

The Kinesthetic Instinct:
An Investigation into Pedagogical Theories and Practices for a Framework for Dance Education

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Introduction

Jeet Kune Do favors formlessness so that it can assume all forms and since Jeet Kune Do has no style, it can fit in with all styles. As a result, Jeet Kune Do utilizes all ways and is bound by none and, likewise, uses any techniques which serve its end.

Bruce Lee

In the fall of 2008, I spoke to a friend and asked if she knew of any situation in which an undergraduate student was granted a teaching assistant position – I was desperately trying to find creative ways of funding my education which was set to begin in the spring. She said she did not but was willing to write a letter of recommendation which highlighted my credentials as a teacher. There were a few problems with that idea, my friend never saw me teach and I hadn't taught a dance class in about ten years. When she asked me about my teaching philosophy, I instinctually began talking about a form of dance that was based on a set of principles:

*Most of my teaching has been basic like a beginning ballet or hip hop. However I am very excited about teaching a more eclectic, sort of universal form of modern that has form but is not dependent on one form. Bruce Lee wrote a book called *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do* and the basic concept that he struggled to perfect was creating a form of Martial Art that is formless. I guess it's the same feeling one has when improvising. It will take me a long time to work on that dilemma but while at Rutgers...it will probably be my thesis.*

Letter to Sara Rudner, 2008

In my first Dance Education class in the spring of 2009, I was introduced to Mosston's work on styles of teaching. One concept that has stuck with me involved a slanted rope. In this concept, the slanted rope represented an option or choice – the child gets to choose the height level he or she can tolerate such as in a game of limbo where eventually the level is so low that eventually, no one can accomplish the task. Another revelation was found in many of the core curriculum standards in the area of dance...I discovered that we as dance educators did not have to teach a specific form of dance. As I continued in my classes I began to work out ways in which I could teach a class built upon a foundation that was fluid and inclusive. Toward the end of the semester, I was

invited to participate in the CTE dance exams to help with logistics and observe the process. When I saw that part of the exam involved a ballet assessment, I was devastated – how would my future students that have been trained in my formless form style look doing ballet – they would fail. It was back to the drawing board.

Four years later, I have the opportunity to investigate the assumptions that have been ruminating in my head;

- We all have the capability to dance
- Dance is all around us
- Dance historically has been used as a form of communication
- If children can dance, then they can teach dance.

It is these assumptions that have led to the following claims.

Claims

- All bodies can dance
- Children's prior experiences can be used as pedagogical stepping stones for teaching and learning.

Key Terms

In this paper, the term Kinesthetic Instinct is defined by combining kinesthesia – a sense mediated by receptors located in muscles, tendons, and joints and stimulated by bodily movements and tensions (www.merriam-webster.com) and instinct – a natural or inherent aptitude impulse, or capacity (www.merriam-webster.com).

The Problem

What led me to investigate this problem was the realization that the “slanted rope” had the potential of doing more harm than good. Children do not like having their learning challenges

broadcast to the entire class. Children get pulled out, given material that meets their learning needs and sometimes placed in “special classrooms.” I thought that maybe it would be better to just get rid of the “slanted rope” altogether and imply that it’s there so that students may choose quietly and with dignity without getting singled out. This required a method in which students are the driving force of the direction of curriculum so that they can enter into it at whatever level they choose and this level can be fluid, like emotions. I decided that I would concentrate on an idea in which students’ individual movement style or what I define as Kinesthetic Instinct, is taken apart. What is taken apart is formed into exercises that become the techniques that enable the rest of the students to perform that one child’s kinesthetically instinctual movement.

Significance

According to Research Priorities for Dance Education, for over 76 years field attention toward learning styles and theories and kinesthetic learning has averaged 10% or more, highlighting a wide gap in research in this area (p.95).

The literature that was examined was the product of the search terms that I used to help in my investigation. Some of my search terms include; student-directed, authentic-learning, non-linear pedagogy and improvised teaching. There was a period early in my investigation in which I thought of using the term, “authentic movement.” However, as it was pointed out to me that this term has historical implications, after some investigation, I learned that the term was used to define the post-modern dance phenomenon of the early 60’s. Although the era was significant and was the start of a movement that called for “authenticity” in all art, not only dance, it was short lived. One theory was that “authenticity” was difficult to maintain – it is easy for a dancer to say “no to virtuosity,” but almost impossible to do.

Research Question

Given that, “all children at every level must have access to a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of dance instruction taught by teachers qualified in dance” (NDEO – The Child’s Bill of Rights in Dance), is it possible to create the pedagogical framework for a comprehensive and sequential dance program that is built upon the foundation of a kinesthetic instinct inherent in all children?

Outline

- Groundwork for Dance Education
- Voices of Teaching and Learning
- Pedagogies in Action
- Theoretical Approach

Survey of Related Literature and Findings

Groundwork for Dance Education

Nahumck, N. C. (1970). *A comprehensive curriculum in dance for secondary schools* (Rev ed.).

Nahumck’s research provided me with a snapshot of what a comprehensive dance curriculum looked like 43 years ago as well as a framework for what a dance curriculum can look like in the future.

The major objective of the project was to develop a comprehensive curriculum in dance for secondary schools based on several assumptions; everyone owns an instrument for dance;

everyone has an extensive, though non-selective, movement vocabulary and everyone has learned and habituated his movement characteristics, to name a few (Nahumck, 1970). At the end of the three year project, one of the findings was that, "Perceptions and comprehension of choreographic structure are advanced when the focus is on similarity as well as distinctiveness in human movement and when movement is studied in the context of its cultural traditions as well as immediate environment" (Nahumck, 1970). What was essential about this project was the importance of individuality. In other words, discovery and development of the individual was of utmost importance. In another finding, it was discovered that all dance instruments, Nahumck's term for human bodies, performed well when the movement was focused around "instrument tuning" and when it was not required to habituate, "a choreographer's personal idiosyncrasies" (Nahumck, 1970). In order for a mover to habituate a choreographer's idiosyncrasies, the mover has to abandon his or her "distinctive human movement" which is no different than pulling the rug from under the mover's feet. In addition to teaching dance as an art, the curriculum that was proposed, made recommendations for integrating subjects such as dance theory, arts related to dance, language arts, world cultures, mathematics and sciences all within the context of dance. I would venture a guess that the objective was not for the dance educator to teach a subject like mathematics, but to incorporate mathematics within the context of dance for the student to gain a deeper knowledge of not only what he or she is learning in school but how it all connects to his or her world. Nahumck's research is comprehensive and inspiring, but not without sadness and lost dreams - I would love to have been a student in that school. On the other hand, her research is a pathway in which I, as an educator, can rely on to light the way.

Russell, J. (1987). *Creative dance in the primary school* (3rd ed.).

In the same year that Nahumck embarked on her project in the United States, in Europe, Russell was asserting her belief that, “movement and how a child experiences his world through it, should be foundational” (Russell, 1987).

Although Russell’s book was of an instructional nature, it too was written on the belief that movement should be taught as a vehicle for self-discovery and self-expression. Russell, as well as Nahumck, relies heavily on Laban’s work as an underpinning for their proposal for a pathway of teaching dance. Laban’s effort qualities are taught as a natural way for students to describe what they are doing physically and so that all student can use and understand a universal language of movement. Laban’s movement notation was also taught not only for the student to learn how to read written movement, but how to notate their own movement creations as well. In stating the problems that a teacher may encounter when teaching dance, Russell asserts, “The real problem for the teacher of dance, as for the teacher of modern mathematics and science, is to ask the right question at the right time and to ask questions which lead the child to an understanding of the body as a medium for expression” (Russell, 1987). The child is central in that he or she should not spend the majority of his or her time learning static movements but should be allowed to explore and create while the teacher guides or mentors the student through the journey.

The central theme throughout this section of my literature review was that discovery and creation comes from the perspective of the student and although it is not stated explicitly, constructivism plays a large part in the success of these schools of thought. Constructivist theory is predicated upon the premise of mentor and apprentice in that the mentor’s role is to provide

guidance and to listen for cues for when the apprentice is ready to move on (zone of proximal development). Nahumck and Russell both asserted unequivocally that movement needs to be experienced by the child and not given to the child. For a child to be subjected to hours of rote learning in my opinion is dangerous and is not conducive to promoting creative thinkers.

Voices of teaching and learning.

Dewey, John, (1938). *Experience and education*.

In this section of literature, I examine the authors position on “experience” in order to provide some context to this area and how teaching and learning is enhanced when experience is brought to the foreground.

Dewey asserts, “...the gulf between the mature or adult products and the experience and abilities of the young is so wide that the very situation forbids much active participation by pupils in the development of what is taught” (Dewey, 1938). His concern is that educators are suppressing the “natural inclination” of using experience in exchange for habit. Additionally, what a child brings to the classroom in terms of their own experience is being overlooked due to “external pressure” (Dewey, 1938). It is the educator’s role to decrease the gulf between subject matter and child so that connections can be made between the two in order for the child to understand how education relates to his world. Although “bridging the gap” in our educational system has always been equated with achievement, there can’t be achievement without students and if a student doesn’t have any connection with the material, there is no motivating factor for the child to continue to attend school. On the other hand, educators today are literally between a rock and a hard place with federal mandates expecting results on one end and children wanting to be heard and valued on the other - it behooves me to think seventy five years ago, Dewey was

writing about this very issue. Politics aside, it is my belief that experience is the bridge between knowledge and understanding and in Dewey's view classroom learning should begin with experience. On this matter Dewey states, "When Education is based in theory and practice upon experience, it goes without saying that the organized subject-matter of the adult and the specialist cannot provide the starting point" (Dewey, 1938).

Bransford, J., National Research Council. Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning, & National Research Council. Committee on Learning Research and Educational Practice. (2000). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (Expanded ed.).

Students have attained a wealth of preexisting knowledge that for the educator needs to be sifted and reorganized so that students may access it for understanding subject matter.

Bransford highlights that in the past three or four decades the study of the mind has had important implications for learning in that there is a shift from needing to remember information to finding and using it. I wonder if this shift may be attributed to a student's knowledge and use of technical devices such as smartphones and computers. These devices require the user to seek out the information that is being sought and used. Some may even call these students experts in that their proficiency with these devices goes above and beyond the abilities of the average person. I have observed the technical prowess of the young and am fascinated as to the intimacy of their knowledge of their personal devices. I have also seen how our educational system has placed very strict guidelines against the use of electronic devices in the classrooms and as part of a classroom strategy I would agree to prohibit its use. However, I see a missed opportunity of exploiting this technical "preexisting knowledge" from our proficient young and would venture a guess that if asked, they would be honored to share that knowledge. Following this tangent a bit, I

wonder, if asked, if the student could put his or her experience with their electronic devices into words. Reason being, it is difficult to describe an act that is both intuitive and kinetically instinctual. Additionally, Bransford's work reveals that, "learning is enhanced when teachers pay attention to the knowledge and beliefs that learners bring to the learning task, use this knowledge as a starting point for new instruction, and monitor students' changing conceptions as instructions proceeds" (Bransford, 2000). Again the student's "preexisting knowledge" is being acknowledged and incorporated in learning. However, there is always a downside in that a student's preexisting knowledge could be riddled with misconceptions and assumptions. In these cases the educator needs to implore a positive approach to clearing up misconceptions and attitudes that are misplaced. Here is where prior knowledge comes head to head with preconceived notions that the educator that values students' "preexisting knowledge," will need to provide that necessary antidote that will both provide current understanding without devaluing the students' prior understanding.

Sawyer, R. K. (2011). *Structure and improvisation in creative teaching*.

A skillful educator is one that knows and lives within the tension between creating and implementing a curriculum that is flexible and meets the needs of students, and his or her responsibility to plans, standards and subject matter (Sawyer, 2011).

It is within this realm that Sawyer explores how improvisation plays a large role in determining a skillful teacher when he states that, "teachers who invite input from students must then find ways to take up their ideas and use them to chart a new, flexible path toward instructional goals" (Sawyer, 2011). Sawyer also stresses the importance of "harvesting" the information from select students to lay the flagstones that will guide students in the direction that

leads to the curricular goals of the subject that is being explored. I agree in that children arrive with a rich array of experiences that need to be not only acknowledged but sorted as well. In speaking of Vygotsky's theories of play, Sawyer says that, "One way to understand what happens to children's pretend play is that it is by doing what they do not know how to do that children learn how to do the myriad of things they learn how to do before they arrive at school" (Sawyer, 2011). I agree, but would also add that although children teach themselves through imaginative play; it does not mean that the outcomes of their self-teachings are accurate. Children are children and construct their world based on their perceptions of it and this bodes well for adults as well. The only difference is that adults have a different understanding of the world because of age and how he sees himself in it. Ask a child and an adult the same exact question and one would get very different answers based on the levels of experience that can be recalled in order to answer the question. Chances are that the child's answer would be the most direct and matter of fact depending on the question asked.

Although the terminology used by the authors in this section of my literature review is different on the surface (Dewey - experience; Bransford - preexisting understandings; Sawyer - ideas), the substance is the same in that children are not empty vessels just waiting to be filled but people with rich, experiences that can help both educator and student to enrich classroom learning.

Pedagogies in action

Bendix, S. (2010). *The accidental curricularist: The building of a dance curriculum through artistic and improvisational practice.*

Bendix's narrative chronicles her experience as an inexperienced teacher and how that experience led to the creation of a student-led curriculum...by accident. Bendix's teaching experience was reminiscent to many newly hired teachers in that we all have had grand expectations of what to teach our students on the first day. Unfortunately, the fact of the matter is that our expectations are so grand that it falls way short of what students can and know how to do. In Bendix's case, her prior knowledge had no connection with the cultural context of her students. In time, "*The relationships between the kids in class became a fabric upon which to build ideas*" (Bendix, 2010). Bendix later discovered that the students were "tremendously imaginative" and it was imagination that was able to allow her into their world. Additionally, there was no knowledge of dance education at the school or district level so there was literally, nothing to chance. Bendix began to use play activities, most likely through imagination, in order to bring out the students creative natures and with "attentiveness" and a bit of "serendipity," Bendix was able to allow the pedagogical spirits do their magic.

Bendix operated under the assumption that every day or every class for that matter may be different than the next because students are not machines, they're human. Her students came to class with emotions and experiences from their cultural communities and Bendix saw this, through her attentiveness, as a way of bringing them into focus and transitioning them into play and creativity. Her students experimented with narratives and working in teams, they critique one another not from a place of superficiality but from an honest emotionality which allow for deep expressive movement qualities.

My only point of contention with Bendix is her choice of the word "accident." I don't believe in accidents, only opportunities that are arrived from moments of serendipity. Bendix's work is important and should be referenced often by educators that have reservations about

letting things take their course and trust that the students know what they are doing. On the other hand, to define work of this depth an “accident,” taints the spirit of the students that were a part of its creation...these students are not accidents nor should they be led to think they are.

Caseley, P. M. (2004). *Toward an authentic pedagogy: An investigation of authentic learning instruction in a middle school.*

Caseley begins chapter one with this quote from Dewey, “from the standpoint of the child, the great waste in school comes from his inability to utilize the experience he gets outside while on the other hand he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning in school. That is the isolation of the school—its isolation from life” (Dewey, 1938).

Caseley is an advocate of “authentic learning,” which operates under the premise that learning should include the student’s immediate environment, community and cultural beliefs - in other words, learning is real. Caseley is concerned with the superficial learning and regurgitating of information that has become synonymous with today’s public schools. Additionally, Caseley’s concern with the gap between assessing students’ authentic learning and using authentic assessment was what led him to this inquiry. Caseley’s grounded theory, which builds on Dewey’s Theory of Experience, states that, “one’s present experience is a function of the interaction between one’s past experiences and the present situation” (Caseley, 2004). It is this awareness and sensitivity to experience that allow for substantive conversation that provides students with opportunities to work out problems by engaging in higher order thinking. There was also several of what he called, “aha” moments during his experience in which I interpreted them to mean that if you trust the process that discovery and learning will fall into place - in teaching I found this to be crucial to guiding students to the next level of discovery.

McWhorter, P. (1996). *Student-generated curriculum: Lessons from our students*

After a study of “student-generated” projects in an Athens, Georgia High School, a central finding was that quality, relationships and implications for future groups of students wrested upon a classroom environment that was, “conducive to collaboration between the teacher and the students” (McWhorter, 1996). Other factors included that teachers needed to be willing to share responsibility with the students and that student-generated learning should meet required curricular objectives. Here I sense a bit of a conflict in the findings in that their needs to be “collaboration between teacher and students” and that “teachers need to be willing to share responsibility.” Maybe what McWhorter has highlighted, consciously or unconsciously was the conflict that lies within teachers that have been educated in the traditional sense that teachers know everything and are the providers of knowledge to children. This authoritarian style of teaching is prevalent in our public school system and has been accepted as the norm in what defines a good teacher.

In keeping aligned with core standards, meeting required curricular objectives is vital. This would require that the teacher stay closely connected which the journey that students are embarking on so as not to be left at the dock with nothing but a paddle boat only to discover later that his or her students arrived at the wrong island. On the other hand, it also doesn’t mean that the teacher should take the helm on a student-generated project – balance is the key.

Another key finding is that student-generated learning is a gradual process. I underline process because the process is what is being assessed not the product. There is so much emphasis on product and all of what was done to get there is thrown by the wayside. I would assert that the reason is that process cannot be quantified. It is qualitative and requires a set of assessment

instruments that measure the process at incremental stages – similar to pausing a film at different frames. McWhorter believes that, “an understanding of alternative assessment practices strengthens the effectiveness of student-generated/student-centered learning experiences” (McWhorter, 1996). However, can alternate assessment practices quench the hunger of the ever present federal mandates that require quantitative results?

My investigation of this author’s research was limited due to restricted access to her work (microfiche). However, I was able to extrapolate from the abstract, findings and a brief summary of the experience. The reason I continued with this author was that research on classrooms that support “student-generated” learning is limited and this work supports the problem that I am investigating.

Chow, J. Y., Davids, K., Button, C., Shuttleworth, R., Renshaw, I., & Araújo, D. (2007). The role of nonlinear pedagogy in physical education.

My investigative search of non-linear pedagogy led me to Chows research and finding of an interesting approach to teaching and learning called Teaching Games for Understanding. The basic concept is to teach the students what the game is about instead of the skills involved in playing the game. This sets up a very interesting pedagogical approach in that it does not exclude anyone. When approaching a sport from the skills end, you will no doubt discover that children will not have the ability to attain or master the skills required to play. However, if you approach a sport from the conceptual end, then children will bumble about but eventually find their way in order to fulfill the conceptual aspect of the game – and have fun doing it. When I coached soccer to kindergarten children, the bulk of our practices consisted of playing keep away - all I did was toss the ball on the field and let the children bumble about. On the subject of technique Chow

quotes one coach as saying, "...incorrect technique is not necessarily seen as a "bad thing" that must be immediately changed. Many athletes use unorthodox techniques that still achieve the right result (and often bamboozle their opponent" (Duyn 1996). This is the million dollar question for most dance teachers of non-technically trained students, "Am I teaching technique or understanding?" The answer depends on two factors, what is the mission of the school or university and what is the mission of the teacher.

The TGfU approach consists of four categories, target, net or wall, striking or fielding, and territory or invasion games. These four categories sum up the main objectives of most sports games and is a great starting point to understanding the conceptual nature of sports games.

The authors of this section of my literature review were the result of key search terms that I used in my investigation of pedagogical methods that were student-generated or off the beaten path. The results culminated in a conceptual idea that student learning that involves student input and ideas, a teacher's willingness to let go of power and trust that sometimes the path to a destination is unknown but if you follow the compass everyone will get there in the end, is a recipe for though knowledge and understanding.

A theoretical approach

Lefebvre, H. S. (2012). *B-boy (dance) cipher: An innovative knowledge community's shared activity*.

The choice to use the research of both Lefebvre and Dr Bashaw was to investigate areas of teaching and learning when an explicit teaching method or the teacher for that matter was not present.

Lefebvre's investigation of the Bboy cipher clearly describes the processes involved in a Bboy battle as well as the undeclared mentor/apprenticeship relationship that takes place within the cipher. I found this work to be quite interesting because for me, a former Bboy, the cipher was a place where you "school" or are "schooled" by your opponent. The cipher is described as a, "...here-now activity that blends two constituent processes, competition and collaboration." She goes on to say that, "This dualism cycles through individual to collective processes of learning and innovating" (Lefebvre, 2012). Before one has chosen to step into the cipher, he or she has to agree to the implicit contractual agreement to the non-verbal terms set by the first individual that has created the conditions of the cipher. What follows is an attempt by each dancer that enters into the cipher to evolve his or her movement to the point where he or she is the last dancer to exit the cipher – the last dancer is the most evolved if no other can create a movement set that is as advanced. During this process, other contestants wait outside of the cipher and observe the Bboy in the circle. During this observation is when this "dualism" occurs – where "learning and innovating" is taking place.

Lefebvre also mentions the mentor/apprenticeship process that seems to take place where the mentor mentors himself through the process of the cipher (Lefebvre, 2012). When the Bboy becomes the spectator/student, he is looking for cues or cracks in the performer's foundation and at the same time, he is cycling through his repertoire of movement possibilities and to gather ideas from the performer as to way to evolve his movement.

Lefebvre's argues that, "the b-boy practice provides educators with opportunities to better understand the ways humans learn and teach in places and with people that commonly do not come to mind when conceptualizing educational approaches, settings or teachers" (Lefebvre, 2012). The people that she is diplomatically referring to are people that have been basically

forgotten and labeled as unteachables – malcontent and emotionally disturbed just doing their time waiting for the bell to ring.

Bashaw, B. W. (2011). *Young choreographers: An ethno-phenomenological study of developmental and socio-cultural influences during untutored dance making*

Dr. Bashaw's work is the only of its kind that has provided me with a lens to what children can do without instruction, prompting (which is the case with the cipher) or the assistance of a figure of authority. Her "ethno-phenomenological" study questioned, "the role that intuitive and self-directed practice plays in children's dance making and whether a span of age would reveal different characteristics in how dances were made" (Bashaw, 2011). "Young choreographers" varied in age and were observed in several different settings and although her analysis revealed, "three distinct yet overlapping phases of choreographic development" (Bashaw, 2011), what I was interested in was how much of the child's "kinesthetic instinct" played into the creation of their choreography. In Dr Bashaw's video presentation the evidence was clear. In the video that represented the younger side of the spectrum, the children were less conscious of their movement, creating movement that look to be more "authentic" and intuitive; whereas the high school students were more conscious of the overall look and design of the movement they produced. Additionally, the high school students were concerned with how the emotionality of the movement was coming across to the viewer.

Watching the relationships between the students in group work was fascinating as well. They worked together, creating their own methods of communicating with one another. The high school students were intent at conveying the message they wanted to come across and when they danced together; there was a connection that just cannot be replicated if it were ask by an adult choreographer.

Dr Bashaw concluded with this statement, “Dance making is a delicate process within a robust medium, and it will thrive if sensitive adults step back and allow children to inform them, if they can find the means to honor the distinct opportunities growth provides, and if they can find fascination in the embodied, social minds of children. Trust the “experiences” and “preexisting understandings” of children – whether teacher, parent or administrator; To believe in the process and allow for the adventure to unfold; to let go of our prior definition of “teacher” and accept what develops from learning from our students. Bashaw describes a time during her research when a guest artist was invited a school in which she was there to observe. This is what transpired;

“At the end of the session, one of the guest artists asked the children why people choreograph. The first response from the children was that it was for "entertainment." The guest artist responded, "But I could go to the movies for that." Another child then stated, "Because it is loveable." Ignoring the response, the guest-artist then asked the question again, "Why do people create dances?" Like popcorn, different children responded that it was made to inspire, attract, and for fun. "But so is basketball," responded the guest-artist. Finally a child stated that dance "...can express emotions." "Ahhhh!" responded the guest-artist, closing the discussion based on the answer she wanted to receive.

Dodd-Nufrio, A. (2011). *Reggio emilia, maria montessori, and john dewey: Dispelling teachers' misconceptions and understanding theoretical foundations*

The Reggio Emilia Approach is consistent with Dewey’s philosophy in that “*educators must pay attention to the unique experience of children*” (Dodd-Nufrio, 2011). I don’t think this was my intention however I am finding that “experience” and taking into account the “preexisting understanding” of children, a running theme throughout my literature review. The Approach was established after WWII and was built upon a social constructivist framework inspired by the work and philosophy of *John Dewey*, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner. Reggio Emilia “promotes the image of the child as a capable participant in learning”

and believes that “children are the architects of their own learning” (Dodd-Nufrio, 2011). Policy makers in the United States have asked for studies that measure “lasting child related outcomes” as well as “program quality.” In response, “Educators should focus on process-folios not portfolios because it is how we learned not what we learned (Rinaldi, 2005).

Lastly, when pondering the question of “How can American educators recognize and use what Reggio Emilia has accomplished in their 50 years of development,” the answer was bleak. Reggio is an experience – it is not a how to teach platform like most teachers are used to. It is also believed that if Reggio was to be “transplanted” in the United States, “it must be reinterpreted and reinvented in the context of American culture” (Dodd-Nufrio, 2011).

Summary

The answer to my question is not clear – like a jigsaw puzzle scattered on a table. However, the answers are there, just ready for me to put in the right places. The threads that connects each and every piece of literature reviewed are experience and constructivism; Dewey and Vygotsky; theory and scaffolding. It seems that if I allow myself to be open to receive the “preexisting understandings” of my students’ experiences and enter into an implicit agreement of guided discovery, the journey begins and all that the word “journey” implies including, serendipity, disasters and success. But, it doesn’t matter where you arrive, only how you got there.

Conclusion

Dance Education is an undiscovered country, not only for the general public, but for dance educators as well. Although Wikipedia defines Dance Education as, “the transferring

of dance performance skills and knowledge of dance to students through teaching and training, or acquiring such knowledge and skills through research,” my definition and the definition of my cohorts, would vary greatly. In order to have a collective understanding of dance education, there needs to be a collective understanding of a pedagogical method of teaching dance education. If we are the ambassadors of our craft, then we need to know the answers to every question pertaining to our craft when we are standing at the podium.

Implications

Based on the literature that I have reviewed, I would engage in action research in order to compare several theoretical constructivist practices such as Reggio Emilia as a means of creating a pedagogical framework for Dance Education. Possible outcomes would include:

- Education of constructivist theories for dance educators
- Development of qualitative assessment strategies
- Integrating core subjects in the classrooms to close knowledge gap

Action Plan

Test drive findings that enhance understanding of pedagogical theories are an action plan that I would like to implement during my teaching internship. The action research that I wish to engage in would require a group of students with little to no technical dance training and would require studio space with I have access to. The duration of this research I predict will be 12 weeks to allow for the process to run its course. Data collection methods include video at various intervals of the process and pre and post interviews as well as a journal that I will use to chronicle my observations.

Learning Reflection

In the beginning of this course, my knowledge of research comprised of an interest and following up with gathering information – little did I know that this was actually investigation and that the act of engaging in research is a much more involved process involving a systematic process of analyzing data. Additionally, I have learned, and as a dancer I have always known, that I am a creature of habit. As I continued to read, skim and analyze text, I developed the habit and ability to stay connected to the text for longer periods of time. I have a deep respect for my peers as I share their excitement and ideas for the areas of research that they find important. Lastly, I have learned that our profession has a long history, but lacks the research that is necessary in order for it to be deemed valid by the public and administrators alike.

Scholarly dialogues that I share are that of Dewey, Vygotsky and Piaget to name a few. Their works both intrigue and inspire me to continue to find ways of incorporating their theories in my future work.

The strengths that I possess as a result of this course are the ability to critically analyze literature for its content, make connections with literature of different subject matter and to be able to write this all in a relatively cohesive manner.

My goal is to continue the practice of constructing literature reviews for the express purpose of working on areas in which I could improve on such as skimming and organization as well as not to let what I have learned get too far from me. Looking into the future, pursuing a doctoral degree is something that I goose bumps whenever I think about it. Just knowing that I

have a chance at making changes in this profession that I have devoted so much of my life to...I just can't put into words.

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LITERATURE REFERENCES TRACKING TABLE

Types ⇒ Purposes ↓	Min # Required	Book	Journal Article Dance	Journal Article Education	Journal Article Other Area	Dissertation	Grey Literature *
Minimum # Required		1	1	1	1	1	1
Primary Source		10,3				1,2,8	
Secondary Source				5		4	
Historical Background of Issue (Literature that helps to give a historical perspective based on your topic)	2	6		7			
Contemporary Context of Issue (Literature that addressed current debates and the current thrust of research happening on topic)	2	12,3,6		5,9		1,4	
Theoretical Underpinnings (Literature that helps to explain the theories/concepts you will draw upon)	1	6,3,12		7,5		1,2,4,8	
Terminology (Literature used to help define special terms)	1					4	
Previous Research and its Gaps (Literature that helps justify why your	3	3		5		1,2	

research should happen)							
Practical Based (Literature that is not research- based, but supports the significance of the issue being researched in some manner)	1	11					

Appendix

Interview Schedule

- Tell me the first thing that comes to mind when I say the word, dance education?
 - Explain
- "Everybody can dance," do you agree or disagree.
 - Why
- Would you call yourself a dancer?
 - Why?
- You walk into school one day and your teacher tells you that from now on, in addition to PE, you would be required to take dance education classes, how would you feel?
 - Why?