need freedom

If you don't have freedom, you're just doing something you don't want to do and if you like

dancing you should be able to do it with freedom

If you don't have any problems you won't be able to learn from them

Thinking is important because you need to think what moves you want to do

Ideas are because you have to think about what ideas you want to do

If you don't have fun making up a dance you won't really like it and you won't want to do it.

If you don't have teamwork you're gonna collapse and your going to get bored

Students might not know as much as adults, so they might have more fun than if they already knew it

If your unique you'll be different to everyone else, it will be more interesting if your different to everyone else, if it is something you made up yourself its not something everyone is doing, it will be more different and interesting for people watching

Copying isn't wrong in dancing because you could copy someone's idea and change it around and make it your own.

Remember goes with thinking but it also goes with physical.

Make things up?

Make things up goes with creative.

Unique is making things up sort of.

And choice.

I think problem would go with behavior.

I think problem is one of the hardest ones.

Adding could go with remembering because if you add something you have to remember it.

Physical?

Being physical?

I think serious is an important word, because if you make your art, or if you do a dance, and if you muck it up, you have to be serious.

This word freedom is because, all our dance moves that we did, to me it felt like we were free and we were doing such good dancing.

I think creative, because you can make lots of dance moves up and you can do whatever you want with it.

I think adding is pretty important too, because you might want to add some more moves into the middle of your dance to make it longer or more interesting.

I think a teacher is someone who guides you and is there to help, kindfull

Is that even a word?

Yes, yes . .

I think ideas are good, because if you just copy someone or doing something else its not much of what your made of or your not giving out what you think is something good

We talked a lot about fun, but is there more to it, or more to the point, what does fun mean in this context? <i>An extract from a conversation about dancing and what was important.</i>	
R - Is dancing important apart from fun?	
You have fun and you teach us moves we didn't know'	fun
Like words	
Like thinking	thinking
The fun isn't all about it, it's a part of serious and it helps you in life sometimes and you are more social with people and you're more physical	Life skills Being social Being physical
When your dancing you're free	
And when your doing work you're obviously not free	
You just have to sit there	
In dancing you think more about what you doing and how you are moving, thinking about your group and not just yourself having all the ideas	Body thinking – moving and thinking at the same time
You have to be physical	physicality
You need to have a choice.	
Everyone has a choice, if there's no choice, its like the rules, you have to do it, but if there's a choice its easier.	choice
You have the choice to do it or not to do it	
When your making up a dance you need freedom	freedom
If you don't have freedom, you're just doing something you don't want to do and if you like dancing you should be able to do it with freedom	freedom
If you don't have any problems you won't be able to learn from them	Learning from problems
Thinking is important because you need to think what moves you want to do	
Ideas are because you have to think about what ideas you want to do	Thinking and ideas
If you don't have fun making up a dance you won't really like it and you won't want to do it.	Fun helps
If you don't have teamwork you're gonna collapse and your going to get bored	Teamwork helps
Students might not know as much as adults, so they might have more fun than if they already knew it	Having fun with the unknown
If your unique you'll be different to everyone else, it will be more interesting if your different to everyone else. if it is something you made up yourself its not something everyone is doing, it will be more different and interesting for people watching	Being different is more interesting
Copying isn't wrong in dancing because you could copy someone's idea and change it around and make it your own	Copying isn't wrong
Remember goes with thinking but it also goes with physical	Using body to remember
Make things up?	
Make things up goes with creative	Creative and making
Unique is making things up sort of	
And choice.	Choice for creativity
I think problem would go with behavior.	
I think problem is one of the hardest ones.	
Adding could go with remembering because if you add something you have to remember it.	
Physical?	Physical
Being physical?	
I think serious is an important word, because if you	Art is serious

make your art, or if you do a dance, and if you muck it up, you have to be serious.	
This word freedom is because, all our dance moves that we did, to me it felt like we were free and we were doing such good dancing.	Freedom goes with good dancing
I think creative, because you can make lots of dance moves up and you can do whatever you want with it.	Creative is open-ended
I think adding is pretty important too, because you might want to add some more moves into the middle of your dance to make it longer or more interesting.	Making dance
I think a teacher is someone who guides you and is there to help, kindfull	
Is that even a word?	
Yes, yes . .	
I think ideas are good, because if you just copy someone or doing something else its not much of what your made of or your not giving out what you think is something good	Good to have your own ideas

What helps in dance?

- Teamwork
- Physicality
- Choice
- Freedom
- Or just serious fun

What type of thinking

- Body thinking
- Thinking ideas, dancing them
- Body remembering

Life skills

- Being social
- Being physical
- Be original and be a team

Learning from problems, you know the fun is not all about it, it's a part of serious

Making dance

- Is having fun with the unknown
- Having choice to create
- No right answer, copy and remix

*What is important in dance?*

- Freedom
- Thinking
- Ideas
- Fun
- Being Physical
- Teamwork
- Moving

## Appendix 3

### Sample of photo interpretation

Children getting excited about having 'just one more practice'

They would be directed to sit or return to the choir stands to sit, a number of times during the session. As soon as the teacher would signal with an "ok, lets start" or by turning on the music, they would leap up. Maybe moving, even if you weren't in the mood, was better than sitting. The boys group in the photograph, used that more flexible approach to collaboration. They would sometimes work independently and then come back into the group, enjoying their own movement experiments independently, not too focused on the end product.



IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DANCING

Improvising movements, there seemed to be a lot of energy for improvising, some students constantly moving, maybe it could be called fidgeting. As long as they had worked out when to move and when to be still, they could operate under the behaviour radar.

#### Laughing

Sometimes they would laugh so much, they would fall over. They would usually laugh a lot, when moving in the space with the whole group, a chance to mingle?



Sometimes they would smile so much in these all images, as if in a photo shoot. Without a clear idea what the image was about, just 'make pictures' so they did. They picked up the idea that using different levels was a good idea. "Make your picture more interesting than the other groups", was an incentive to keep up on someone's back.

#### BEING WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Was very important, solidarity, maybe against the teacher, depending on what else was happening. A chance to be learning, with your friends, in a different way than in the classroom



FINDING STRATEGIES TO GET BY

Copying each other. These two boys worked out that mirroring was a good strategy, because one or the other would take turns being absent from school, so couldn't develop any idea for too long. The group below, were committed, pretty sure that their idea was totally independent of any teacher instruction or guidance.



IN THE FLOW

Counting, repeating, checking their maps and then trying out the ideas, they seemed to take seriously the task they had been given.



#### SERIOUS FUN

Getting over it and moving on ... it didn't always go smoothly, sometimes they needed help to move the energy, or just have someone else seem to make the decision, a decision they were in conflict about.



TEACHER AS NEGOTIATOR

#### Appendix 4

Samples of ethics forms- informed consent and information sheets.

- Principal informed consent forms:

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- Teacher informed consent forms

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has been removed

This administrative form  
has been removed



**APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH OR TEACHING INVOLVING  
HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**  
Human Research Ethics Committee

Dance in the Classroom  
PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Parent/Carer

Your child is invited to take part in a research project investigating dance in the primary school. The study is being conducted by Miriam Torzillo and will contribute to a as part of a Doctorate of Education degree at James Cook University. The class your child attends has been chosen as the site for the study and agreement has been obtained from the Principal and the classroom teacher for the study to be conducted.

Research has shown that creative dance education can develop students' cooperative, creative, physical and thinking skills. The aim of this study is to learn more about the teaching strategies used in creative dance and how students respond to and learn in dance.

I would like to collect data in your child's classroom through: a focus group interview with students before starting data collection; observing and videotaping class dance lessons; informal conversations with students prior to and after dance lessons; and reading any written notes students make about their dance learning. The focus group interview will be audio taped, and should take up to one hour. As other children will be present, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

The video data will only be viewed by the researcher, and will be kept in secure storage at the university. If any parents or guardians refuse permission, their children will work in a separate group that will not be videotaped.

I will attend dance lessons weekly for one to two school terms. Interviews and informal conversations will take place in class time and in the school venue.

This research will contribute to my doctoral thesis, future academic publications, and will help to develop an understanding of how the Arts (which are part of the new National Curriculum) can best contribute to learning. All data collected will be de-identified. Names and locations will be referred to by pseudonym only.

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary and your child can stop taking part in the study at any time without explanation or prejudice. You may also withdraw any raw data from the study.

If you are happy for your child to be involved in the study, please fill in the attached consent form and return it to the classroom teacher.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Miriam Torzillo or my supervisor, Dr Reesa Sorin.

Principal Investigator:  
Miriam Torzillo  
School of Education  
James Cook University

Supervisor:  
Name: Dr Reesa Sorin  
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## Appendix 5

### **Poem from method with in text citations**

I travelled in metaphors  
In this research journey,  
dancing through it (Janesick 1998)

Finding my feet – to feeling my way.  
Standing my ground  
To going with the flow

One step forward, then two steps back (Maple & Edwards, 2007).  
Into questions, questions and more questions.  
From the remembered past, to the lived now, and then to some imagined future (Clandinin, 2006),  
but “always in relation” ( ibid, p.46).

Through fluidity, change, uncertainty, proliferation;  
I made ontological claims to myself (Lather 2006).  
Looking for a “point of constancy” (Clandinin, 2006, p.45), in the study of experience.

Hoping to reveal images of the possible, down corridors into rooms through houses  
Telling stories, entwining tales and testing out theories and tangents; till the moment came to  
stop and write (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

## Appendix 6

Imagined dance recount, following a dance observation

Sometimes she yells at us, but hardly really compared to other teachers, we spend a bit of time talking, but during the talking I'm thinking of my moves.

I know which ones I want to use, I really like shuffling moves, using your feet fast and spinning on the ground. I like the robot too, it's funny and fun.

When the music starts we have to dance our dance map, we know what we are doing, but sometimes we change it on the spot.

It's ok to be silly as long as you are dancing and not pushing someone.

Our teacher calls out " great, I love that idea", make sure you write it on your dance map, sometimes we do. Sometimes we change it the very next time.

It's exciting when everyone is dancing together, run up on the stage all together and make our shape.

We forgot moves, sometimes we were too quick going on stage and agreeing on which moves we were going to do.

We got to work in a group together, I like how we got to pick our own groups. I liked how we got to go on stage, I liked how we got to make-up our own moves, and how we got to make our own dance.

Our shape had all the levels, Joe was balanced on Jason's back that was cool.

Sometimes I can't stop moving, if Miss is in a good mood, she doesn't mind. I usually get into trouble in class for not keeping still.

In dance you could get into trouble for not moving...

When we are practicing everyone is talking about what we are doing, trying to work things out and decide and get organized.

Some days people were mucking up, because they were already in trouble before we got to dance, they were still mad.

At least you can get it out of you by dancing, laughing at the funny moves.