DANCE AS TRANSFORMATION:
AN ANALYSIS OF DANCE AND THE BEGINNING LEVEL STUDENT

A Thesis

Presented to the faculty of the Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
California State University, Sacramento

Submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Education

(Curriculum and Instruction)

by

Lisa Carmen Ross

FALL
2015
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Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract
of
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Statement of Problem

This study seeks to add to the underdeveloped body of literature detailing the benefits of dance education. This study examined the attitudes and perceptions of beginning level dance students before their participation in a dance technique course and again at the conclusion of the course to determine if the students’ attitudes and perceptions changed about dance on a personal and social level.

Sources of Data

Data was collected from five sections of beginning level dance technique courses. This data provided the researcher with necessary information to answer the research questions. A pre-and post-survey was given to students which contained demographic questions, yes or no response questions, and open-ended questions. The demographic questions and the yes or no questions determined the demographic of students and their level of previous dance training. The open-ended questions allowed
students to provide a narrative of their experience within the process of studying dance technique.

Conclusions Reached

The demographic data and the yes or no response data was analyzed using Excel Spreadsheet programming. The qualitative data was analyzed using a thematic approach and coding sheets. The qualitative data analysis revealed themes that suggested students did have a personal and social connection through the study of dance technique, including enhancing kinesthetic learning, an improved sense of overall well-being, and a positive effect on academic studies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge my family for their love and support throughout my educational journey. I thank my husband and children for their sacrifice, long nights without Mama’s attention, and their unwavering encouragement throughout these past few years. I thank both of my parents for their willingness to support me in continuing my education. I am eternally grateful for their continued encouragement in pursuing my dreams. This resulting thesis could not have been possible without the love, support, and motivation from all of my friends and family.

I would also like to thank Dr. Sherrie Carinci who has guided me along my journey as a graduate student. Her patience and flexibility, dealing with my busy schedule of worker, mom, wife, and student, was much appreciated and helped me believe that it was all possible. Her encouragement and support allowed me to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

I would also like to thank the faculty of the Department of Theatre and Dance at Sacramento State for believing in this study and providing me the opportunity to analyze their students. The encouraging words from Lorelei Bayne and Dr. Melinda Ramey Wilson have pushed me to be a better dance educator.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgements</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Basis for the Study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Chapters</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of the Researcher</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The History of Dance Education</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Intelligence and Learning Modalities</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement and Educating the Whole Student</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance as Transcendence for School Success</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Deprivation of the Arts as a Form of Oppression</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tables</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students by Gender ...................................................................</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students by Ethnicity ..................................................................</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students by Age ..........................................................................</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Previous Dance Experience – All Participants ................................</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Previous Dance Experience – Positive Response to Q1, Number of Years</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Previous Dance Experience – Negative Response to Q1, Comparison to Q3</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Gender Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Positive Response, Number of Years</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Gender Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Negative Response. Q1 – Have you taken a dance class before? Q3 – Was dance instruction taught in your primary or secondary school?</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ethnicity Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Positive Response, Number of Years</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ethnicity Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Negative Response. Q1 – Have you taken a dance technique class before? Q3 – Was dance instruction taught in your primary or secondary school?</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Age Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Positive Response,
Number of Years ............................................................................................ 76

Q1 – Have you taken a dance technique class before? Q3 – Was
dance instruction taught in your primary or secondary school?.................... 77
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Areas of Previous Dance Instruction, Percentage of Students</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dance Instruction Taught in Educational Environments, Percentage of Students</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Interested in Continuing the Study of Dance, Percentage of Students</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

When participating in a dance class there is an experience that takes place that cannot necessarily be codified as receiving a tangible object. There is neither painting to take home nor piece of pottery created, there is no musical score defined and notated, or script developed and printed. The movement learned during the process of the class is memorized but can only be shown through another fleeting experience where the observer witnesses for but a moment. However, every dancer can express whole-heartedly that there is a difference of being after participating in a dance class. The body feels differently. The mind has transcended to a different place, a different thought.

Dance, as an art-form, can be difficult to interpret and deriving meaning from dance movement can take years of exposure and experience. According to Minton (2008), dance is the least understood and appreciated of the art forms by the public, due in part to the small number of dance programs in our public schools. If the study of dance is rarely practiced by children in the educational system, then their understanding and personal connection to dance movement cannot be developed and practiced. For some children, they may never have the opportunity to find their true calling and identify themselves as dance artists. “All analysis of dance rests on the notion that the symbols and structures of dance can be read through the cultural practices of society” (Carter, 1996, p. 45). If society believes this to be true, then
children must practice dance to feel proficient. This practice can help them understand the nuances of their culture and enhance their connection to their world.

In any school environment, every student has a dominant way of learning. Some learn better through visual modalities such as pictures, videos, or by use of flashcards. Others prefer auditory modalities such as group discussions, audiobooks, and oral presentations. A different faction of students learn best through kinesthetic or tactile modalities such as building models, participating in simulations, or physical activity such as sports, games, or dance. In a large study among K-12 students conducted by Specific Diagnostic Studies, the majority of students, 37%, tested as kinesthetic learners, while 29% tested as visual learners and 34% as auditory learners (Willis & Hodson, 1999). However, the majority of instruction taught in school settings requires children to sit at a desk, listening to the teacher while viewing some type of PowerPoint presentation, taking notes, or reading from a textbook. It can be noted that a portion of students who underachieve in such an academic environment actually need more opportunities to engage in experiential learning. As Confucius (551 BC) stated “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand” (as cited in Ornbo, Sneppen, & Wurtz, 2008, p. 30). Providing students more opportunities for hands-on learning may increase their cognition and improve school performance; ultimately giving them a better possibility for a successful future.

Not only does dance develop kinesthetic intelligence, it creates opportunities for self-expression and communication within the constraints of the medium of the body. For more than 70 years, the benefits of dance education have been documented
by dance teachers, parents, and students. “Dance, used as a mirror of the dancer’s being, may help students understand themselves as a whole person and to discover and express their identities, values, and beliefs, whether personal, ethnic, gender-related, communal, or national” (Hanna, 1999, p. 32). This new sense of identity can help them articulate their unique point of view to the world with confidence.

The idea that students should be given opportunities to connect with their bodies through movement is not new as physical education is taught on a daily or weekly basis in all 50 states as part of their respective state standards (National Association for Sport and Physical Education [NASPE], 2004). However, though the development of the mind-body connection through the study of dance and its positive affects towards behavior and overall well-being is well understood among dance educators, it is not emphasized in K-12 education curriculum. Dance is often viewed as enrichment curriculum rather than necessary curriculum. Dance educators know that teaching dance is not just a holistic approach to physical activity, but can enhance critical thinking, can increase student engagement, and is an outlet for artistic expression. In fact, the study of dance can fall into several categories such as physical, social, emotional, cultural, and historical which could support teaching across multidisciplinary engagement (Giguere, 2005).

Unfortunately, dance has become an extra-curricular activity in K-12 education usually funded by parents. As dance is considered an embodied language and a way of expressing meaning artistically, to say that only children of economic means will have the opportunity to practice and develop expertise in dance shows a level of
oppression, only giving the privileged a voice. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1995), only 43% of children receive dance training in America, and of that 43%, only 7% are taught by certified dance specialists. This deprivation is a great disservice to our youth, as only a few have access to quality dance education.

A report by Arts Education Partnership (2002) analyzed the impact that art praxis has on academic performance. By reviewing over 62 different studies from 100 researchers spanning the range of fine arts from dance to the visual arts, researchers determined that students who received more arts education did better on standardized tests. The report found that students improved their social skills and were more motivated to learn than those who had reduced or no access to the arts. The researchers admitted that art is not the only remedy for what ails struggling schools. However, it could be a valuable asset for teaching students of all ages; especially those in poor communities or who need remedial education. Children-at-risk with lower socioeconomic statuses benefit from arts-rich experiences, helping them create meaning in their world. In a report by the National Dance Educators Organization (2013), evidence showed that non-white children in urban areas are primarily kinesthetic learners. By not giving them more opportunities to connect with their bodies through artistic expression we are creating an environment where they will be “left-behind” in a world of seat-based and passive learning. Once again, we are creating a world of the haves and have-nots (Boykin & Cunningham, 2001).
Statement of the Problem

There is very little funding given to the arts in general and the first art-based programs to receive funding or focus in K-12 education are typically music or visual arts. Schools that are able to develop theater programs sometimes incorporate dance instruction, but only as a small component. The majority of students only learn a brief sampling of social or folk dance as a unit in their middle school physical education class. Unless a school is Visual and Performing Arts focused, the teachers and parents are often left to their own devices to bring technical dance instruction to the children if there is a desire. However, the concept of kinesthetic learning and the study of the arts have been valued across the board with our earliest educational philosophers and reformers (Dewey, 1897). They understood the importance of a well-rounded education through challenging both the body and the mind.

With the implementation of Common Core Standards and a national debate about education reform, research is needed regarding the transformative nature of dance. This research will help solidify dance as a key component in creating curriculum for the overall well being of children and to the society as a whole. It is only when a student is academically successful and can then attend a college or university setting that they are able to choose their own course of study which may include dance. Access to all types of arts and sciences are available in higher education and in-depth analysis of the world and its functions is encouraged and fostered. The study of dance technique, history, and choreography at its highest level is finally provided for any student with an interest. By making this opportunity only
available to students who achieve the level of college study, our educational system is denying all K-12 students a truly enriched understanding of dance and its importance both historically and culturally.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the transformative nature of dance and to identify its relevance in educational curriculum. Though dance is a component in the current standards for visual and performing arts in the State of California, little technical dance training is given to students in their primary and secondary education and very few schools have teachers who are qualified to develop a dance program, let alone teach dance technique (Reedy, 2003). Unless a student is of economic means to enroll in dance classes taught by professionals in the community or has the privilege to attend dance concerts, one can perceive that many students graduate from high school with little to no exposure to dance as an art form or to its relevance in our society.

By analyzing students in a college setting, this study attempted to identify such students who have received little to no exposure to the art form of dance through their primary and secondary education. During the duration of a semester at a State University, the researcher analyzed the experiences of college students who had enrolled in beginning level dance classes both for the first time, and as a continuation of their dance education. Based on Howard Gardner’s seminal work (1983) on the concept of mind/body connection and the theory of multiple intelligences, Elliot W. Eisner’s research (2002) on the importance of the Arts in Education, and John Dewey’s philosophy of Art as Experience (1934), much of this study explored the
students’ perceptions of the process of learning dance as art-form and its connection to their personal well-being and growth through the study of dance technique.

The following research questions were explored:

1. When exposed to dance training, do students perceive a better understanding of the arts on a personal and social level and does any new understanding transfer to other areas and enhance their overall academic success?

2. Will students perceive dance and other art forms differently after studying dance technique?

3. Will students feel personal growth in well-being after studying dance technique?

**Methodology**

Participants of the study were students enrolled in beginning level dance courses at Northern California State University (pseudonym). Pre- and post-surveys were distributed to the students in an attempt to monitor any changing perspectives on their understanding of the personal benefits of dance training. The 109 students involved in the study were enrolled in the classes without coercion and without a prior personal relationship with the researcher. Usable surveys were collected from five sections of beginning level dance courses. The results can be interpreted with confidence because the enrolled students with varying backgrounds and other factors provided various perspectives that affected the research. Because this study was
conducted at Northern California State University, results may be more generalized to
the population of State Universities.

Having gained permission from the students to participate (Appendix A), the
study began with a pre-survey that allowed the researcher to establish a group of
students who fit the criteria of having little to no exposure of dance instruction
(Appendix B). Through the use of open-ended questions, the researcher inquired
about their previous dance experiences within social, educational, and private
environments. Though the researcher examined all data collected, the information
gained from students with no to little prior dance experience were the most significant
to the researcher.

This study obtained qualitative data through open-ended questions asking
about the students’ views of the process of studying dance and its relevance in
education. This method allowed for more rich narrative and description, and instead
of providing an outcome, helped analyze the process (Filstead, 1979). In order to gain
more truthful answers from participants, the researcher reassured the participants that
the answers given on the survey would be confidential and would not affect their
performance in the class.

Qualitative research is by definition exploratory, and it is used when we do not
know what to expect, to define the problem or develop an approach to the problem
(Rea & Parker, 2005). This method of research was most beneficial for the researcher
as she was unaware of the level of previous instruction or exposure to dance that the
students had experienced. There are multiple ways that students can have dance
influence through both social and educational environments and allowing the questions to be open-ended allowed the researcher to go deeper into the students’ perceptions of dance in our culture.

This study incorporated a post-survey that was given to the same students at the completion of the course (Appendix C). The researcher asked the students about their perceptions of dance after participating in the course. The questions that were included helped the researcher analyze their understanding of the mind-body connection, their development of an artistic voice, and any perceived improvement in overall well-being. The open-ended questions and qualitative approach allowed the students to express their personal human experience and create more meaningful data for the study (Anderson, 2010).

Qualitative research is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning as well as to gain insight, explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the phenomenon. Thematic approach analysis helps the researcher to gather information into categories. These themes are developed into broad patterns, theories, or generalizations that help the researcher identify varied end points (Creswell, 2009). This method of research was most beneficial for the researcher to help identify themes that suggested levels of personal transformation through exposure to dance. To describe the themes, the researcher presented direct quotes from the participants. Qualitative techniques are extremely useful when a subject is too complex to be answered by a simple yes or no hypothesis (Sandelowski, 2000).
Limitations

Limitations of data collection that could have arisen include any particular student’s lack of continued enrollment of the course. In addition, some students may have had a personal view based on their successful or non-successful completion of assigned coursework. The students’ experience may have also been dependent on their personal view of the teacher and the teacher’s abilities which could have skewed their perception of dance. Three of the researcher’s own classes were included in the study, which may have hindered authentic responses from students due to teacher-student power conflicts.

By including a research study within the course, the overall performance or experience of the class may have been compromised. This phenomenon is called the Hawthorne effect. Stated in its simplest form, “the Hawthorne effect suggests that any workplace change like a research study, make people feel important and thereby improves their performance” (Craighead & Nemeroff, 2001, p. 668). Another possible limitation that may have arisen is known as the Cooperative-Subject Effect (Kirk, 1995). Kirk explains that this phenomenon occurs when subjects try, consciously or unconsciously, to provide data that supports the researcher’s hypothesis (p. 20). Essentially the students could try to please the researcher and be “good subjects.”

By limiting the study to only beginning level dance courses, the researcher may have restricted the perspectives to only a sampling of the University’s population. As dance is considered an elective at the University, the students may have a more favorable view of their experiences and the importance of dance in education in
general. Because this study was conducted at Northern California State University, it may not be able to be generalized to private institutions or others that are significantly different in demographic or socioeconomic status and therefore may have a very limited scope.

**Theoretical Basis for the Study**

The theoretical framework for this study is based on four areas of educational research. These include the works of Progressivist theorists, the arts specialist pedagogists, kinesthetic and movement-focused theorists, and critical pedagogy theorists.

**Progressivist Theorists**

In John Dewey’s major work on aesthetics, *Art as Experience* (1934), he explained that “Such vital intimacy of connection cannot be had if only hand and eye are engaged. When they do not, both of them, act as organs of the whole being, there is but a mechanical sequence of sense and movement, as walking is automatic” (p. 51). In this quote Dewey speaks to the need for educating of the whole student, and that learning without feeling or intellectual process is merely regurgitation or following a routine.

**Art Specialist Pedagogists**

Elliot Eisner (2002) shows the relationship to experience-based learning and the importance of the arts in education as well. Eisner explains the idea of developing the student as a whole person with the goal of becoming a lifelong learner. He teaches through experiential learning and stresses the importance of the student defining these
experiences through many representations, not just written language. Eisner argued that the aesthetic plays a crucial part in how the minds of students are developed. He stated that not only does the aesthetic experience give insight into cultural values; it also helps to make the learning process enjoyable. Within the surveys, the researcher posed questions that spoke to the socio-emotional development of the students through the process of studying dance for the semester long course.

**Kinesthetic and Movement-focused Theorists**

Another area of theoretical literature foundation involved in this study is the concept of the mind-body connection and the specificity of dance instruction. Gardner’s (1983) views on Multiple Intelligence specifically tie into the concept of dance instruction assisting with other modes of learning. With the implementation of nationally standardized testing, education has been stream-lined to sitting, watching and listening. Gardner’s theory brings significant debate to effective teaching practices and the measurement of student success. Within the surveys, the researcher posed questions to the students relating to their academic success throughout the semester in an attempt to analyze this theory.

**Critical Pedagogy Theorists**

The final section of theoretical literature review focuses on the concept of education as transformation. bell hooks’ discussion of education as a “Practice of Freedom” states the need for self-transformation through personal experience, practice, and exploration (1994). The concept that practicing the arts is a way of practicing freedom provides the framework for transformation analysis.
Further theoretical review is approached within the critical pedagogy of Freire (1970), in which he questions the critical thinking of students as they learn through the banking system in education. The theory that students are passive in their learning and that education is a form of oppression helps shape the research regarding the lack of arts education opportunities to all children regardless of race, creed, or economic status. The research surveys attempt to analyze critical pedagogy theory through the questioning of the students race and previous artistic opportunities in the education system.

**Definition of Terms**

*Ballet*: an artistic dance form performed to music using precise and highly formalized set steps and gestures. Classical ballet, which originated in Renaissance Italy and established its present form during the 19th century, is characterized by light, graceful, fluid movements and the use of pointe shoes (Oxford University Press, 2015).

*Beginning level dance class*: Beginning dance students (Level I) will demonstrate the basic knowledge of body alignment, basic vocabulary that crosses different styles of dance (modern, ballet, jazz, and ethnic forms). Basic requirements include understanding body placement, execution of non-motor and loco-motor movement, center floor adagio work, movement progression and combination work which incorporate form and function (California State University, Sacramento Office of Academic Programs Assessment, 2007).
Choreography: The sequence of steps and movements in dance (Oxford University Press, 2015).

Common Core Standards: The initiative sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) that seeks to establish consistent educational standards across the states as well as ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit-bearing courses at two- or four-year college programs or to enter the workforce (NGA & CCSSO, 2010).

Curriculum: the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes (Ebert, Ebert, & Bentley, 2011).

Dance: the language of movement as expressed by the human body for communication, aesthetic purposes, and the release of energy or emotions (California State Board of Education, 2015).


Jazz dance: a dance form or dance that is matched to the rhythms and techniques of jazz music, developed by American blacks in the early part of the 20th century (Random House Dictionary, 2014).

Kinesthetic: having to do with motion or movement of the body (California State Board of Education, 2015).

Modern dance: a free, expressive style of dancing started in the early 20th century as a reaction to classical ballet. In recent years it has included elements not
usually associated with dance, such as speech and film (Oxford University Press, 2015).

*No Child Left Behind Act*: a United States Act of Congress that supports standards-based education reform based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education (2002).

*Pedagogy*: the art or science of teaching and principles of instruction (California State Board of Education, 2015).

*Performing*: the execution of movement and dance or the presentation of choreography (California State Board of Education, 2015).

*Tap dance*: style of dance in which a dancer wearing shoes fitted with heel and toe taps sounds out audible beats by rhythmically striking the floor or any other hard surface (Tap Dance, 2015).

*Technique*: the physical skills of a dancer that enable clean execution of steps and movements required in choreography. Different styles or genres of dance often have specific techniques (California State Board of Education, 2015).

**Organization of the Chapters**

This thesis has been organized to introduce the reader to the study, review other pertinent research, confer how the study was conducted, analyze the data collected, and discuss the study’s findings and recommendations. The research study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the study, with sections including: the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, methodology, limitations, theoretical basis of the study, definition of terms, the
organization of the chapters, and the background of the researcher. The second chapter is the review of relevant literature. Topics include: the History of Dance Education, Multiple Intelligence and Learning Modalities, Student Engagement and Educating the Whole Child, Dance as Transcendence for School Success, and Deprivation of the Arts as a Form of Oppression. The third chapter is the methodology which will include an overview of the project, the intended participants and setting, and the project objectives. The fourth chapter is the findings of the data collection and the fifth chapter is discussion of the findings and recommendations for future research on the topic of dance and its transformational nature.

**Background of the Researcher**

As a professional dancer, choreographer, and dance instructor for over 20 years, the researcher has devoted her life to the exploration and education of dance. Through multiple levels of discipline (ballet, jazz, modern, African-Caribbean, tap), she has witnessed first-hand the effects of mastering the mind-body connection. Academically, she received a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education with an emphasis in Dance from California State University, Sacramento (CSUS) which further developed her expertise in the physical well-being of dancers. While working as Adjunct Faculty for 15 years at CSUS, she has witnessed the transformation of many students both physically and mentally through the study of dance.

As a choreographer in her community, she has had the privilege of working with many schools (both private and public), who are able to bring dance instruction into their curriculum. She has witnessed many students’ desire for more dance
education as the funding for arts education has slowly declined over decades. She is hoping to bring more knowledge to the positive effects of dance as an art-form and provide valuable research to the dance community as a whole.
Chapter 2

A REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The study of dance can be life-changing to an individual. Through the discipline and dedication of dance studies, students can foster lifelong skills such as teamwork, problem solving, effective communication, and social acceptance. They can learn to interpret their world with an artistic voice that will develop over time. In order to fully understand the benefits of dance in education and the transformative nature of dance, the researcher delved into significant literature within dance education resource publications as well as dance pedagogy journals, textbooks, and biographies. The following literature review involves six major sections of research: The History of Dance Education, Multiple Intelligence and Learning Modalities, Student Engagement and Educating the Whole Student, Dance as Transcendence for School Success, the Deprivation of the Arts as a Form of Oppression, and Dance and the University Student.

The first section of literature review examines current and past studies on arts education with a specific focus on dance. This section showcases the reasoning behind including dance in education curriculum through the research of creative movement and dance pedagogy texts over the history of education. These resources help solidify the methods of dance training available and the specific concepts formed from dance learning environments.

The second section of literature review studies the concept of the mind-body connection and the specificity of kinesthetic instruction. The relationship of
kinesthetic learning to experiential learning helps bridge the focus towards the students’ ability to retain information more easily and to their overall comprehension of curriculum. The works of education and brain-development theorists were examined in this section as a foundation for the scientific evidence available on the methods in which students learn.

The third section of literature review examines the purpose of our education system. The concept that educators are creating a whole student who has feelings and temperaments and must be able to connect to his/her world both physically, mentally, and spiritually is reviewed. Dance as a pedagogical tool that enhances that overall development is explored through the works of some of the earliest educational reformers, constructivist theorists, and dance pedagogy theorists.

The fourth section of literature review studies statistical data available on the educational achievements of students who practice the arts. Through journal articles, international studies, and nationally-funded organizational projects’ reviews the researcher examines the funding of dance education and its availability to students within school systems.

The fifth section of literature review studies the concept of education as transformation. The works of major Critical Pedagogists is reviewed in order to examine the available opportunities of arts education for all children. The concept that practicing the arts is a way of practicing freedom provides the framework for transformation analysis. The need for more opportunities to have artistic experiences, practice, and exploration in our education system was analyzed. Showcasing dance
training as a vehicle for providing those opportunities is the ultimate goal of the researcher with this analysis of prominent educational literature.

The final section of literature review narrows the focus to the university dance student. As the proceeding research was set at a university campus where the students were above the age of eighteen, the analysis of dance education as an adult learner is highly relevant. As the resulting study focused on beginning level students, the perceptions of teaching that level are also reviewed and analyzed.

The History of Dance Education

Dance as an art form has been performed for over five hundred years and dance as ritual has been documented back to the ancient civilizations. From the earliest studies, anthropologists have referred to dance and often describe it through the concepts of historical cultural ceremonies and events. However, there are relatively few anthropologists who have studied dance from the perspectives of the discipline of dance, and less than a handful who have concentrated exclusively on dance itself. “Dance has only recently been thought of as a significant element of human behavior and culture, and therefore, as a legitimate concern for study” (Hanna, 1979, p. 8). Within her scholarly work, To Dance Is Human, Judith Lynne Hanna believed that the social scientists’ long-standing avoidance of dance could perhaps be explained by a combination of Puritan ethics, social stratification, concepts of masculinity, and a sense of detachment from nonverbal behavior. This disconnect from the relevance of dance to our society has been seen for many years within our education systems as well. “The United States has a tumultuous history with dance
education, as both its popularity and its support has waxed and waned” (Reedy, 2003, p. 11). As many decades of education reform have wrestled with the most efficient method of teaching our children, dance has been supported only on the whim of our nation’s wavering political agendas.

Though cultural dances have been handed down from generation to generation for thousands of years across the globe, the discipline of a codified dance technique is fairly a new concept as the beginning of ballet developed under the reign of King Louis XIV of France some 350 years ago. In the beginning, this form of dance training was limited to the royal court, and over time, slowly developed across Europe forming into the romantic performance art that is known today. By the end of the 1800s, private dance schools were developed throughout Europe and across the United States (Ross, 2000).

The study of dance technique in private studios, like ballet, has a different intent than educational dance within schools and colleges though they can be important components of the same field. As opposed to private studio instruction where technique and performance are the primary focus, educational dance is comprehensive. It emphasizes creating and composing, studying dancing technique and performing, and knowing about and responding to dance from a broad variety of dance styles and cultures (McCutchen, 2006). Private studios train dancers to dance, educational dance introduces all students to dance in order to strengthen body and mind as part of a general liberal education. Dance education specialist and author Brenda Pugh McCutchen (2006) states,
Both private study and educational dance aim to create the best dancers possible, but rarely does a basic curriculum during the school day offer enough time to create highly proficient performers who would not also need outside instruction. Motivated students get the best of both when they get schools that teach dance broadly and studios that further refine dance technique and give them additional performance venues. (p. 7)

An arts education perspective expects critical thinking in all the artistic processes: creating, performing, and responding, to help broaden their educational horizons through a broad-based curriculum in dance. “You will teach them to dance, create dances, and know about dance as human expression. You will also teach them to analyze, value, and critique dance with their new dance vocabularies” (McCutchen, 2006, p. 6). Though dance could be seen in public school early childhood classrooms in the mid-1800s through creative movement, set games, and folk dances, instruction of dance within school systems beyond the lower primary grades was not considered important and it certainly was not studied to the extent desired above (Hinitz, 1980).

Dance emerged in our higher education system as a distinctly female form of physical exercise during the first half of the 20th century through the inclusion of country dances, national folk dance forms, and techniques like the Delsarte System of Expression (Ross, 2000). In 1926, the University of Wisconsin’s Physical Education Department headed by Blanche M. Trilling offered the first educational dance classes to female students (Ross, 2000). With the beginnings of modern dance forming, as this was the same year that Martha Graham presented her first group dance concert in
New York City, Trillings and her faculty protégée, Margaret H’Doubler spearheaded the first university dance degree program in the world after ten years of offering dance courses to college women (Ross, 2000). In her influential book, *Dance and Its Place in Education*, H’Doubler (1925) describes her beliefs on the relevance of dance in education:

> It serves all the ends of education – it helps to develop the body, to cultivate the love and appreciation of beauty, to stimulate the imagination and challenge the intellect, to deepen and refine the emotional life, and to broaden the social capacities of the individual that he may at once profit from and serve the greater world without. (p. 33)

She developed a sophisticated method and philosophy of dance education based on scientific principles and the belief that each student had potential creativity and abilities that could be developed with careful nurturing. Her program inspired many institutions throughout the Midwest to incorporate dance into women’s physical education curriculum which defined her as a leader in the Educational Progressivism movement (Ross, 2000).

Soon after in 1932, Bennington College in North Bennington, Vermont took dance out of the physical education department and established a model of dance as a theatrical art form with dance education (Ross, 2000). The Benning School of the Dance offered the most intensive summer session of dance production and study in the nation, which competed significantly with H’Doubler’s summer courses for dance
teachers. The infant field of American dance education was small, and it was clearly divided with its focus and principles (Ross, 2000).

Over the next thirty years, at least 527 dance programs developed within colleges and universities around the country, each showcasing its unique perspective on the hybridization of dance as a performing art and dance as a medium of physical and art education, but these fundamental tensions about the purpose of dance in education remain. McCutchen (2006) explains that dance training for certified physical educators is usually activity based, as he argues, “Rarely do physical educators study dance performance, choreography, criticism, and dance history. Their dance goals relate to fitness, skill development, recreation, rhythmic acuity, locomotor skills and sequences, movement exploration, and lifelong learning” (McCutchen, 2006, p. 7). Physical educators who incorporate dance in their instruction tend to have strong backgrounds in folk, social, and recreational dance and some even offer quality programs in movement exploration and creative dance. Their professional preparation makes them strong collaborators and collegial resources in kinesiology and most physical education standards include physical skills in dance as an activity. Whereas, more vigorous study of technique, performance, dance history, criticism, and composition prepare the educator for bringing dance to the aesthetic presentation as an art form. “The expectations of aesthetic education by a dance specialist are that dance will be taught as an expressive art form in all its facets rather than strictly as activity-based learning” (McCutchen, 2006, p. 8). The focus becomes creativity versus
activity. Marrying the physical and emotional natures of the body help manifest this artistic expression, allowing the students’ personal voice to be honed and defined.

As modern and jazz dance developed as American art forms during the 20th century and private instruction soared, the higher education system continued to wrestle with the purpose of dance in education nationwide (Ross, 2000). With the increasing criticism of Progressive Educational theory after the Second World War and the height of the conservative McCarthy era, questions about the liberal ideas of arts education left dance, as a theatrical art form and its own distinct discipline, out of public elementary and secondary schools for the most part (Hinitz, 1980). Rather, dance was shelved as a small component of physical education until the 1970s.

Throughout the decades that followed, childhood education became a vehicle of political debate and the incorporation of standardized testing took center stage. However, as Jane M. Bonbright (2000), the Executive Director of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) explains,

As a result of Title IX (1972), and the Equal Educational Opportunity Act (1974), men's and women's physical education merged into coeducational programs and, as the content and pedagogy of dance became more defined, there came a corresponding realignment for dance. Dance migrated to other fine and performing arts in newly created "Colleges of Fine Arts." (p. 2) This repositioning of dance from a woman’s physical education program to an independent department in the fine arts allowed for more professional preparation in the creative and artistic processes of dance that involved creating, performing, and
analyzing movement. Over the years, more and more educators emerged with Bachelor’s of Fine Arts and Master’s of Fine Arts degrees and graduates were groomed in the academics as well as the performing art (Bonbright, 2000).

The enabling legislation for arts education, the Goals 2000 – Educate America Act, was enacted by Congress in 1989. It named the arts, including dance, as basic subjects for every child. According to the National Endowment for the Arts (1994), Goal 3 of Goals 2000 states the following:

All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts history and geography. (p. 3)

This legislation assured that all children would have some form of guaranteed exposure to the arts. The United States became a nation of standards-based education, which finally included dance education. The recommendation for national arts standards followed in 1994 under sponsorship of the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations (DAMT for Dance, Art, Music, and Theatre) called the National Standards for Arts Education. The purpose was to stop the marginalization of the arts in American education and to ensure a place for the arts in the K-12 curriculum. Though voluntary, the standards were developed as world-class standards of what American young people should know and be able to do in all the arts in an attempt to keep pace with other countries around the world that emphasize arts education (McCutchen, 2006).
In 2002, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was passed by Congress (McCutchen, 2006). NCLB recognized the arts as core subjects, but it failed to fund them or to identify standards or assessments in arts education. NCLBs emphasis on reading and math scores tipped the scales away from arts and back toward the old “basics.” Lacking direct funding support for the arts, arts educators had to find other funded aspects in NCLB where the arts contributed to learning so as not to have the arts left behind (McCutchen, 2006).

Dance became either an extra-curricular activity offered in after-school programs, or more rarely, as an effective teaching strategy. Sandra Minton (2008) suggests in her education textbook, *Using Movement to Teach Academics: the Mind and Body as One Entity*:

> It is remarkable that movement is not used today as a teaching strategy throughout all levels of education, considering the connections that exist between mind and body. While preschool, kindergarten, and 1st-grade teachers recognize the need to have students move and dance, those who teach grades 2 through high school use movement as a teaching strategy much more sparingly. Perhaps current emphasis on academic achievement does not allow sufficient time to introduce movement-based lessons or teacher training programs may not include movement-based curricula throughout. (p. 45)

Dance education instituted as after-school programs is generally not regulated by quantity or quality, and what is taught varies widely. Some programs are funded by Parent Teacher Organizations, some are privately paid, some are state or federally
funded, and some are offered through arts education umbrella organizations like the Kennedy Center, which funds after-school programs in designated communities throughout the country. Most after-school dance programs are taught by instructors with a background in dance who are not certified dance specialists, which does not guarantee the quality of instruction (McCutchen, 2006).

This concern for quality dance instruction can also be asked of the availability of dance training for teachers who want to implement dance as a teaching strategy. Barbara Ischinger from the Center for Educational Research and Innovation (2013) states:

The idea that arts education fosters such skills is plausible, and there is some evidence that this is sometimes the case, but such outcomes depend on how the arts are taught. The arts can be taught in a way that enhances these outcomes, or they can be taught poorly. This implies that, as important as the curriculum can be, we need to understand better the pedagogies and attitudes that lead to these kinds of outcomes. (p. 3)

The NCLB law includes the arts as a core academic subject and a small number of forward-thinking school districts have begun to integrate the arts across the curriculum and into the fabric of the school day. However, the comfort level of the teacher towards teaching the specific art form within their curriculum depends on their own experience and expertise (Holcomb, 2007).

Patricia Reedy (2003), author and dance curriculum specialist, feels that there is room for instructor growth while implementing dance in the classroom, that
teaching is not an exact discipline. Rather, it is more of an art and as an art; it requires the acceptance of a certain amount of uncertainty or risk taking. By acting upon the right to experiment, to try new ideas and perhaps fail, the teacher gains confidence in the process of guiding a creativity-based art experience. Through establishing an atmosphere of openness, the teacher communicates to the students that experimentation is valued and that they are willing to join them in risk-taking endeavors (Reedy, 2003).

With the implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2012 over NCLB, the education system is moving forward into a new land of the unknown when it comes to dance in education. With four main areas of focused learning desired through CCSS: ways of thinking, ways of working, tools of working, and skills for living in the world, there appears to be more room for creativity, collaboration, and personal expression which encompass all aspects of dance (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010).

In addition to these national standards, two professional organizations both lead advocacy efforts on behalf of dance: the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) and the National Dance Association (NDA). They serve the national reform agenda in dance education and represent dance in various arts education coalitions. McCutchen (2006) feels that dance education has come of age in America as society has entered the 21st century – manifesting a growing presence in public education. She believes that future generations will see the last decade of the 20th century as the time when goals for the art of dance aligned with the goals of education: a time when
arts education, arts focus schools, arts magnet schools, and dance education increased in quantity and quality in U.S. schools (McCutchen, 2006).

**Multiple Intelligence and Learning Modalities**

With the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001, education reform took the route of standardized testing with a focus on language literacy and mathematics. Children across the country had their everyday learning environment streamlined to worksheets and assessment tests in an attempt to monitor the “success” of our schools. After a decade, the major consensus from administrators, teachers, parents, and students was that NCLB left every child behind. In Michael Apple’s (2007) article in the *Journal of Teacher Education* his views on NCLB read, “Controversies continue to swirl and intensify around such things as its redefinition of literacy and reading instruction and its emphasis on only one set of strategies for teaching such things” (p. 110). Pigeonholing teaching into one way of learning left many children by the wayside within our educational system. With the new implementation of the Federal Government’s Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the mandated way the children will learn has relaxed to allow the teachers the ability to create their own lesson plans and incorporate different modes of learning. “These standards establish what students need to learn, but do not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers decide how best to help students reach the standards” (NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010, p. 5). This new approach opens the possibility for artistic expression to be integrated within learning the curriculum.
As much research has been done on the seminal work of the Harvard developmental psychologist Howard Gardner (1983), *Frames of Mind: the Theories of Multiple Intelligences*, educators know that children learn in different ways and allowing them opportunities within the classroom to exercise these learning modalities can only enhance and enrich their learning and comprehension. He defined these aptitudes for learning as musical–rhythmic, visual–spatial, verbal–linguistic, logical–mathematical, bodily–kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic. He later suggested that existential and moral intelligence may also be worthy of inclusion as modalities (Gardner, 1983).

Dance education researchers have expounded this theory in multiple publications. McCutchen believes that the Multiple Intelligences help dance and the arts gain educational respect among educational reformers. She suggests examining at Multiple Intelligences as “pathways” to achieve different areas rather than ways to prescribe individual interests. Those individuals who are strong in bodily-kinesthetic aptitudes may or may not choose to channel that ability into dance or sport, but that aptitude gives them a chance to succeed in the education system if they do have the opportunity to use kinesthetic learning. She encourages teachers to identify students whose profiles indicate bodily-kinesthetic as a preferred learning modality and invite them into dance as a way to be a student advocate (McCutchen, 2006).

In Reedy’s (2003) guide to creative dance, *Body, Mind, & Spirit*, she agrees, stating:
Integrating dance into other core academic content allows children to access multiple intelligences and modalities to grasp concepts they might otherwise miss, or to deepen their understanding of science, math, language arts, visual arts, and music by learning through all of their senses, integrating body and mind. (p. 33)

Lessons can essentially be learned in multiple ways. In an active form of learning, students process information through oral expression or written work, but they can also make diagrams or drawings, do peer-teaching, and present performances or demonstrations that could potentially involve dance as a form of expression.

“Effective multisensory instruction engages children by asking them to see, hear, touch, and move in relation to the concepts they are studying. Multisensory teaching also encourages children to be emotionally connected to what they are learning” (Minton, 2008, p. 2). By experiencing the curriculum in tangible ways, the process of learning can be more personal to the individual child.

With multisensory teaching, educators must know what the praxis of art does to the mind and body. Traditionally, society separated mind from body in education; working with one’s head was different and nobler than working with one’s hands. It is thought that very bright students study physics while students that are good with their hands take woodshop. “This separation is philosophically naïve, psychologically ill-conceived, and educationally mischievous. Rather, the competent work of the hand depends on the competent work of the mind” (Eisner, 1998, p. 23). These two components cannot work without the other. Research suggests that the senses and the
mind are connected. By experiencing and differentiating color, texture, smell, and sounds, students become more conscious of their world. By refining these sensibilities, they can develop the cognitive operations of remembrance and imagination (Eisner, 1998).

Eisner (1998) believed that by taking the refinement of our sensibilities a step further, students can develop the praxis of a specific art medium. Through praxis, permanence of an idea or opinion is created. Students can then analyze and learn to critically edit the art to enhance and hone the idea to perfection. Communication becomes possible and dialogue often occurs either through the art itself or in commentary about the experience of the art. Research suggests that opportunity for self-discovery, interpretation, and invention manifests for the students. Through this process of learning, the practice of critical-thinking occurs. Eisner suggests that building upon this artistic refinement with the study of multiple art forms will increase cognitive potential, as each art medium studied requires different attention and skill. A drawing or painting is better than a paragraph when we want to know what someone looks like. A story is usually better than a drawing or painting if we want to know a sequence of events. Dance and music are better at understanding the vital and dynamic experience of our emotional life (Eisner, 1998).

John Dewey (1897), as one of education’s earliest reformers and a voice for the Progressivism Movement believed that the active side precedes the passive in the development of the child’s-nature. He stated in My Pedagogic Creed that “expression comes before conscious impression and that movements come before conscious
sensations. Education should therefore be a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing” (p. 79). This essentially is the concept of experiential learning, or learning through reflection or doing experience (Felicia, 2011).

The practice of dance is a form of experiential learning. The student must physically propel their body into space creating various shapes and forms, and over time, eventually develop patterns and sequences combined with rhythms that manifest into an artistic experience. “Children learn to dance and to make dances by actually doing so” (Reedy, 2003, p.7). With repetition and discipline, this process of learning becomes not only extremely personal to the dancer, but it can help them create an artistic voice, an embodied language, that helps them interpret the world around them and articulate new meaning.

By learning through experience, educators are making learning personal for the student. “For children, developing the kinesthetic sense provides perception of themselves: their size, their strength, their timing, their movement control and flow” (Reedy, 2003, p. 13). Experiential learning guarantees a form of self-expression and a sense of identity within education. Dewey felt that the only way to make the child conscious of his social heritage is to enable him to perform those fundamental types of activity which define civilization (Dewey, 1897).

With more praxis of dance and the use of dance as a learning tool, over time, proficiency and an ability to monitor growth will develop in education. A child’s physical maturation, background, and prior movement experiences combine to
determine movement readiness. “Not all children automatically progress to a high level of movement and control unless educators design meaningful movement techniques for them to master” (McCutchen, 2006, p. 67). This progress can take years and years of study, even for the most coordinated of children.

Maxine Greene (2013) states,

By living in the questions, it enables us to release our social imaginations in order to take action against the very standards of measurement and evaluation that are separating us from one another and from our ability to learn and teach in differing and, yes, creative ways. (p. 251)

Though such teaching cannot always be predicted or controlled, providing students an opportunity to work on life-skills as well as curriculum can only enhance their growth and well-being. The students’ self-discovery that manifests in the process must be considered valuable. “Education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing” (Dewey, 1897, p. 79). Kinesthetic learners must be given more opportunities to engage their bodies, both within traditional and nontraditional curriculum. This will not only help their cognition and retention, but will engage their whole being.

**Student Engagement and Educating the Whole Student**

As an educational reformer, Dewey believed that the educational process has two sides – one psychological and one sociological; organically related. Therefore education cannot be regarded as a compromise between the two, or a superimposition of one upon the other. “The best and deepest moral training is precisely that which
one gets through having to enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought” (Dewey, 1897, p.79). He believed that students need opportunities to engage with each other in ways that create thoughtful dialogue. When examining our current educational framework, Critical Pedagogist and philosopher Paulo Freire (1970) defined the banking system of education as a process where information is fed to students and the students regurgitate out that same information in order to pass standardized tests; essentially the opposite of Dewey’s recommendations. By learning this way, education does nothing to engage and enhance the child’s social skills, well-being, or personal growth (Freire, 1970).

When the student is able to invest their mind and body into their learning through mediums such as dance, the personal and organic nature of that learning unearths feelings and emotions that lay under the surface, previously untapped. “The body and its movements are the medium that reveals how a child feels inside. The way children move through space, use time and force, and relate to others and their environment reveals these feelings” (Cone & Cone, 2005, p. 12). This emotional connection becomes a process of learning that helps them understand their environment more deeply.

To developmental psychologist and philosopher Jean Piaget (1936), cognitive development was a progressive reorganization of mental processes as a result of biological maturation and environmental experience. He believed that children construct an understanding of the world around them, and then experience discrepancies between what they already know and what they discover in their
environment (Piaget, 1936). This method of trial and error is used throughout the discipline and pedagogy of dance.

In addition, increasingly validated in the literature is the concept of the reciprocal relationship between motion and emotion – whether a manifestation of body image, a psychic, attitudinal, or muscular state – as neurophysiologic correlates. Thus, music and rhythmic movement like dance may combine to play significant roles in shaping the quantity and quality of behavioral responses (Berrol, 1992).

As students engage more with their emotions through dance, they develop a better understanding of themselves, their opinions, and what they find most meaningful. McCutchen (2006) explains:

Aesthetics relates to quality, value, and meaning. It reaches into more areas than just the artistic. As we respond to something particularly beautiful, something that touches us, we have an aesthetic reaction or feeling response. Encourage an aesthetic feeling response in dance to help learners savor life’s best opportunities and experiences. Help them acquire a direct link to themselves through dance to know what it is to be human, to be alive, to live deeply, and to participate fully. (p. 72)

Learning and continual study become less laborious and student engagement increases. “We now know that active, interdisciplinary, and multisensory teaching approaches like educational dance use a greater number of human intelligences, promote better retention, create emotional connections, and inspire an inner desire to
learn” (Minton, 2008, p.2). The more students practice multisensory learning, the more confident they become in social engagement.

Dewey believed that by educating the whole student through both the sciences and the arts, the best potential for human action would be reached, the most genuine human conduct aroused, and the best service to human nature would be capable. This process of educating would increase the student’s engagement at home as well as provide the deepest moral training in their social life (Dewey, 1897). “We want to increase social skills through dance. We want to promote a sense of well-being and ensure that students feel good about themselves as movers and dancers” (McCutchen, 2006, p. 87). With this gained confidence, they can interact with others with more intention and compassion.

Through the engagement of the discipline of the arts, students can learn to deal with moments of conflict more constructively. “Dance is psychological, involving cognitive and emotional experiences affected by and affecting an individual’s personal and group life. Thus dance serves as a means of knowing and coping with socially induced tensions and aggressive feelings” (Hanna, 1979, p. 4). Students need to feel successful about the experiences they pursue and accomplish. They also have a need to express their joy, fear, anger, frustration, and excitement and to communicate their understanding about their world. Dance recognizes and fulfills these needs (Cone & Cone, 2005).

Educators must rethink the practice of stifling creativity through standardized testing and the exclusion of art instruction. Maxine Greene (1988) stated,
If situations cannot be created that enable the young to deal with feelings of being manipulated by outside forces, there will be far too little sense of agency among them. Without a sense of agency, young people are unlikely to pose significant questions, the existentially rooted questions in which learning begins. (p. 3)

These situations can arise through the study of the arts, by allowing children to explore their feelings and emotions, and giving them a platform to speak.

Dance students use the elements of dance to create movement scores derived from their own personal, cultural, and familial experiences. As the students perform these dances for their peers, they are accepted for who they are and diversity is respected and applauded. As students teach their own movement and learn that of their peers, they develop empathy, improve their observation and communication skills, and learn respect for others (Reedy, 2003).

Through this improved state of well-being, educational dance is for everyone, both child and adult. It broadly educates, it embraces all aspects of dance that have educational value, it increases aesthetic education, and it affects the total education of a student. It stretches the body and the mind (McCutchen, 2006).

**Dance as Transcendence for School Success**

Research suggests that not only does the studying of the arts increase a student’s overall well-being it also has a reflection on their overall test scores. A report commissioned by the Arts Education Partnership and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) in 2005 cites research studies documenting more than
sixty-five distinct relationships between the arts and academic and social outcomes. There is strong evidence that specific forms of arts education have a positive impact on the development of certain skills. The report concluded that visual arts instruction increased reading readiness, while dramatic enactment enhanced conflict resolution skills. Learning to play the piano increased mathematics proficiency and dancers scored higher than non-dancers on creative thinking measures, especially abstract thought. Arts activities in general were shown to promote growth in students’ social skills like collaboration, and in developing empathy and social tolerance (Holcomb, 2007).

In Singapore, the Ministry of Information, Communications, and the Arts (MICA) established the School of the Arts in 2008 to develop an innovative schooling model. This independent high school offered a six-year education program in the arts for thirteen to eighteen year old students. These students studied their selected art forms for more than ten hours per week but also learned regular academic subjects. In 2013, the first cohort of students of the School of the Arts, which enrolls about two hundred students annually, all passed the International Baccalaureate diploma examination, and almost 44% of students obtained a score of 40 or above placing them in the top 5% of students taking the examination (Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013).

A report by Americans for the Arts (1998) states that young people who participate regularly in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, to participate in a math and science fair, or to win an award for
writing an essay or poem than children who do not participate (Heath, 1998).

Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skill. Arts learning can also improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork. A report by the Rand Corporation about the visual arts argues that the intrinsic pleasures and stimulation of the art experience do more than sweeten an individual's life -- according to the report, they "can connect people more deeply to the world and open them to new ways of seeing," (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Brooks, & Szanto, 2005, p. xvi).

It is also important to mention that countries that do not put arts on the fringe of their education system score higher on the Global Creative Index (GCI). This annual report given by the Martin Prosperity Institute (MPI) analyzes and assesses the prospects for sustainable prosperity across eighty-two nations according to a combination of underlying economic, social, and cultural factors that are referred to as the three “T”s of economic development—Technology, Talent, and Tolerance (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012). The report also compares the GCI to a series of other metrics of competitiveness and prosperity—from conventional measures of economic growth to alternative measures of economic equality, human development, and happiness and well-being. Countries such as Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Japan, Germany, Switzerland, Iceland, Finland, and New Zealand score higher than the United States, England, and Australia (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012). The United States must move away from exclusion of the arts if they want to compete in global future. Society can no longer succeed –or even tread water – with an
education system handed down from the industrial age, since there is little need for the assembly line workers of the past. Rather, the education system should reflect and reinforce the values, priorities, and requirements of the creative age (Florida, 2005).

In the report, *Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement* (2006) many benefits of arts education are listed, including:

In a well-documented national study using a federal database of over 25,000 middle and high school students, researchers from the University of California at Los Angeles found students with high arts involvement performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with low arts involvement. The high arts-involved students also watched fewer hours of TV, participated in more community service, and reported less boredom in school. (Ruppert, p. 8)

This compilation of multiple independent studies commissioned by NASAA has shown that increased years of enrollment in arts courses are positively correlated with higher SAT verbal and math scores (Ruppert, 2006). Arts participation and SAT scores co-vary—that is, they tend to increase linearly: the more arts classes, the higher the scores. Research that is specific to the medium of dance shows that, amongst high school age students, those who studied dance scored higher than non-dancers on measures of creative thinking, especially in the categories of fluency, originality, and abstract thought (Ruppert, 2006).

These areas of academic prowess, though impressive, cannot compare with the social benefits shown in a study of juvenile offenders and other disenfranchised youth. When a group of 60 such adolescents, ages 13 to 17, participated in jazz and hip hop
dance classes twice weekly for 10 weeks, they reported significant gains in confidence, tolerance and persistence related to the dance experience (Ruppert, 2006).

The Deprivation of the Arts as a Form of Oppression

Within the last decade, the decline of arts education opportunities in schools has been well documented. According to the National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Department of Education, between the school years 1999-2000 and 2009-2010, there was a significant decline in the availability of arts instruction in our schools. Though the availability of music and visual arts instruction in elementary and secondary schools across the nation only fell slightly within those ten years, the instruction of theater and dance had significant reductions. For theater and dance in elementary schools, the percentages of schools making these art forms available went from 20% to only 4% and 3%, respectively. In addition, at more than 40% of secondary schools, coursework in arts was not required for graduation in the 2009-2010 school year (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012).

In Freire’s passionate work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), he writes that our education system, by using the banking method to maintain the status quo, reveals a political agenda to silence the voice of our children. “The capability of banking education to minimize or annul the students’ creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed” (Freire, 1970, p. 73). He believed that the banking system was prevalent in public education to maintain the working class’ status, whereas private school education systems foster the voices of the elite.
This oppressive agenda is omnipresent within the implementation of the NCLB Act where the focus on literacy and numeracy, accompanied by high-stakes testing, exerted pressure on other areas of learning, such as the arts, to maintain inclusion in weekly curriculum. Due to lack of public funding, the arts, if taught at all, are an after-thought in public education; only implemented as extra-curricular activities funded by parents or parent organizations. However, international evidence suggests that this systemic effort to keep the arts away from our children may be the actual culprit for the United States and other Western countries’ poor testing scores. Study after study reveals the benefits of student participation in the arts (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012).


> The programs we provide, what we include and what we exclude, what we emphasize and what we minimize, what we assign prime time and what we assign to the remainder, reflect the directions in which we believe children should grow. (p.13)

By shoving the arts to the fringe of our educational system, we develop potentially generations of students who will not become proficient in the praxis of art, essentially silencing their artistic voice, stifling creativity, suppressing social criticism and commentary, and maintaining the status quo. Most profoundly, these trade-offs have been especially noteworthy in schools in disadvantaged settings (Caldwell & Vaughan, 2012).
Evidence suggests that arts education has been slipping for more than three decades, the result of tight budgets and an ever-growing list of state mandates that have crammed the classroom curriculum (Smith, 2009). Though arts education is one of the ten necessary components of education curriculum within the government-mandated programs NCLB and now CCSS, implementation in the classroom is not guaranteed. The teachers may lack proficiency and comfort ability implementing art education as they themselves had no music and art classes in the 1970s and 1980s. With government standardized tests that measure achievement through math and language arts scores, not drawing proficiency or music skills, many districts have zeroed in on the test only (Smith, 2009).

Access to the arts becomes a financial and socio-economic component to our education system. The wealthiest of our citizens send their children to private institutions that provide a wide range of the intellectual mediums, i.e., the arts, humanities, and philosophy, guaranteeing their children’s artistic expression and voice. Parents and parent organizations within middle class neighborhoods have been forced to financially support any artistic curriculum themselves to keep up. While the disadvantaged children of the poor, without access to the arts at home or in their neighborhood, are now deprived of the experience in school (Zhao, 2012). “It is not only morally cruel but also practically discriminating; the wealthy have a rich, well-balanced education while the poor have an impoverished experience focusing on literacy and numeracy” (Zhao, 2012, p. x). The education system is fostering the artistic voice of the privileged youth and silencing the artistic voice of the
disadvantaged youth who are at the greatest risk of dropping out of the system completely. Eisner (1998) felt that “the power to imagine is central to our culture’s development. It not only provides for cultural development, it provides for our own development; because, through culture, our own development occurs” (p. 25). The reciprocal nature of this artistic oppression denies any upward mobility to a certain demographic of our nation’s youth who need it the most.

Findings by UCLA researcher, James Catterall indicate that low socio-economic-status students who are engaged in arts learning have increases in high school academic performance, college-going rates, college grades, and holding jobs with a future. Despite these findings, Catterall also found that the decline of arts education is most drastic in underserved populations, where students who could benefit the most from arts education are getting it the least (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). “From Mozart for babies to tutus for toddlers to family trips to the museum, the children of affluent, aspiring parents generally get exposed to the arts whether or not public schools provide them” (Smith, 2009). Low-income children however do not have this advantage. Arts education enables those children from a financially challenged background to have a more level playing field with children who have had those enrichment experiences. Strong arts programming in schools helps close a gap that has left many a child behind. “Dance can be used as a tool for a liberating education. It can directly drive away oppression by celebrating both the diversity and the commonality of the human experience. Everyone has a body; everyone has
something unique to say with it” (Reedy, 2003, p. 13). Every dancers’ interpretation of movement will be a reflection of their individual experiences.

Dance educators feel that dance may be, like play, rituals of rebellion, or cathartic outlets for deviance, a way of representing a segment of the psyche or world to understand or cope with it. It develops a forum for articulating political attitudes and values; it is an arena for training which carries over to important positions in other spheres of life, and a vehicle of control, adjudication, and change. “When dance is suppressed for moral, religious, or political reasons, it rises phoenix-like to assert the essence of humanity” (Hanna, 1979, p. 1). Urban dance forms like hip/hop or cultural dance forms like Capoeira are examples of dance that developed because of social and political oppression. Through the artistic expression of dance, the nature of humanity can change.

Through significant research we have seen the evidence that art can be transformative and socially uplifting. Through the praxis of art, children can engage in critical thinking and increase cognitive learning that branches out across curriculum helping to improve test scores. Sadly, the availability of art instruction in schools has declined significantly with the implementation of the NCLB Act and the reduction of public funding for the arts. This provides a social and political gap between those of privilege and those who are disadvantaged. By establishing this gap, we are silencing children’s voices enforced by bourgeois values and sanctioned in the classroom by everyone (hooks, 1994).
Society has no idea how this silence will affect the culture of our nation for generations to come. Paulo Friere (1970) said it best:

Problem-posing education is revolutionary futurity. Hence it is prophetic (and, as such, hopeful)... it affirms men as beings who transcend themselves, who move forward and look ahead, for whom immobility represents a fatal threat, for whom looking at the past must only be a means of understanding more clearly what and who they are so that they can more wisely build the future. (p. 84)

Dewey believed that art will give shape to human powers and adapt them to social service. By practicing art in education, we increase our humanity and that no insight, sympathy, tact, executive power, is too great for such social service (Dewey, 1897).

The purpose of education is to raise the standard of our society. “The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important” (Eisner, 2002, p. 72). Students need teachers who believe in their success, who can help them find meaning, passion, and new ways to think. They need their voices heard, their songs sung, their dances danced. Educators need to find a way back to the inspiration that led them to teaching and allow themselves to be the change agents by advocating for student success for all.

**Dance and the University Student**

As students arrive at four-year universities and enroll in dance courses of various levels, many have preconceived notions of dance and its meaning. Some have a great deal of previous dance training and others, very little. Regardless of level,
engaging in dance instruction within a university setting provides unique perspectives for students to learn about themselves, their community, and dance as an art form.

For the seasoned dancer, since it is rarely emphasized in dance-studio training and K-12 dance programs, there is little knowledge of modern dance and the concepts of dance composition, improvisation, and criticism (Enghauser, 2008). Much of what they have learned about the process of creating dances and the execution of movements has limited them from exploring free expression. They have been trained to look a certain way or to copy or execute movements very militantly rather than experiencing the sensations of movement through their bodies. Celeste Snowber (2012), wrote in her article Dance as a Way of Knowing, “This isn’t knowledge that can just be told or read about; it must be experienced. And in experiencing, there is as much unlearning to do as learning” (p. 55). Like other areas of higher education, dancers are asked to question some if not all of their previous training; to analyze, deconstruct, and to discover anew.

Snowber (2012) feels that learning about dance in a postsecondary educational setting extends its meaning to include not only the more formal way one thinks of dance, but also through creative movement, improvisation, and ways of moving that are marked by expressivity. This educational format is particularly important as there are a wide variety of backgrounds brought by students through diverse experiences. “One cannot take only one class or a semester, and refine the skills to teach or learn dance in all of its rich forms. It is a lifetime of practice and artistry, not to mention muscular and physical requirements to become adept at any particular discipline”
(Snowber, 2012, p. 53). The students must revisit movements from fresh perspectives and sometimes revert back to basics to find new meaning. Although the methods and standards in which universities carry out dance education are varied, they all attach great importance in cultivating university students’ healthy aesthetic concepts and aesthetic capacity (Bi, 2010).

For beginning level dance students with no previous experience, there is a much different palette of expectations for dance training. Students essentially arrive with a blank slate, and there are various obstacles that a teacher must overcome to fully engage the students with their bodies. “Spinning and dancing, which were once so organic to us as children, have often been lost in adulthood” (Snowber, 2012, p. 55). With little opportunities to engage in dance-like movements in primary and secondary education, dance has no reference to their everyday lives. Many of these adult students have grown up learning little about dance in the school system, yet now need to learn about an arts curricula and its role in the world (Strachan & Lee, 2014).

Beginning level adult dance students may be afraid of learning dance as they are restrained by various ages and physical conditions (Bi, 2010). As the state of the nation has become more sedentary both in and out of education, students often have a bodily disconnect that can be detrimental to their health. The American College Health Association (2012) reported that approximately 34% of individuals in colleges and universities are overweight, with approximately 45% of males and 50% of female college students not participating in the recommended levels of weekly physical activity (Haskell et al., 2007).
However, this fear of dancing is not just designated to students who lack physical strength, coordination, and stamina. Dancers and educators, Leisha Strachan and Nathan Lee (2014) recognized this fear among physical education students as well, as they stated in their article *D.A.N.C.E.: A Framework for Instructing University Physical Education Students About Dance*,

Many of these students love physical activity and can see the value of teaching games with purpose. However, when the dance unit is introduced, there is often a great deal of apprehension and even trepidation. In teaching dance to future physical educators, it has been important for us to alleviate fears and have students develop a level of comfort with the material. (p. 34).

With the introduction of dance, beginning level students worry about misconceptions and ridicule as they have to perform and share dance in front of peers. This process helps them understand feelings of vulnerability and opens their discovery that dance can be enjoyable (Strachan & Lee, 2014). “The creativity of dance accesses the place within us that has primal imagination. Integrating play within dance making has the capacity to return us to the place where we lose inhibitions of the self-consciousness of our bodies” (Snowber, 2012, p. 56). By opening themselves up to these feelings they can better relate to the vulnerability of others around them.

As socio-emotional development takes place, adult students’ appreciation and awareness of the prevalence of dance around them is an important step in learning about their world. Dance is communal and there is a new learning about culture that can be gained through dance. They learn that the arts are reflected in, and potentially
influence, the political and cultural climate (Strachan & Lee, 2014). To study dance and its origins and development is intrinsically a study of culture and history. “These types of facts need to be delivered to students so that they can understand the links between dance and culture and have an ability to make these links in a multidisciplinary fashion” (Strachan & Lee, 2014, p. 35). Dance helps them identify their own culture, but also learn about the culture of others. This approach to cultural identity can heighten their civic-responsibility as they are entrusted with the personal stories and narratives of their fellow classmates through dance (Parrish, 2009).

Through experiential exercises, scholarly readings, proper assessment through teacher, peer, and self-evaluations, and a consistent level of mind-body engagement, adult dance learners can reach their potential as fully-embodied movers (Kearns, 2010). With continued study in improvisation, choreography composition, and the access to Artist-in-Residence programs that only universities can provide, adult students have access to the arts as a part of everyday life and an ideal fundamental education (Parrish, 2009).

Summary

Much research has been conducted and relevant literature has been created on the importance of dance instruction. Through the examination of literature available on the history of dance education, an understanding of dance training methods and the unconventionality of dance learning environments is realized. If dance is offered, lives can be transformed in many ways.
The innate use of kinesthetic and experiential learning through dance education is scientifically affirmed within the literature of Multiple Intelligences; as students’ ability to retain information and overall comprehension is evaluated and documented. The use of dance as a pedagogical tool for the overall development of a student physically, mentally, and spiritually has been espoused from our earliest educational reformers, constructivist theorists, and dance pedagogy experts. Through the review of statistical data, there is concrete evidence of a link between school success and the praxis of dance training.

As the decrease in funding for dance education is documented over several decades, the literature questions the political reasoning behind such deprivation for all students within K-12 school systems. The concept that practicing dance is a way of practicing freedom is noted and the acknowledgement that university settings may be one of the last places where students can access truly ideal dance praxis is suggested.

By inviting learners into a different relationship with their bodies through the study of dance, we are increasing their relationship to a variety of content areas in curriculum. “Dance accesses many kinds of knowledge beyond kinesthetic intelligence, including visual, tactile, mental, cognitive, and emotional intelligence” (Snowber, 2012, p. 57). No matter the vocation of the student, they are able to integrate the fullness of their intelligence and expand their humanity when studying dance. Their presence of knowing is increased and they develop a deeper knowing of their world (Snowber, 2012).
With increasingly diverse student populations in the nation, there is increased pressure to put in place new systems for academic support and innovative approaches to pedagogy (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009). According to the report *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution* (2009), questions about curriculum and higher education's purpose are particularly salient in developing regions where emerging economies require both specialists trained for science and technical professions as well as strong leaders with generalist knowledge who are creative, adaptable, and able to give broad ethical consideration to social advances. (Altbach et al., p. x)

The ability to transfer skills and techniques learned in class to other places is among the most important forms of success dance educators can provide (Kearns, 2010). Exposure to dance in and throughout primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational systems may inspire students to return to dance, begin taking classes, or engage in social dance in their personal time. At the very least, students have a chance to engage with dance and learn about themselves and their peers (Strachan & Lee, 2014). “Dance ushers in a way to connect biology and body, economics and intuitive thinking, human geography and physicality, and psychology and visceral awareness” (Snowber, 2012, p. 56). The practice of dance is needed as we recover what it means to be humans in today’s technological world, learning with mind, body, and soul.

The literature reveals that, though there is significant research on dance in primary and secondary educational systems, there is little attention given to post-secondary dance students; and specifically more needed on the novice dance learner
(You, 2009). This inquiry could provide a wider variety of perspectives and approaches on dance in higher education.

Besides the health benefits of dance training, the concept that there can be a transfer of dance learning to other situations; that students can acquire skills through the study of dance that will enhance learning in other subjects, and can be applied to other areas of life, may be one of the great potentials for dance education (Dunkin, 2004). The resulting study hopes to expand our knowledge of beginning dancers in higher education. This can build a connection to the importance of dance instruction at all levels of education and help guide any future research.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research study and resulting thesis have attempted to contribute to a deeper and richer understanding of dance and the mind-body connection. One hundred and nine students from Northern California State University (pseudonym) participated in the study. Data collection took place at the beginning and end of a 16-week dance technique course in five different sections offered. The researcher administered an 8-item pre-survey at the beginning of the course that included demographic and open-ended questions (Appendix B). At the end of the semester, the researcher administered a 13-item post-survey that contained demographic and open-ended questions (Appendix C). The completed surveys supplied the necessary data to answer the research questions. Following is a detailed explanation of the general parameters and specific elements of the educational research study documented here; including the research questions, the research study design and methods of data collection, the research instruments, the participants and setting involved, and the analysis procedures.

Study Design and Data Collection

The current study used a qualitative research approach. According to Merriam (1988), the qualitative case study is defined as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). The use of surveys to obtain data is widely acknowledged as an effective research tool in most of the
developed countries of the world. Surveys have broad appeal, particularly in
democratic cultures, because they are perceived as a reflection of the attitudes,
preferences, and opinions of the very people from whom the society’s policymakers
derive their mandate. Munn & Drever (1990) identify four main advantages for the
researcher when using surveys. These are: an efficient use of time, anonymity for the
respondent, the possibility of a high return rate, and standardized questions (p. 2).

The surveys obtained qualitative data through open-ended questions asking
about their views of the process of studying dance and its relevance in education. This
method allowed for more rich narrative and description, and instead of providing an
outcome, helps analyze the process (Filstead, 1979). Qualitative research is by
definition exploratory, and it is used when we do not know what to expect, to define
the problem, or develop an approach to the problem (Rea & Parker, 2005). This
method of research was most beneficial for the researcher as she was unaware of the
level of previous instruction or exposure to dance that the students had experienced.
There are multiple ways that students can have dance influence through both social
and educational environments and allowing the questions to be open-ended allowed
the researcher to go deeper into the students’ perceptions of dance in our culture.

A pre-survey which included eight statements of demographic and open-ended
questions was distributed at the beginning of the semester. This survey allowed the
researcher to determine a pool of students who had never taken dance instruction
before enrollment in the class. Through a post-survey with 13 statements of
demographic and open-ended questions that was distributed at the completion of the
class, the researcher identified common themes in the students’ descriptions about their experience after studying dance for the course of the semester. This type of research is called longitudinal in design as the participants were studied over a distinct period of time (Kirk, 1995).

By distributing the survey to only students of beginning level dance classes, the researcher used a form of research known as selective sampling. Schatzman & Strauss (1973) state that selective sampling is a practical necessity that is “shaped by the time the researcher has available to him, by his framework, by his starting and developing interests, and by any restrictions placed upon his observations by his hosts” (p. 39). The ultimate goal of sample research is to allow researchers to generalize about a large population by studying only a small portion of that population (Rea & Parker, 2005). According to Merriam (1998), "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 61).

A quasi-experimental research design was used in collecting data for this study as the students enrolled in the class by their own volition as an elective. By definition, quasi-experimental studies encompass a broad range of non-randomized intervention studies. “These designs are frequently used when it is not logistically feasible or ethical to conduct a randomized controlled trial” (Harris et al., 2006, p. 16). The researcher was specifically analyzing the responses from students currently enrolled in dance classes based on their personal experiences, therefore no other classes were given the surveys besides dance classes.
Prior to participation in the study, students were asked to sign their own consent forms documenting their voluntary participation in the study (Appendix A). The researcher assured the students that their participation in the study would in no way affect their grade in the course. The students were able to opt-out of the study if they so chose. The researcher was not aware of any students who chose to opt out of participating in the study. The participants were asked to identify on their surveys their gender, ethnicity, and age, in order to categorize their responses by gender, racial/ethnic and socio-economic factors, and maturity level. The responses given by the students are confidential and students’ names and identification numbers were not requested by the researcher.

Having gained permission from the students to participate, the study began with a pre-survey to establish a group of students who fit the criteria of having little to no exposure to dance instruction (Appendix B). The researcher inquired about their previous dance experience within social, educational, and private environments. Though the students with little to no prior dance experience were the focus of the research, the data collected from all participating students enrolled in the beginning level classes are included to enhance the study. In order to gain more truthful answers from participants, the researcher reassured the participants that the answers given on the survey would be confidential and would not affect their academic performance in the class.

A post-survey with demographic and open-ended questions was given to the same students during the semester’s last week of instruction (Appendix C). The
questions asked the students to describe their perceptions of dance after participating in the course. Through open-ended questions, the researcher was able to analyze any increase in their understanding of the mind-body connection, their development of an artistic voice, or any perceived improvement in their overall well-being. The open-ended questions and qualitative approach allowed the students to express their personal human experience and create more meaningful data for the study (Anderson, 2010). Qualitative research is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning as well as to gain insight, explore the depth, richness, and complexity inherent in the phenomenon (Sandelowski, 2000). This method of research proved to be most beneficial for the researcher to help identify themes that suggest levels of personal transformation through exposure to dance. Qualitative techniques are extremely useful when a subject is too complex to be answered by a simple yes or no hypothesis (Sandelowski, 2000).

**Research Questions**

Using the work of educators such as Gardner (1983), Eisner (2002), and Dewey (1934) who advocated for the arts and the importance of experience-based learning as a foundation for this research, the questions posed will attempt to substantiate their findings by analyzing the experiences of students through their study of dance. The study’s educational research questions were:

1. When exposed to dance training, do students perceive a better understanding of the arts on a personal and social level and does any new
understanding transfer to other areas and enhance their overall academic success?

2. Will students perceive dance and other art-forms differently after studying dance technique?

3. Will students feel personal growth in well-being after studying dance technique?

Research Instruments

The research instrument employed for this study was the use of surveys using straightforward questions that allowed the students to share their insights qualitatively. The surveys were developed during the researcher’s coursework of EDTE 250 Education Research, based on examples of qualitative surveys. In order to create a level of anonymity, the researcher compared between surveys by use of tracking numbers that did not identify the participants. The surveys included demographic questions, ‘yes or no’ questions, and several open-ended questions which were specifically designed for the students to have the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions freely and more fully. This provided insight into their experiences with the study of dance technique that they deemed most important. The narratives provided as answers to the open-ended questions represent the bulk of the qualitative data.

Once the data was collected in its totality, the researcher utilized Excel programming spreadsheets to assist in the analysis of the demographic and the yes-and-no question data. The variables were the tracking code made up by the students,
the demographic information, and the responses from the yes-and-no data. The open-ended qualitative data was analyzed through the process of thematic data analysis, a process of encoding qualitative information. Thus the researcher develops "codes," words or phrases that serve as labels for sections of data (Boyatzis, 1998).

Thematic synthesis of research often follows a three stage process that overlaps to some degree; a line-by-line coding of the findings, the organization of these ‘free codes’ into related areas to construct ‘descriptive’ themes, and the development of ‘analytical’ themes (Thomas & Harden, 2008). The researcher developed codes after reading each response and common themes emerged after counting the codes. The qualitative data was then formulated into percentages to present the findings of the study. By using percentages and comparisons, the researcher was able to analyze the students’ responses and validate trends and commonalities. Although this analysis is most often used in quantitative research through numbers and used statistically, it can also be used with data gleaned from interviews, focus groups, and other forms of qualitative data (Barksdale & Lund, 2006).

**Participants**

The participants of the study were students who voluntarily enrolled in beginning level dance courses at Northern California State University. A total of 109 students participated in the study from five separate course sections. The students involved in the study enrolled in the classes without coercion and without a prior personal relationship with the researcher. The results can be interpreted with confidence because the enrolled students with varying backgrounds and other factors
provided various perspectives that enhanced the research. Because this study was conducted at Northern California State University, results are more generalized to the population of State Universities.

The university’s overall population of students is considered diverse, with 53% of all students identifying themselves as a member of a minority race and over 50% of the students coming from a low socio-economic background (SSOIR, 2014). As dance is an elective at the University and not a requirement, the population of students who enrolled in the classes are limited to those with an interest in dance technique. Table 1 describes the participants included in this study by gender. Table 2 provides a description of the ethnicities of the study participants. The age of the students is described in Table 3.

Table 1

*Students by Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Students by Ethnicity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

*Students by Age*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Setting**

The specific setting of the study within the Northern California State University campus was beginning level dance classes of various genres. These classes included the dance techniques of jazz dance, modern dance, ballet, and tap dance. The
classes were held in various dance rooms at multiple times during the day. The researcher administered the pre-survey at the beginning of the class period during the first week of instruction. The post-survey was administered at the beginning of the class period during the last week of instruction. The students were able to complete surveys within a 15-20 minute time frame. The demographic information and the yes-and-no answers were entered into an Excel spreadsheet at the personal home office of the researcher. Coding of the qualitative data took place in the Northern California State University Library. The qualitative data was analyzed through thematic coding developed by the researcher.

**Procedures**

To begin the study, the researcher obtained formal permission from the Department Chair of Theatre and Dance and the Human Subjects Research Committee. The researcher coordinated with the instructors of all beginning level dance classes and visited each class at the beginning of the scheduled times during the first week of instruction for the pre-survey, and during the last week of instruction for the post-survey. The surveys were distributed after an informed consent form was signed by the participating students (Appendix A). All materials were distributed at the beginning of the designated class period and each student was given the same amount of time (15-20 minutes) to complete the surveys.

The instructors of the beginning level dance courses were not required by the Department of Theatre and Dance to follow an exact curriculum; however, the syllabi for the courses were similar and the students were required to observe and critique
dance concerts as part of their training. Several different genres of dance training were taught amongst the courses which added to the differing experiences of the students.

Once the surveys were completed, the researcher matched the pre- and post-surveys according to a tracking number developed by the students. Coding of the demographics of the students along with the yes-and-no response data were entered into an Excel Spreadsheet. The qualitative data was analyzed in the Northern California State University Library. This venue gave the researcher a quiet place to carefully code the data and identify themes. Coding sheets were developed by the researcher to track each theme as it emerged. The data collected from the open-ended questions was analyzed in a qualitative fashion with a thematic approach by looking for key words and phrases. The analysis of the surveys began with identifying the amount of previous exposure to dance training the students indicated and categorizing them based on years of exposure. The data collection was then further categorized by gender, race-ethnicity, and age.

**Summary**

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher used qualitative methods to analyze the experiences of students enrolled in beginning level dance courses. Once the entirety of the qualitative data was collected, demographic data and yes- and no-responses were entered into an Excel Spreadsheet and analyzed. Through the use of open-ended questions from pre- and post-surveys, the researcher was able to identify themes and to monitor attitudes and perceptions about the process of dance
training. The researcher is relying on a qualitative research design to collect the necessary information that will answer the proposed research questions.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

This study gathered data from 109 students enrolled in five different beginning level dance technique courses offered at Northern California State University. One hundred and fifty two students took part; however, not all participants completed both surveys and therefore were not included in the study. No student enrolled in the courses chose not to participate in the study. In order to accomplish the research objectives, two separate surveys were analyzed; one at the beginning of the semester, and one at the end. The purpose of the pre-survey was to ascertain the students’ level of previous dance training and to explore their perceptions of dance before instruction commenced. The post-survey was distributed at the end of the semester in order to explore students’ perceptions of dance after the completion of the course. Both surveys included demographic questions in regards to gender, race, and age, followed by open-ended questions that were analyzed using a thematic approach. Two questions in the pre-survey allowed for yes or no responses.

Qualitative Data

Demographic Data Relating to Previous Dance Experience

The pre-survey included demographic questions to ascertain the background of the participants. The following data was analyzed in relation to the participants’ previous dance experience. Question #1 asked whether students had ever taken a dance technique class before enrolling in the course. Among the 109 participants, 79 students (72%) marked “yes” indicating previous dance instruction and 30 students
(28%) marked “no” indicating never taking a dance technique class before. Question #3 asked whether dance instruction was taught within the students’ primary and secondary school experience. Among the 109 participants, 57 students (52%) marked “yes” that they had received educational dance instruction and 52 students (48%) marked “no” indicating never receiving dance instruction within their primary and secondary school experience (Table 4).

Table 4

*Previous Dance Experience – All Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 - Have you taken a dance technique class before?</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 - Was dance instruction taught in your primary or secondary school?</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 79 students who indicated having previous dance instruction before enrolling in the course, 12 students (15%) had studied dance for less than a year. Forty students (51%) indicated 1-4 years of previous dance instruction. Eleven students (14%) had 5-8 years of previous dance instruction. Sixteen students (20%) had studied dance for nine years or more (Table 5).
In response to Question #1, 30 students (28%) marked “no” indicating never taking a dance technique class before. Among those 30 students, 9 students (30%) answered yes to Question #3 indicating having dance instruction available or taught within their primary and secondary education and 21 students (70%) answered no indicating not having dance instruction available or taught within their primary and secondary education (Table 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 - Have you taken a dance technique class before?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Response</td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Previous Dance Experience – Positive Response to Q1, Number of Years*
Table 6

*Previous Dance Experience – Negative Response to Q1, Comparison to Q3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 - Have you taken a dance technique class before?</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3Response</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 - Was dance instruction taught in your primary or secondary school?</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender**

Of the 79 participants who indicated “yes” to having taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in the course (Question #1), 16% were male and 84% were female. Within the responses from the male students, 4% had less than a year’s experience, 10% had 1-4 years of experience, 3% had 5-8 years of experience, and none had nine years or more. Within the responses from the female students, 11% had less than a year’s experience, 41% had 1-4 years of experience, 11% had 5-8 years of experience, and 20% had nine years or more (Table 7).
When analyzing the ratio of males to females among the 109 participants, 23 were male (21%) and 86 (79%) were female overall. Of the 30 participants who indicated “no” to having taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in the course (Question #1), 33% were male and 67% were female. Of the 52 students who indicated “no” to having dance instruction taught within their primary or secondary school education (Question #3), 23% were male and 77% were female (Table 8).
Table 8

*Gender Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Negative Response.*

**Q1 – Have you taken a dance technique class before?**

**Q3 – Was dance instruction taught in your primary or secondary school?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>Q1 – No</th>
<th>Q3 – No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnicity**

Table 9 demonstrates the breakdown of the students’ ethnicity across the 79 participants who indicated “yes” to having taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in the course (Question #1). The percentages of students are listed across four categories including “less than one year,” “one to four years,” “five to eight years,” and “nine or more years.”
Table 9

*Ethnicity Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Positive Response, Number of Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 - Have you taken a dance technique class before?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analyzing the ethnicity amongst the 109 participants, 39 students (36%) were Caucasian, 25 (23%) were Hispanic/Latino, 18 (17%) were Asian, 12 (11%) were African-American, 10 students (9%) identified themselves as Mixed race, and 5 students (5%) identified as Other overall. Of the 30 participants who indicated “no” to having taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in the course (Question #1), 3%
were African-American, 17% were Asian, 33% were Caucasian, 33% were Hispanic/Latino, 10% were Mixed race, and 3% identified as Other. Of the 52 students who indicated “no” to having dance instruction taught within their primary or secondary school education, 8% were African-American, 19% were Asian, 29% were Caucasian, 29% were Hispanic/Latino, 12% were Mixed race, and 4% identified as Other (Table 10).

Table 10

*Ethnicity Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Negative Response.*

*Q1 – Have you taken a dance technique class before?*

*Q3 – Was dance instruction taught in your primary or secondary school?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>Q1 – No</th>
<th>Q3 – No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Age

Table 11 demonstrates the breakdown of the students’ age among the 79 participants who indicated “yes” to having taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in the course (Question #1). The percentages of students are listed across four categories including “less than one year,” “one to four years,” “five to eight years,” and “nine or more years.”

Table 11

*Age Relating to Previous Dance Experience – Positive Response, Number of Years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1 - Have you taken a dance technique class before?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td><strong>Less than 1 year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When analyzing the age range of the 109 participants, 97 students (89%) were between the ages of 18-24, 11 students (10%) were between the ages of 25-34, and 1 student (1%) indicated being 17 years old overall. Of the 30 participants who indicated
“no” to having taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in the course (Question #1), 90% were between the ages of 18-34 years old, 7% were between the ages of 25-34 years old, and 3% were 17 years old. Of the 52 students who indicated “no” to having dance instruction taught within their primary or secondary school education, 87% were 18-24, 12% were 25-34, and 2% 17 years old (Table 12).

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>All Participants</th>
<th>Q1 – No</th>
<th>Q3 – No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of Open-ended Questions

Open-ended questions were the primary format of the surveys which allowed students an opportunity to provide a narrative on their perspectives of dance as an art-form. In addition, the researcher was able to gain an understanding of the students’ experiences within the process of studying dance technique over the course of a semester. Using thematic analysis, the researcher developed a table in which themes
were identified, tallied, and coded from the responses given by the participants. The questions were examined individually in order to determine which themes were most popular in each circumstance. Some students mentioned multiple topics in their responses and all of those responses were included.

**Pre-Survey Responses**

The purpose of the pre-survey was to assess the students’ level of previous dance training and to explore their perceptions of dance before instruction commenced. The responses from open-ended questions #1-5 provided the following qualitative data.

**Question #1: Have you ever taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in this course? If yes, please list experience.** Among the participants, 30 students (28%) indicated never taking a dance technique class before. Of those who indicated having previous dance instruction, 35 participants (32%) indicated taking a previous dance technique class at a college or university. Thirty-six participants (33%) listed training at private dance studios with a varied length of study; from 10 years or more of dance training down to less than a year. Twenty-seven students (25%) listed participating in high school dance teams or having dance instruction taught within their high school curriculum, while 14 students (13%) indicated having exposure to cultural dance through the community or with family including African-Caribbean, Mexican Folklorico, Polynesian, Capoeira, Bellydancing, Salsa, and traditional Asian dances (Figure 1).
Questions #2: What are your perceptions of dance? The most mentioned response by 48% of participants was regarding the idea of dance as a form of expression or communication. An 18-24 year old male student of mixed race with 5-8 years of dance training indicated that dance is “a form of self-expression used to celebrate why we are human.” A similar response came from an 18-24 year old Caucasian female with nine or more years of dance training who stated, “I think it is a beautiful, visual expression that transcends words and language barriers.” Another common theme mentioned by 31% of participants regarded the use of athleticism in dance and the requirement of technical skills. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino male with no previous dance training indicated, “It takes talent and persistence. It also requires confidence and flexibility. I feel it’s hard!” While 23% of students described...
dance’s therapeutic qualities as a way to “escape,” “relax,” “be free,” or “feel liberated.”

**Question #3: In your educational experience in primary and secondary schooling, was dance instruction taught? If yes, please explain.** Of the 109 participants, 52 (48%) listed receiving no dance instruction throughout their primary and secondary schooling experience. Among, while 20 students (19%) indicated learning some dance in middle school as part of a Physical Education unit. One student who is an 18-24 year old Asian female with 1-4 years of dance training stated, “In P.E. in middle school, dance was part of our instruction for about two weeks; they covered square dancing and the waltz.” Another student, an 18-24 year old Asian male with 1-4 years of dance training explained, “I mainly want to say no, other than the dreadful square dancing in middle school.” Fourteen of the 109 students who participated (13%) indicated having dance technique classes available in high school as an elective for physical education or art, while ten of those students (9%) also listed having multiple genre of dance classes available and a performing student company. Eight students (7%) describe having basic dance moves taught during their primary education experience. One 18-24 year old Caucasian female student with 5-8 years of dance training explained such experience as “performing routines for our parents with singing.” These percentages are displayed in Figure 2.
Figure 2. Dance Instruction Taught in Educational Environments, Percentage of Students.

**Question #4: What exposure to dance as an art-form have you had prior to enrolling in this course? (This may include social or cultural dance, dance performances, dance clubs or organizations that incorporate dancing, etc.).**

Forty-six percent of participants listed having attended dance or musical theatre concert performances (including cultural events and festivals) as exposure to the art-form. Another venue that 47% of students identified was through their own participation in social events like bars, dance clubs, and family gatherings. While three students (3%) identified participating in athletic activities that incorporated dance such as gymnastics and Zumba, three other students (3%) listed film or television as a medium of dance exposure.
Question #5: Why did you enroll in this class? As to their reason for enrolling in the course, the greatest response from students (41%) was a desire to learn something new. One 18-24 Caucasian female with no previous dance training explained, “To learn a new skill and gain units.” While 26% of students identified their passion or love for dancing as a part of their reasoning, 19% indicated a desire to “de-stress” as their motivation for enrolling. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with 1-4 years of dance training stated, “I wanted to have this class as a stress reliever because of my heavy load, it would force me to come and enjoy. Something I would love to learn more of.” Another reason identified by 32% of participants was a desire to improve physical abilities and technical skills. One 18-24 year old Caucasian female with no previous dance training wrote, “I think it will teach me about my body and make me a better rock climber.”

Post-Survey Responses

The purpose of the post-survey was to ascertain any change in the student’s perceptions about dance after studying dance technique for the semester. The survey also delved into specific components of the reviewed related literature such as the mind-body connection, dance as a medium of self-expression and communication, and the relation of school success to dance praxis. The responses from open-ended questions #1-10 provided the following qualitative data.

Question #1: Did anything prevent you from studying dance prior to enrolling in this class? If so, what? Fifty two percent of students indicated that nothing prevented them from studying dance prior to enrolling in the course.
However, a portion of students (27%) indicated lack of time or a need to focus on their respective majors or minors as a factor. An 18-24 year old Asian female with no previous dance training explained, “Since dance isn’t my major, I didn’t bother enrolling in a class. But this year/semester, I wanted to do something fun.” Another factor indicated by 24% of participants was lack of opportunity due to money, transportation, or discouragement from family. An 18-24 year old Asian male with 1-4 years of dance training stated, “Having access to dance definitely prevented me from even knowing that dance existed. My parents also sheltered me a lot; made sure I was at home.” Another student, an 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with 1-4 years of dance training stated, “My parents were busy working and we could not afford lessons.” A portion of students (13%) indicated fear or judgment from peers and family as a reason for never studying dance.

**Question # 2: After enrolling in a beginning level dance class, in what ways has your perceptions about dance training changed?** Only 8 students (7%) indicated no change in their perception of dance training after studying for the duration of the semester. Students who did indicate a change of perception were able to answer this question with a wide range of descriptions. The greatest number of students (47%) identified increased knowledge of dance skills and concepts of physical strengthening. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with 1-4 years of dance training described, “It is not all smiling and moving your feet. I needed to work on all of the details. It is more complicated than I thought.” Another student, a 25-34 year old Caucasian female with nine or more years of dance training expressed, “I
realize there is no magic trick to learning training and getting the movements uniform; just hard work.” Twenty eight percent of participants described an awareness of ability of their body’s potential and an increase in confidence. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with no previous dance training stated, “My perception about dance training definitely has changed. I’m more confident in my ability to achieve it.”

**Question #3: In what ways has your understanding of your own physical capabilities changed?** Only three students (3%) indicated no change of understanding in regards to their physical capabilities. Among the rest of the participants, two separate themes emerged as most popular. Firstly, 59% of the participants felt that their skill level in their respective dance genre had increased. Students identified these new skills specifically as increased strength, flexibility, cardio/stamina, or technique. One 25-34 year old Armenian male with no previous dance training explained, “I am more flexible and have a better understanding of the counts and moving to the beat.” The second popular theme that emerged from participants (65%) is the recognition of an increased connection to their body by either exceeding or identifying their body’s limitations. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with no previous dance training stated, “I feel a lot better about my dance skills because I learned a different part of me I didn’t know existed.” This particular student identified feeling better about her dance skills and discovering that she had exceeded her expectations. Whereas a different student, a 25-34 year old Caucasian female with 1-4 years of dance training explained, “I am not a tapper, it is much harder than I expected.”
Question #4: In what ways have you connected emotionally during the study of dance? Of the 109 participants, only eight students (7%) stated feeling no emotional connection during the study of dance. From the remainder of the participants, 32% felt that dance helped them release emotions such as nervousness, stress, or anger. A 25-34 year old Caucasian female with nine or more years of dance training shared, “This class was very much a get out and try something new stage after getting over a terrible break-up; so it was emotional in many ways.” An 18-24 year old of mixed race female with 1-4 years of dance training expressed, “Dance is a way to let all of my emotions out and not tell anyone out loud what my problems are. Dance saved my life.” Another theme that emerged was an increase in self-identity or confidence through body connection. A 25-34 year old Caucasian female with 1-4 years of dance training stated, “For me, dance is a process of self-discovery and emotional growth/acceptance.” An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino male with no previous dance training shared, “I have learned to appreciate my body and ability I have, not to stress about what I can’t do, but what I can do.”

Question #5: In what ways has studying dance changed the way that you communicate with others? A portion of the class (39%) felt more open and expressive in their communication skills. “It helped me open up and stop being afraid to ask for help,” stated an 18-24 year old Asian female with no previous dance training. “To pass this class, I built friendships and teams to help each other learn the dances.” This theme was reciprocated by a portion of the class who felt more empathetic and patient when relating to others. An 18-24 year old Caucasian female
with nine or more years of dance training shared, “It has made me able to understand others on a different level and made me appreciate and help others when they get frustrated with the movement.” A 25-34 year old Caucasian female with 5-8 years of dance training stated, “Dance humbles you in your honest ability. I have learned to communicate from an honest and more aware standpoint.” Seventeen percent of students felt that there was no change in the way that they communicate with others after studying dance.

**Question #6: How has your perception of dance as an art-form changed?**

Seventeen percent of participants felt that there was no change in their perception of dance as an art-form after studying for the semester. However, 34% of participants identified a new or increased appreciation for the art-form. An 18-24 year old African-American female with less than a year of dance training stated, “I have a new found appreciation for those who dedicated their lives to dance.” Thirty-one percent of participants recognized the discipline of the technique. An 18-24 year old Caucasian female with no previous dance training expressed, “I think it is even more beautiful now. As I watch performances I not only see the dance, but all the hard work behind it.”

**Question #7: Describe any effect (either good or bad) that studying dance had on your other academic studies this semester.** Of the 109 participants, 62% identified positive effects that studying dance had on their academic studies. One student, an 18-24 year old African-American female with less than a year of dance training stated, “It was good because it was a block during my day that helped relieve
stress.” While other students identified positive effects like “more focused,” “more confident,” “more energetic,” and “helps memory,” 26% of students indicated a negative effect that dance had on their academic studies. The reasons given for these negative effects were mostly due to time management. An 18-24 year old Caucasian female with no previous dance training stated, “I could not find enough time to fit in practice with all my other studies and that negatively impacted my learning dance.” While another student, an 18-24 year Caucasian male with no previous dance training stated, “It’s time consuming and has taken away from my other studies.” Eleven percent of students felt that dance had no impact on their academic studies at all.

Question #8: Explain why or why not you plan to take more dance classes in the future. Eighty five percent of participants indicated a desire to continue studying dance, while 11 students (10%) are considering making dance a major or minor. One 25-34 year old Hispanic/Latino female with 1-4 years of dance training explains, “Because I love dancing. But as I am a student who is graduating, I don’t know where I will take classes in the future.” Fifteen percent of participants indicated not wanting to continue the study of dance (Figure 3).
Question #9: After taking this class, would you be more willing to support your local dance community in the future? Please Explain: (attending concerts, sponsoring events, helping backstage, enrolling in classes or workshops, etc…). Only two students indicated not wanting to support their local dance community in the future. For those that were willing, the most popular response (80%) indicated attending dance concerts. Fifty-five percent indicated wanting to take more classes or workshops in the future, while 18% indicated willingness to volunteer or work backstage.

Question #10: Do you feel that studying dance is important in education? Explain your reasoning. Of the 109 participants, one hundred (92%) felt that dance was important in education. Four students (4%) indicated it was, but only if an elective or a student’s major. One student indicated that they did not know if dance in...
education was important, and three students felt that it was not. The responses for the inclusion of dance in education identified a wide range of reasoning. Sixty-nine percent of participants felt that dance aids the student on a personal level, in ways such as “opens/enlightens,” “emotional expression,” “confidence,” “discipline,” “self-awareness,” “body connection,” and “teaching patience.” One 18-24 year old Asian female student with 1-4 years of dance training explained, “Being in dance was my biggest stress reliever during school and I was still learning about myself. It was a confidence boost and I can focus better when I’m happy/stress free.” A portion of students (22%) indicated the importance of dance in education for cultural relevance and appreciation of the art-form. Twenty-eight percent of participants indicated dance’s inclusion in education as a way to balance academics between various subjects for a well-rounded student.

**Conclusion**

The data collected by the researcher gave an insight into the perceptions of university students before and after the completion of a 16-week dance technique course. The responses from the students indicated an overwhelmingly positive response to the instruction of dance technique. Information on the percentage of students who felt a better understanding of dance on both a personal and social level was identified by analyzing the open-ended data. The majority of students identified an increase in well-being through physical, emotional, and social means. Students were able to express their thoughts on the importance of dance education and their desire or lack of for future dance instruction. The demographics of the students and
their previous exposure to dance training both in the community and through the education system was analyzed as well.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study was designed to monitor the attitudes and perceptions of students enrolled in a beginning level dance course for the duration of a semester. The study addressed the following questions, “When exposed to dance training, do students perceive a better understanding of the arts on a personal and social level and does any new understanding transfer to other areas and enhance their overall academic success? Will students perceive dance and other art-forms differently after studying dance technique? Will students feel personal growth in well-being after studying dance technique?” Overall, this study sought to obtain a better understanding of the transformative nature of dance and its importance in education curriculum.

Qualitative data was gathered from the participants through the use of pre- and post-surveys for the purpose of collecting a narrative of students’ experiences within the process of learning dance technique. The questions included in the open-ended portion of the surveys were designed to reference the reviewed related literature. The demographic questions and the yes- and no-questions were designed to determine the students' previous dance training and their access to arts education in regards to gender, age, and ethnicity. The researcher was able to use thematic analysis of each question to identify the most popular themes that emerged from the students’ responses.
In using thematic data analysis, three major themes emerged and helped shape the discussion for this chapter: Kinesthetic Learning and the Mind-Body Connection, Educating the Whole Student, and Studying Dance and School Success. Also included is analysis of demographics and past dance experience.

**Discussion**

**Kinesthetic Learning and the Mind-Body Connection**

The researcher included two questions specifically focused on the concepts of kinesthetic learning and the mind-body connection. Question #3 asked, “In what ways has your understanding of your own physical capabilities changed?” Ninety-seven percent of students identified a heightened understanding of their physical capabilities. This understanding was expressed through the students' perceptions of increased strength, flexibility, stamina, and dance technique skills. As 65% of students’ responses included identifying their physical limitations, some students expressed gaining confidence by surpassing their expectations, and others recognized their weaknesses. Minton (2008) states, “When dance making is part of lessons, students solve movement-based problems, leading to feelings of accomplishment” (p. 3). This gained confidence can lead to increased motivation and personal ownership within the classroom. One student, an 18-24 year old African-American female with 1-4 years of dance training expressed, “If I actually push myself, my physical abilities will change.” The connection between testing the capabilities of our physical being and our mental awareness of both our surroundings and our ability to achieve goals can clearly be seen here. Going back to the statement that was earlier expressed from
Confucius (551 BC): “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand” (as cited in Ornbo et al., 2008, p. 30), this may now be expanded to say “I try and I succeed.” Testing the students’ physical capabilities through dance training increases their confidence in their overall well-being, which then transfers to other areas of academic study.

Question #7 asked, “Describe any effect (either good or bad) that studying dance had on your other academic studies this semester.” Though this question directly asks about school success, an underlying concept is the application of kinesthetic learning. Students identified being more focused and having better memory retention. Minton (2008) explains, “They must also remember the order of movements in a dance and the number of times each action is performed” (p. 3). This example of muscle-memory practice exercises the brain in a way that may transfer to other areas of academic study. An 18-24 year old student of mixed race with nine or more years of dance training shared, “It has had a great affect because, with dance, I have discipline and I’ve applied it to my studies.” This is demonstrated clearly in the number of years that students have committed to continuing their dance training. The desire to perfect their skills in movement suggests a disciplined nature that could transfer to other areas of their life, both academically and personally.

Students touched on kinesthetic learning in their responses to other questions within the surveys. The pre- and post-surveys both asked students about their perceptions of dance. A comparison between the two surveys shows an increase in students’ responses identifying the concept of kinesthetic learning. Though students'
responses from the pre-survey included an understanding of athleticism and technical skill required in dance (a proficiency of kinesthetic learning) from 31% of the students, more responses (47% of participants) identified an awareness of these same concepts of kinesthetic learning in the post-survey at the end of the semester. For example, an 18-24 year old Caucasian female with no previous dance training described dance as “free expression” in the pre-survey. However in the post-survey given at the end of the semester, she stated, “Dance takes me a long time to memorize routines, so this class was hard for me when I thought it would be easier.” Her awareness of the amount of skill that is required when learning movement and the level of discipline needed shows her newly found understanding of herself and her own kinesthetic abilities.

Overall, there was an overwhelmingly positive response towards the concept of kinesthetic learning from the participants. Most significantly, this response came from the vast majority of students regardless of previous dance experience or the number of years the student has taken dance instruction. Hanna (1999) believes that dance enhances an individual’s lifelong quality of life. “Early dance education leads to adult participation in dance through continuing to take class in dance or other exercise and attending performances” (p. 34). By making dance available for all students to learn from an earlier age, their awareness of their body and its limitations could be identified sooner and with more practice, a desire for more training may concur. This belief is representative in the number of students who enrolled in the beginning level dance course regardless of their extensive dance training. With more
students learning about dance from a younger age, the connection to dance and its history could only expand as part of our cultural identity.

**Educating the Whole Student**

Though dance is movement-based and allows students to connect to their bodies like other physical activities such as sports, the emotional connection that develops by the chrysalis of artistic expression is unique to dance and speaks to the developing of a whole person. This relates to much of the literature that was reviewed as it discussed the concept of educating the whole student. The idea that students need to think both critically and creatively means that students must tap into their emotional beings. Question #4 in the post-survey asked, “In what ways have you connected emotionally during the study of dance?” Ninety-three percent of students identified having some type of emotional connection during their study of dance. Many students recognized this as a connection to their own bodies and as a development for personal identity. Hanna (1999) suggests, “Dance, used as a mirror of the dancer’s being, may help students understand themselves as a whole person and to discover and express their identities, values, and beliefs, whether personal, ethnic, gender-related, communal, or national” (p. 32). One particular student, an 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with 1-4 years of dance training expressed, “I have always loved dance. It is a part of my culture and I will continue to dance and take classes.” Another student, an 18-24 year old Caucasian female with no previous dance training eloquently stated, “I am more confident. I have faced my fears of inadequacy. I am
good at being me, nothing else matters.” This increase in self-identity is indicative of
dance used as self-expression, and the formulation of an artistic voice.

Beyond Question #4 in the post-survey, many students responded to Questions
#7, #8, and #10 as recognizing the therapeutic elements of dance training. The most
discussed theme was using dance to relieve stress. An 18-24 year old Caucasian
female with 5-8 years of dance training shared, “Dance has allowed me to leave
whatever is happening in my life and lift the large weight off my shoulders.” Another
student, an 18-24 year old Native-American female with 5-8 years of dance training
stated, “I use dance to remember to be happy and free.” Hanna (1979) believes that
“dance functions like play, exploratory behavior, rituals of rebellion, or cathartic
outlets for deviance, in which a segment of the psyche or world is represented in a
non-threatening manner in order to understand or cope with it” (p. 68). This ability to
relieve stress through dance training, identified by these college students, could
transfer across generations to the primary and secondary settings where teachers have
difficulty keeping children focused and well-behaved.

Building upon the concept of personal well-being and growth through the
study of dance, many students identified better communication skills and interpersonal
relations as well. Question #5 within the post-survey asked students, “In what ways
has studying dance changed the way that you communicate with others?” Among the
participants, 83% responded with some level of enhanced communication skills.
Many students identified dance as a way to express their thoughts and feelings more
clearly. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with no previous dance training
explained, “I am a very shy person, so dance has allowed me to express what I am feeling with movement.” Many children in our education system have difficulty expressing their thoughts and feelings which results in either a suppression of thought or an oppressive nature potentially leading to misconduct and disrespect.

Reedy (2003) feels that this heightened sense of communication through dance can help students find the best movements to express one’s ideas and feelings in the clearest possible manner. This gives the students opportunities to hone communication skills and potentially build understanding, tolerance, and compassion in the classroom (Reedy, 2003, p. 2). Many students mentioned communication skills and personal relations amongst classmates within responses to other questions throughout the questionnaires. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with less than a year of dance training shared,

I have learned to work with people and to get along with them and to not be shy and go full out. I learned to be more patient with people, as well as get along with others and communicate differently.

Clearly, enhanced communication skills builds confidence and helps students relate with each other in a way that can develop their overall well-being. This emotional and therapeutic connection to dance was demonstrated throughout the responses from dance students of various levels of training and technique experience. Their development of creative expression and increase in confidence can potentially transfer over to developing a voice in other areas of curriculum when analyzing content, debating, or reasoning. If students are given opportunities to explore their feelings and
emotions through dance praxis more consistently and for longer duration in primary, secondary, and post-secondary schooling, there is potential for better interpersonal relationships within our communities as a whole.

**Studying Dance and School Success**

Within the post-survey, there were two questions that related to the study of dance and academic success. Question #7 stated, “Describe any effect (either good or bad) that studying dance had on your other academic studies this semester.” Question #10, though not directly relating dance to academic school success, asked, “Do you feel that studying dance is important in education? Explain your reasoning.”

The majority of students (62%) responded to Question #7 as having positive effects on their academic studies for the semester. Students identified these positive attributes as feeling less stressed, more focused or disciplined, more motivated, increased memory retention, and more confident with communication skills. An 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with no previous dance training shared, “I am able to speak up more in other classes and I think it is because dance has given me more confidence.” This is an example of what Hanna (1999) feels is a significant assessment of the benefits of dance education. “Dance teaches the values and skills of creativity, problem solving, risk-taking, making judgments in the absence of rules, and higher-order thinking skills...students gain the self-esteem and confidence needed to apply themselves in other areas” (p. 32). Dance can provide an artistic voice that is specifically channeled through their being, making any statement highly personal.

With repetition and discipline these thoughts and ideas can become more confident
and articulated with more intent. This development of a voice then transfers to being able to articulate their thoughts and feelings more clearly within other academic areas.

Students ended the semester with an overwhelming majority (92%) expressing the importance of dance in education (Question 10). A 25-34 year old Caucasian female with 1-4 years of dance training stated, “We need different perspectives and different ways of learning presented to us.” An 18-24 year old Caucasian female with 5-8 years of dance training expressed, “Absolutely! It should be a requirement at all levels of schooling as it is important to stay well-rounded in life.” An 18-24 year old Asian female with 1-4 years of dance training added, “It is important for learning how to respect your body and others.” An 18-24 year old male of mixed race with 5-8 years of dance training stated, “It creates a physical connection to the things we celebrate as humans.” Dewey (1897) believed that the only way to make a child conscious of his social heritage was to enable him to perform those fundamental types of activity which makes civilization what it is; the expressive or constructive activities as the center of correlation. Dance is a component of our social heritage. It is an activity that makes civilization what it is. By giving students an opportunity to be expressive, we are opening their minds to creativity across the curriculum (Dewey, 1897).

**Demographic Data/Previous Experience Discussion**

When examining the demographic data relating to the participants and their previous dance experience, several interesting facts emerge. A strong majority of students (72%) had some type of previous dance training before enrolling in the
course. Of those students, they listed various degrees of multiple years of training which the researcher organized into categories consisting of “less than a year,” “1-4 years,” “5-8 years,” and “nine or more years.”

The majority of students who indicated having previous dance training (51%) classified as having 1-4 years of experience. As the students’ age ranges fall between the ages 17-34 years overall, the majority of students have only studied dance between their teen and adult years. This conclusion is broken down by looking at the responses to Question #1 of the pre-survey. A total of 62 students (57%) indicated their experience as high school dance teams, or instruction in high school, or at a college or university.

Question #3 of the pre-survey inquired of the students if dance instruction was taught within their primary and secondary school experience. Of the 57 students who indicated having some type of dance instruction taught, only 14 described this instruction as an actual technique class. The remainder of the students described their exposure as extracurricular dance clubs, physical education units, or “basic dance moves in primary school.” Hanna (1999) explains that “dance is the least taught of the arts” and that it “seems to be the area that educators know the least about” (p. 48). The varying descriptions given by the students responses validates these discrepancies between the effective teaching of dance technique as an art-form and what is actually taught to students about dance in primary and secondary education. As dance offerings often change according to school budgetary concerns and educational
leadership turnovers, institutionalized dance instruction within curriculum is very rare (Hanna, 1999).

An interesting fact that emerged is that students continue to train at a beginning level dance class even though they have multiple years of previous experience. In fact, 20% of participants indicated having nine or more years of previous dance training, though they chose to enroll in a beginning level class. Part of this could be that the particular genre that they enrolled in could be a new genre of study, so their experience in that style of dance is limited. Dance is an art-form that is interpreted through the body and every instructor’s body is different, so learning movement from a new person at any level may have a new perspective of dance technique. Or, as one 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female with nine or more years of previous dance experience stated, “there is nothing wrong with going back to the basics.” When asked why she enrolled in this course, she stated, “I stopped dancing six months ago and want to get back in to it.” Regardless, it is refreshing that students who have so many years of training feel that they have something to learn from a beginning level class.

When examining previous dance training and the ethnicity of the students, those who identified as Caucasian had the most previous dance training (Table 10). Most significantly, students who indicated having nine or more years of training (essentially, as children in private instruction) were disproportionately Caucasian. The greatest number of students from other ethnicities listed previous training within 1-4 years, which would have been during their teen and adult years. A deduction could
then be made that students of a race/ethnicity other than Caucasian had limited access
to dance training other than through the education system, specifically secondary
school and at college or university. Greene (1988) believed that democracy
constitutes a way of life that must be practiced within both social and political arenas,
made living through our relationships, our educational experiences, as well as our
moments of beauty and enjoyment out in the world (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres,
2009, p. 4). Thus, it can be argued that including dance instruction in the education
system is fostering our democracy.

When examining gender and previous dance training, women outnumbered
men in the dance course significantly. Amongst those participants who had previous
dance training, 84% were female. This disproportionate ratio could possibly be due to
American society’s perception of dance as a feminine art-form. Carter (1996)
explains, “The images of women inscribed by traditional Western theatre dance forms
are synonymous in our society with notions of what it is to be not just female, but
feminine” (p. 43). As one 25-34 year old male of Armenian descent explained when
asked if anything prevented him from studying dance prior to enrolling in the class,
“Yes, fear of judgment from my peers and family members.” Sadly, gender roles and
what it means to be feminine and masculine in our society and how dance relates to
those roles is still firmly in place as is evident within the number of males who
enrolled in dance classes within this research.
Notable Findings

Thirty students enrolled in their respective beginning dance course with no prior dance experience. Of those 30 students, 20 (67%) identified never receiving any form of dance instruction in their educational experience. When asked if anything prevented them from studying dance prior to enrolling in the course, 14 of those students (47%) stated either a lack of time or opportunity as the reasoning. This fact exemplifies the reasoning for including dance in educational settings as some children have no access to the arts unless the education system provides it.

All of the 30 students who indicated having no previous dance training (100%) identified having a changed perception of dance training after taking the class. This fact sheds some light on why dance may be the least understood of all the art forms. Students do not understand what they have never been exposed to. The most common themes reflected in their change of perception were an acknowledgement of the difficulty of dance technique, their understanding of their own body, and an increase in confidence.

In regards to their understanding of their own physical capabilities, one student did not answer the question. The remaining 29 students (97%) with no previous dance experience identified an increase in their understanding, either identifying limitations or exceeding expectations. As dance is in art-form that is expressed through the body, the students’ increased understanding of their bodies is not unexpected and is overwhelmingly confirmed through the research.
All but three students felt that dance helped them connect emotionally. One 18-24 year old Hispanic/Latino female expressed, “In simple ways as closing my eyes and letting the movements and music enter my body and soul.” Another student, an 18-24 year old Asian female stated, “I’ve connected with the struggles dancers go through when they cannot get a dance move right away – the frustration and the effort that they go through.” Even if emotions were felt through circumstances of performance, or through the practicum of learning, students are allowed to be emotional. This exploration of their emotions is healthy for them and increases their understanding of their overall well-being.

Twenty three of the 30 students (77%) identified dance as helping them with their communication skills. Some students identified being more aware of body language after taking the course, others felt like they became more expressive, while certain students felt like they became better listeners. One 18-24 year old Caucasian female shared, “Learning to bite my tongue and listen to others is an ongoing challenge that has improved.” The research clearly shows that dance training can enhance the way students relate to others and how they become more aware of their surroundings.

When asked if dance had any effect on their other academic studies, 21 of the 30 students (70%) identified a positive effect. The most common reason being that dance helped them relieve stress. This statement exemplifies the mind-body connection and the importance of giving opportunities for students within educational settings to experience curriculum that engages their bodies in hands-on ways. The
second common theme most recognized was building confidence. Acknowledging that confidence leads to better self-identity and more expression of ideas and opinions is a key component of education’s purpose for fulfilling the needs of a whole being. Five students stated having no effect and four students felt that taking dance made them more tired which negatively affected their other studies.

Twenty four of the 30 students with no previous dance training (80%) plan to continue their studies in dance training. This fact shows overwhelming support for including dance in school settings as the classes would continue to be successfully attended and may draw opportunities to engage with families and the community through performances or workshops. Understanding dance as a cultural exchange of ideas that can bridge the gap between diverse populations can only be a positive influence on any educational environment.

Three students indicated they would continue studying but they are graduating from school and therefore will not have the resources. Again, this shows the need for education within school settings as sometimes this is the only way that students have access to the arts. Twenty eight of the 30 students (93%), an overwhelming majority, felt that dance training is an important component of education and should be included.

**Conclusions**

Through the course of a semester, 109 university students were given the opportunity to study dance technique, some of them for the first time. As dance is not offered in primary and secondary education within public schools to the degree of
expertise as in college and university settings, the study intended to explore the experiences that students receive if given the opportunity. An overwhelming majority of beginning dance class participants identified a heightened understanding of their physical capabilities and expressed an increase in their communication skills. Many students recognized a connection to their own bodies and a development of personal identity. Students identified being more focused, having better memory retention, and more motivated to attend school because of their participation in dance class. A number of students recognized the therapeutic elements of dance training. Based on the answers given from pre- and post-surveys given at the beginning and at the end of the course, Question #2 showed that more students perceived a physical and emotional connection to the art-form of dance after studying for a semester. This indicates that students’ perceptions of dance became more personal and socially relevant. Though there are no tangible reminders beyond torn ticket stubs from dance concerts, or well-worn dance shoes for some, there is a feeling of accomplishment, an awakened spirit that understands a little bit better their place in the world. After dancing, their body feels differently. Students’ minds have transcended to a different place, a different thought.

Based on the study and the responses of the students, Caucasian children receive more private dance instruction than children of other ethnicities. Dance instruction in primary and secondary education is only available to roughly half of the student population. The students who participated in the study are amongst the privileged now, as an entire segment of our society will never have the opportunity to
experience what it means to take a dance class. They have become members of the “haves,” rather than the “have-nots.”

The education system’s purpose is to educate our youth, to mold them into the leaders of tomorrow. Dewey (1897) envisioned a system where children were nurtured both mentally and physically, not only as individuals but within a community. He believed that giving students opportunities to act as members of a unity, “to emerge from their original narrowness of action and feeling and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs,” would create the best educational environment (p. 77). Dance and the dance community can help provide such an environment.

Throughout the semester, the participants were able to connect with their kinesthetic intelligence. They were given an opportunity to stray away from traditional teaching methods, unglue themselves from their desks, engage physically and emotionally with the content, and develop relationships with their classmates. An 18-24 year old Caucasian female with nine or more years of dance training stated, “Dance has tested me in all areas, physically, emotionally, and mentally.” When asked if she plans to continue with the study of dance, she replied, “Yes! To dive deep into my physical self.”

As dance is not emphasized in education curriculum within our public schools, the majority of children do not have the advantage of engaging their whole being through dance from an early age. As testified by the participants of the study, only a privileged few have the opportunity to study dance in private studio settings as youth.
As dance, and the arts in general, can express political commentary about our world, the question needs to continue to be raised, “Whose artistic voice is being heard?” bell hooks (1994) believed that transformative education started with a classroom that “held a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute” (p. 39). We, as educators must strive for a completely democratic educational system, giving voice to all children through writing, drawing, singing, and dancing.

Within the Northern California State University’s Mission Statement we can identify a theme for truly democratic education. It reads:

To preserve, communicate, and advance knowledge; cultivate wisdom; encourage creativity; promote the value of humankind; and improve the quality of life for its graduates and the people of the region. The education of students is the central mission of the University. Therefore, the University faculty's primary responsibilities are teaching and the creation of an active learning environment for students.

Dance is fully integrated into the philosophy of this system and should be included in every educational system along the way to reach the university level. Dance and the dance community provide an environment for our youth to preserve, communicate, and advance knowledge. It cultivates wisdom, encourages creativity, and promotes the value of humankind. It improves the quality of life for many people both in educational settings and within the community as a whole.
Limitations

Though there were 152 potential participants, the majority of one class section was not able to complete the second questionnaire due to time conflicts within the instructor’s schedule. When answering questions, more favorable responses may have been indicated by students as the course was an elective and they signed up for the class on their own volition. Students at Northern California State University may have a specific socio-economic demographic compared to other university settings which may have affected the findings.

The researcher chose to limit the surveys to open-ended questions and yes or no response questions. There may have been more statistical data gathered if she had followed a mixed-method approach by creating questions with Likert-scale responses. The researcher also neglected to inquire about the student’s socio-economic backgrounds which may have deepened the understanding of privilege.

Recommendations

There are many variations to this study that can be completed to further expand the research on dance education. Expanding the study to a larger population amongst several colleges and universities could be effective in evaluating varying perceptions and attitudes. This study could also be studied cross-generationally, examining dance students from various ages. Additionally, more research could be done on the perceptions and attitudes towards dance education amongst university students who are not currently enrolled in dance classes.
When reviewing research on arts education in general, the least amount of research focuses on dance. More research could be done on the effects that dance has on the brain and the relationship between kinesthetic learners and school success. One example could be more studies on the percentage of students who study dance that are admitted to colleges of higher learning. Research could also be done on the social component of dance and the relationship to communication. Finally, further research could be conducted on the emotional impact of studying dance and how it relates to relieving stress.

**Reflection**

As a child who had the privilege of studying dance in private studio settings, the researcher cannot fathom what her life would have been like without that opportunity. As a student who engaged kinesthetically and preferred methods of presentation that involved the physical act of interpretation, she feels very blessed to have teachers in her public school experience that allowed her to work in that medium. From classroom skits, to organizing talent shows, to building models, to creating movement scores, she learned the curriculum fully and engaged with her peers. She was educated before No Child Left Behind and entered the university setting fully prepared to engage in higher learning. As a passionate supporter of arts education, it is the responsibility of the researcher to advocate for similar opportunities for all children, now and into the future.

Through exhaustive research on current trends and topics relating to dance education, including the findings of the current study, the researcher has presented a
strong case for the inclusion of dance in educational curriculum. The researcher has concluded that there needs to be more implementation of dance instruction and education on dance history within primary and secondary school systems. The conclusions of the study validated the transformative nature of dance which has motivated the researcher to continue studying the effects that dance instruction has on our society and education.
APPENDIX A

Consent Form
Informed Consent for Participation

Thesis Research Study

My name is Lisa Ross and I am a current graduate student of the Master of Arts in Education at California State University, Sacramento. You are being asked to participate in a study which will be analyzing the university’s beginning-level dance classes. Your participation involved filling out the attached questionnaire which will require an estimated 10-15 minutes of your time.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may quit at any time without consequences. Although none of the questions were designed to cause you any form of discomfort, you may leave any of the questions blank; however, full and complete surveys will be most helpful in completing this study. Grades in your beginning-level dance class will not be affected by the answers you give on this survey. The data collected will be completely anonymous. Do not put your name on the survey. A unique formula will be developed to match pre to post surveys. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report made public, it will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

The results of this study will be available after December 15, 2015. If you have any questions please contact:

Researcher: Lisa Ross
Email: LRoss@csus.edu
Phone: (916) XXX-XXXX

Research Sponsor: Sherrie Carinci
Email: carincis@csus.edu
Phone: (916) 278-7010
Thank you for your participation and time. It will be indicated that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research by signing below. Please return this page back to the researcher.

______________________________   __________
Signature of Participant     Date
APPENDIX B

Pre-Survey
General Information:

Male       Female       Other____________________

Ethnicity: (Please circle one)

African-American       Asian       Caucasian       Hispanic/Latino       Native American

Other____________________

Age range (Please circle)

18-24       25-34       35-44       45-54       55-64       65-74       75+

Dance Experience:

1. Have you ever taken a dance technique class prior to enrolling in this course? (please check)
   Yes_______ No________

   If yes, please list experience:

2. What are your perceptions of dance?
3. In your educational experience in primary and secondary schooling, was dance instruction taught?

Yes_______ No________

If yes, please explain:

4. What exposure to dance as an art-form have you had prior to enrolling in this course? (This may include social or cultural dance, dance performances, dance clubs or organizations that incorporate dancing)

5. Why did you enroll in this class?
APPENDIX C

Post-Survey
**General Information:**

Male  Female  Other____________________

**Ethnicity: (Please circle one)**

African-American  Asian  Caucasian  Hispanic/Latino  Native American

Other____________________

**Age range (Please circle)**

18-24  25-34  35-44  45-54  55-64  65-74  75+

**Questions:**

1. Did anything prevent you from studying dance prior to enrolling in this class? If so, what?

2. After enrolling in a beginning level dance class, in what ways has your perception about dance training changed?
3. In what ways has your understanding of your own physical capabilities changed?

4. In what ways have you connected emotionally during the study of dance?

5. In what ways has studying dance changed the way that you communicate with others?

6. How has your perception of dance as an art-form changed?
7. Describe any effect (either good or bad) that studying dance had on your other academic studies this semester.

8. Explain why or why not you plan to take more dance classes in the future.

9. After taking this class, would you be more willing to support your local dance community in the future? Yes____ No____

   Please Explain: (attending concerts, sponsoring events, helping backstage, enrolling in classes or workshops, etc…)

10. Do you feel that studying dance is important in education? Explain your reasoning.
REFERENCES


