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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

The Correlation between Life Skills, Educational Ownership and the Creative Process in
Choreography for Undergraduate Dance Majors

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in Dance

by

Cara Scrementi

Thesis Committee:
Professor Lisa Naugle, Chair
Assistant Professor Chad Michael Hall
Professor Alan Terricciano

2015

DEDICATION

To

The members of my cohort—Leann Alduenda, Colleen Bialas, Blair Brown, Elke Calvert,

Christine Gerena, Alana Isiguen, Yulong Li, Boroka Nagy, Steve Rosa, Siobhan Tonarelli,

Christian Vincent—for their unwavering support, assistance, guidance, and friendship in this

process.

To

The seven undergraduate participants for dedicating their time, hard work, support, and creative

energy to this study.

To

My parents.

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I would also like to thank the seven undergraduate dance major participants for dedicating their time, energy, honesty and creativity to this research project.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Correlation between Life Skills, Educational Ownership and the Creative Process in

Choreography for Undergraduate Dance Majors

By

Cara Scrementi

Master of Fine Arts in Dance

University of California, Irvine, 2015

Professor Lisa Naugle, Chair

The enhancement of life skills can be a significant part of an educational foundation upon which dance students can enhance ownership of their learning. Utilizing experiential and active learning theories in the design of a course, students can become active participants in the learning process. This research considers the purpose of education, a historical overview of some of the founding thinkers on experiential education, the learning process, and the different yet synergistic roles of the student and the educator. The study included seven undergraduate dance majors from the University of California, Irvine, lasted ten weeks, and investigated the development of life skills and their correlation to educational ownership through the creative process in choreography. The findings of this research demonstrate the growth of the participants not only as students and lifelong learners, but also as choreographers. There was increased development of their awareness of their individual learning styles, successful collaboration with their peers, and increased ability to use their knowledge in one area to help in others and an increased level or awareness of how they learn as individuals.

INTRODUCTION

A major strength of an education in dance is its fundamental alignment with experiential and active learning theories. Many of the principles guiding these leading educational theories are inherently found in the pedagogy of the dance field in higher education. However, it is the experience of many dance students that these inherent connections are often not highlighted to the extent that is possible, an extent that would greatly enhance the students' overall educational experience and empower them to directly apply that education to their life experiences. I did not realize all of the life skills[1] I was gaining through my dance education until I began teaching and preparing lessons. I wondered how my development would have transpired and differed if the embedded life skills were brought more directly to my attention and honed with a greater awareness, as these skills are one of the unifying threads to a student's broader education. I consider the incorporation of these life skills into the dance classroom to be an example of a holistic teaching method (taking the education of the whole person into account when creating syllabi and lesson plans) that I find to be important in a student's dance education.

While many university professors are aware of the life skills gained in a dance education and naturally and/or intentionally seek to incorporate them into their learning outcomes, in my research I did not encounter studies that specifically explored how life skills could be enhanced through a dance education if they are the focus of a course for an undergraduate population. This thesis aims to document (in the form of a paper, descriptions of the process, lesson plan samples, examples of self-evaluations, interview questions, and detailed discoveries) this important connection for the use of future dance educators. In order to clearly illustrate the connection

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[1] By life skills, I am referring to skills useful in all parts of life, such as problem-solving, communication, decision-making, leadership, and collaboration.

between life skills and educational ownership[2], I used the creative process in choreography as part of the method to highlight how students might greatly increase their development in these life skills. This study also aims to heighten their awareness of the connections they can make between their dance education and their broader education and life experiences. While there will innately be some parallels to an undergraduate choreography course, this study differs from current methods in teaching choreography because the daily teaching concepts are life skills such as problem-solving, communication, and leadership as opposed to concepts such as Body, Energy, Space or Time. I also look at how the development of these life skills affects a student's ownership of the work with which the student is engaged.

After presenting a review of literature, I will discuss the structure and design of the study, including the timeline, activities, concepts, and observations. The observations will segue into a discussion of my findings, addressing the type of success that occurred, what happened unexpectedly, and how this study might be furthered in the future.

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[2] When I mention ownership, I am referring to the state of possessing something, in this case, the intangible sense of pride, confidence, and self-direction as it relates to the work accomplished in a student's dance education that can translate to having a broader impact on that student's daily life.

CHAPTER 1

Review of Literature

The initial research for this thesis began with a review of literature in the field of education geared toward educating the whole person. This review addresses the purpose of education, experiential and active learning theories, the principle role teachers can play when setting up an environment ripe for holistic[3] teaching methods, and demonstrates why the creative process in choreography is a natural option from which to explore life skills.

Education, according to John Dewey in his book *John Dewey on Education*, "is a process of development, of growth. And it is the process and not merely the result that is important" (4). Dewey implies that education continues throughout life. According to Yael Sharan and Shlomo Sharan, authors of *Expanding Cooperative Learning Through Group Investigation,* promoting the student's desire to consciously continue learning after leaving a school environment can be done through teaching and learning methods where "students are partners in that process, not merely consumers" and active members of the learning environment (Sharan and Sharan 6).

It is important for an educator to create a meaningful context to support the students' practice and provide opportunities for them to have inside the classroom that they can then apply outside of the class. Dewey offers in his book *How We Think*:

> Consider the power and purposes of those being taught. It is not enough that certain materials or methods have proven effective with other individuals at other times. There must be a reason for thinking that they will function in generating an experience that has educative quality with particular individuals at a particular time (45-46).

Scott D. Wurdinger, professor and experiential learning scholar, wrote, "The dichotomy between how students learn best and how educators teach is not new. Dewey mentioned this idea as early as 1916 when he stated, 'Formal instruction, on the contrary, easily becomes remote and dead—

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[3] By holistic, I am referring to teaching methods that take into account the education of the whole person.

abstract and bookish, to use the ordinary words of depreciation'" (2). Regarding the role of the educator in *John Dewey on Education*, Dewey writes:

> If the teacher is really a teacher, and not just a master or 'authority,' he should know enough about his pupils, their needs, experiences, degrees of skills and knowledge, etc., to be able (not to dictate aims and plans) to share in discussion regarding what is to be done and be as free to make suggestions as anyone else" (154).

While many things have changed since 1916 in terms of education, such as course delivery, online learning, study abroad, much of what Dewey said is still relevant in education today.

Scholars, psychologists and other experts in the field believe in the importance of engagement of students in the classroom. Based on past experience, I have found that in a class in which the teacher is the sole voice heard for the duration of a class, i.e. lecture without student participation, it is difficult for students to engage in the content unless they have a previous interest in it. Jean Piaget, the developmental psychologist known for his studies with children, believed that "students, no matter the age, need opportunities to engage in activities—with teachers, fellow students and materials—that help them create their own mental structures and test them, thus making better sense of the world" (Meyers and Jones 20). In *Promoting Active Learning: Strategies for the College Classroom*, authors Chet Meyers and Thomas B. Jones, professors and active learning scholars, emphasize the role of the student as an active participant in the learning process. They identify two assumptions regarding learning: "learning is by its very nature an active process…[and] different people learn in different ways" (Meyers and Jones 20). They write, "the process of education is about self-development and that learning is truly meaningful only when learners have taken knowledge and made it their own" (Meyers and Jones 20).

Experiential learning theories and methods serve the dance educator particularly well because they provide a way to design a variety of activities that can increase the potential for

students to engage with the topic. "The Association for Experiential Learning (AEE) defines experiential learning as 'a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill and value from direct experience'" (Wurdinger 8). In *The Power of Experiential Learning: A Handbook for Trainers and Educators*, Colin Beard, a professor of Experiential Learning, and John P. Wilson, experiential learning researcher and consultant, write, "the foundation of much learning is the interaction between self and the external environment, in other words the experience" (17). (For the purpose of this research, I believe this experience includes experience a student gains in or outside of the classroom.) Connecting this idea to a choreography course, dance educator Larry Lavender[4] provides guidance as to how the creative process with movement can inherently connect to a student's past life experiences, provide him or her with skills to develop ideas, and structure life skills in relation to an external environment.

David A. Kolb, one of the foremost thinkers and developers in experiential learning, offers a model of the learning process based on the findings of Kurt Lewin, John Dewey and Jean Piaget. He utilizes Lewin's four-stage cycle of learning as a part of his theory. It begins with "concrete experience," leading to "observations and reflections," followed by the "formation of abstract concepts and generalizations," which allows for "testing implications of concepts in new situations" (Kolb 21). This cycle emphasizes "here-and-now concrete experience" which is "the basis for observation and reflection" and "feedback processes" (Kolb 21). Taken from the beliefs of Dewey, Kolb writes, "The impulse of experience gives ideas their moving force, and ideas give direction to impulse. Postponement of immediate action is essential for observation and judgment to intervene, and action is essential for achievement of purpose" (Kolb 22). This relates to teaching choreography because the choreographer has many concrete

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[4] "Facilitating the choreographic process" by Larry Lavender to be further discussed later in this chapter.

experiences in the creative process from which to draw inspiration for movement creation, goes through a process of reflection in order to form ideas that further develop the choreographic concept, and acts on these new ideas in the process. It also relates in terms of moving from one choreographic activity to the next or one choreographic work to the next.

Kolb references Piaget's belief about learning: "In Piaget's terms, the key to learning lies in the mutual interaction of the process of accommodation of concepts or schemas to experience in the world and the process of assimilation of events and experiences from the world into existing concepts and schemas" (Kolb 23). People engage in an experience and then absorb the new information into existing knowledge for greater understanding of the newest experience.

Kolb utilizes the theories of these three influential figures to formulate his own characteristics of experiential learning which state that learning is more about the process; it "requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world," it "involves transactions between the person and the environment," and it "is the process of creating knowledge" (26-37). In this sense, Kolb discusses the importance of the process instead of the product, that the acquisition of knowledge is a continuous process, and that "learning transforms experience in both objective and subjective forms" (Kolb 38). Incorporating these ideas from experiential learning into the classroom can enhance skills such as "teamwork, communication, time management, emotional intelligence or leadership" (Beard and Wilson 61). Experiential learning methods help students build some of the life skills that can be useful in course work or other areas of life.

Like experiential learning, active learning also rejects traditional teaching methods where the student remains passive to information given to them (Meyers and Jones 19). Meyers and Jones explain one of the positive aspects of active learning:

It encourages various ways of learning a subject; in so doing, it draws naturally on varied experiences from students' everyday lives. Because active learning frequently involves students in cooperative efforts—discussing, developing and analyzing the contributions of others—rather than in isolated and competitive situations, the classroom becomes a more hospitable place for a variety of student perspectives (xii).

The authors write, "the brain engages in different thinking processes, or operations, when we talk, listen, read, write, and reflect" (Meyers and Jones 21). Furthermore, "everyone needs to speak in order to clarify what they have heard, read, observed, or experienced" (Meyers and Jones 21). Due to miscommunications that inevitably occur at some point, speaking and clarifying instructions and covered material allow the student to understand and absorb information. In active learning, teachers try to engage the students actively in the course material through a variety of strategies. Meyers and Jones write that "basic elements, learning strategies, and teaching resources" contribute to the active learning theory (19). Within that, there are four components found in all strategies related to active learning: "talking and listening, writing, reading and reflecting" (Meyers and Jones 19). Learning strategies such as group work, teaching resources such as guest speakers, and long- or short-term projects are also used to enhance the active learning environment (Meyers and Jones 19). One of the key elements to take away from both active and experiential learning theories is that students learn by being actively engaged with the material and the experience, which includes a period of reflection. This engagement can inherently help them develop seemingly necessary and life skills that can empower them to take ownership of their work both throughout and after their undergraduate education.

The distribution of knowledge can occur between students, from teachers to students, and from students to teachers. In this type of setting, "learners not only receive knowledge but become capable of generating their own knowledge, assessing it critically, and sharing it with their peers" (Smith and Smith 70). Students are accountable for their own responsibilities to both

themselves and to the class, and can also be a support system for holding one another accountable (Meyers and Jones 75-76). Students need to be able to evaluate themselves, their work, and the work of others. As part of this process, dance researcher Soili Hämäläinen writes, "Reflective discussions on working processes are an essential part of self-evaluation…they are based on reflective thinking, which means evaluative thinking directed at one's own actions, thinking and learning" (112). She says that students are often not equipped to take responsibility for their own feedback and evaluations and often rely heavily on their teachers (115). The author believes that once students can begin to critique their own process of learning, they can "become the subjects of their learning. If the teacher alone is responsible for evaluating the students' artistic achievements, the learners cannot develop an inner motivation or responsibility for their own actions" (Hämäläinen 114). These ideas generally connect to a student's role in a choreography class and can also align with the beliefs and expectations of experiential and active learning in which a student and teacher share responsibility for the learning process.

Teachers play a principal role in setting up a positive learning environment for experiential and active learning to take place in a manner that suits a diverse group of students and learners. They must also be willing to give some of the authority to the students so they have opportunities to lead. "Teachers direct and choreograph what happens in a classroom so students can begin taking responsibility for their learning" (Meyers and Jones 33). This offers a strong chance of helping students grow. According to Wurdinger, "The educator's role is to help students identify an appropriate project and, once students begin work, help them find the necessary information that will move them forward in the discovery process" (14). It is important for educators to continuously explore new teaching styles, especially if the aim is to facilitate student learning to the greatest potential. Kenneth A. Bruffee, a Professor of English and an

American Writing Center administrator, relates to this thought when he states that a "major part of a professor's responsibility is to marshal students' ability to cope with intellectual challenges generated by and within encompassing communities of diversity, uncertainty, ambiguity, and doubt" (87). The content within which Bruffee was writing grew out of a need to better prepare students for college. It therefore seems that maintaining an awareness of the students as individuals and the society within which they will eventually need to be employed will aid in the classroom learning process.

In experiential learning, some examples taken from Beard and Wilson's program typology are designing a journey, stimulating the senses, designing group tasks, giving restrictions, incorporating functional skills, letting the students manage change, and allowing for a period of reflection (47-48). The teacher tends to act more like a designer and choreographer and less as the sole provider of knowledge within the class (Meyers and Jones 33). In terms of a course, an instructor can incorporate the above-mentioned ideas into lesson plans as a means of engaging students in the learning process.

Choreography requires creative thinking—the looking at problems and situations in an inventive way—and therefore directly correlates to active and experiential learning theories. Based on Kolb's theory in experiential learning, Jo Butterworth, professor of Dance Studies, makes a case for experiential learning as it relates to choreography in her article "Choreographer as researcher" when she writes,

> certain features characterize experiential learning: involving the student personally in active learning, delegating control, presenting students with management issues, etc. Key factors to success include relevant facilitation and guidance techniques, which empower individuals (161).

Students are active participants in the choreographic process, and the educator's role focuses on facilitation to help enhance the ideas of the students. Dance educator Larry Lavender also

emphasizes the role of the instructor as someone who helps students realize their ideas without telling them what to do, which gives them freedom to make decisions for their course of action in the problem-solving process (80). In essence, when facilitating the choreographic process, teachers are "Fostering the capacity of choreographers to meet artistic challenges" (Lavender 71). On a broader scale, educators foster the capacity of students to meet the challenges of their education.

Scholars of experiential and active learning theories stress the importance of student engagement in the classroom and offer tools for educators to utilize to create a partnership between the educator and the student. This gives students opportunities to lead, engage in course content, and be active participants in their individual learning processes. Through the incorporation of experiential and active learning theories, this study seeks to engage undergraduate dance students in the development of the life skills in their dance education in order to heighten their awareness of the connections they can make between their dance education and their broader education and life experiences. The creative process in choreography is the mode by which the students will explore these life skills. The study seeks to find the correlation between life skills and educational ownership. The next chapter illustrates the use of these theories as it relates to the design of the study.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology of the Study

My literature review set the foundation for the design of the ten-week study I conducted. The creative process within choreography was part of this methodology to help highlight how students might greatly increase their development in life skills in their dance education. The methodology of this study set wheels in motion to help heighten the participants' awareness of the connections they can make between their dance education and their broader education and life experiences. The study intentionally built on previous learning experiences through the planned exercises, discussions and reflections to help the participants make these connections and to enhance their educational growth and ownership over the work with which they were engaged.

With this information, I was able to structure the lesson plans for each meeting to incorporate elements of experiential and active learning techniques, such as discussions, reflections, reading, writing, incorporation of guest speakers, and orchestration of concrete experiences for the students in a classroom environment. I considered my role to be that of a facilitator who directed and choreographed what happened in the classroom. I then chose a variety of life skills to be the concepts for the meetings and paired them with elements of the creative process in choreography for exploration. Because this study was ten weeks in length, it was structured like a course in the quarter system, and therefore incorporated Student Learning Outcomes (listed in Appendix B). These learning outcomes were also helpful in shaping how success, or lack thereof, was determined and will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

This study included seven participants. The criteria for selecting participants was: (1) be currently enrolled in the B.A. or B.F.A. program in the Dance Department at the University of California, Irvine (2) be able to make the time commitment of meeting twice per week for two hours each meeting for ten weeks and (3) add to the diversity within the group. Initially, I selected 15 participants for this study; however, only seven of those selected were able to commit to the project. They were between the ages of 18 and 24. There was one freshman, one sophomore, and five seniors, two of whom were transfer students. Each had different prior dance experience—such as varying levels of ballet, modern and jazz, tap, as well as one with traditional Filipino folk dance–various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and a varied range in choreographic experience that I discovered through a questionnaire. Four had taken one to two university level choreography courses and choreographed a little for their own projects outside of school. Two had only choreographed once in a university level course. One had never taken a choreography class, but had some experience staging group dances for high school musicals. None had taken any advanced choreography class.

Per experiential and active learning theories and methods, there was a procedure to the meetings in order to foster student engagement. Meetings[5] consisted of movement improvisation activities, student creation of movement phrases, reading assignments, journal writing based on prompts given by students or myself, video viewing of choreographic works by professional companies, written activities, discussions, group work, and guest speakers. In most meetings, one of the participants would lead the focus or warm up exercise—over the course of the ten weeks, each participant led two of these activities. Each meeting had a specific life skill, such as communication, problem-solving, or decision-making, that was explored through choreographic

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[5] I used the term "meeting" as opposed to rehearsal or class because we were not rehearsing for a performance nor was the project technically a course for it to be labeled a class.

activities. There was flexibility within the two-hour meeting time in case one of the tasks needed

more or less time. We always began with an exercise that sought to focus the participants'

attention for the meeting and/or a warm up (lead by myself or a participant) that related either to

a previous meeting or the current meeting's concept. Every meeting included an exploration of a

concept—through lecture, discussion, video, improvisation, or a combination of one or more.

Each meeting also included at least one choreographic exercise and at least one discussion. The

meetings always ended in a reflection exercise. One meeting (based on self-talk) included a guest

lecturer because (1) scholars of active and experiential learning note the importance of guest

lecturers and (2) this person could speak to the concept of self-talk better than I could have. One

session was located outside of the dance studio in a black box theater. Choreographic devices

(Appendix F)—such as scramble, diminuition, and retrograde—and choreographic concepts,

such as Body, Energy, Space, Time and Shape, were incorporated into the exploration of each of

the life skills explored in the meetings. Participants were required to facilitate two focus or warm

up exercises, present on a choreographer of their choice, write a choreographic proposal, and

create a choreographic dance for their final project.[6] I created this structure for the course of the

ten-week study to test how I might implement my theories for learning with undergraduate dance

majors.

Participants were expected to be punctual and attend all meetings for the full two hours.

They were to bring their journals, wear dance clothes, be warmed up, and be prepared to move at

each meeting. It was important that they were active participants, which included, but was not

limited to, partaking in three one-on-one interviews with me in my capacity as researcher, filling

out written self-evaluations, and completing the activities I designed for this research.

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[6] The design primarily draws from experiential and active learning theories, and it also has similarities to a Graduate Choreography course I took, other choreography course syllabi I reviewed, as well as the elements from non-dance coursework that require proposals, presentations and the leading of activities.

Participants were expected to respect themselves and their fellow peers involved in the study, as well as be willing to try, experiment and be open to risk and trust. These expectations were listed in the information sheet I gave them that acted as a syllabus for the ten weeks (Appendix B). In the one-on-one interviews, I asked them questions and inquired about other activities and projects outside of our meetings with the intention of gaining insight into the utility of the activities they completed in the study (Appendix A).

Information was collected in the form of audio-recorded interviews (data that was kept for the duration of this research project but destroyed for privacy purposes after its conclusion), written and visual observations and note-taking during each session, and a participant self-evaluation (Appendix D) used to track participant progress. Body language and words spoken by the student participants were evaluated in the individual interview process, researcher observations of biweekly activities, and written and/or verbal self-evaluations. For example, I took notes during each session, observed how they worked individually and together in a group, and noted what they said during discussions. I designed a self-evaluation form (Appendix D), which was given to the participants four times during the course of the study.

Rather than speak about every session, what follows are three concepts that were explored over the ten-week period. While the majority of the concepts were each covered in one session, there were three themes that I decided were a priority to the research question that necessitated two sessions for more in-depth exploration. These were communication, self-talk, and problem-solving. The following process-oriented observations demonstrate the general structure of each meeting as well as an overview of how the students participated in the meetings.

Meeting 3: Effective and Clear Communication. By effective and clear communication, I am referring to verbal and nonverbal language produced by one participant that another participant or multiple participants can understand without any confusion. Communication was an important concept to explore because it is a part of everyday life, and strong communication skills are a crucial component to any successful relationship, be it professional or personal. Development of the ability to effectively communicate verbally and nonverbally can help a student's overall growth because it is applicable to all coursework, no matter the content. Therefore, it was a critical component to this research study.

The choreographic activity for this meeting focused on nonverbal communication, as the majority of communication in everyday life is expressed in a nonverbal manner, and therefore necessary to explore and develop. The discussion that followed the activity focused on clearly communicating their thoughts and ideas verbally. The participants were asked to explore two tracks of communication: (1) between choreographer and dancer and (2) between the choreography (the art object) and the audience (viewer). In the first activity, the six participants (one was absent) were divided into pairs. Each pair had 30 seconds to choose an idea they wanted to communicate with the audience through movement. Then the pairs had a short amount of time to create a phrase based on their idea. The pairs were restricted from talking or miming with each other during this time. They had to work together and communicate solely through choreography to build their "communication" phrases. After seven minutes, each duet showed their movement phrase to the group, and a discussion followed about how they were able to communicate with each other, what the "watching" groups perceived, and how well a choreographic intention was successfully relayed or not. The pairs never revealed their intention.

The point was to communicate something clearly to the viewers, even if it was not their actual chosen intention, just as in viewing a work in a performance.

In observing the participants, each pair seemed to dive into the activity. They were reminded twice that they were not to speak or use mime or use common gestures, such as nodding or pointing to a specific direction, to communicate with each other. After the initial challenge of creating movement together without speaking, the participants visibly seemed more comfortable with the activity than at the start. Each pair seemed to find a groove, learning to communicate with each other without verbal language, and a balance in their creation process at some point during the seven minutes. During the discussion that followed the showing, each examined phrase communicated something clearly to multiple viewers. Each pair also said that they were able to focus and problem-solve during their process without the use of words. The participants' interpersonal communication skills were challenged by the silence restriction, limiting them to communication exclusively through movement and the creative process. This engaged the participants in a different manner, which I believe helped them to achieve clarity both in their communication with each other and clarity in their concepts and how they were communicated to the viewers.

Meeting 4: Self-Talk. Self-talk is a person's internal dialogue, which can be positive and motivational or negative and demotivating. A person can turn negative self-talk into positive self-talk by using cues that help him or her focus, maintain confidence, and stay calm in stressful situations (Appendix G). This was addressed and explored with the help of a guest lecturer, whose own graduate student research investigated the benefits of self-talk practice via somatics in dance education. Part of this meeting's goal was to put the participants in seemingly high-stress situations in a low-pressure environment and prompt them to track their thought processes

during the activities. This would ideally help dancers to learn about their internal reactions and self-talk with the goal of building confidence for situations in high-pressure environments (such as auditions or interviews). Just like having strong communication skills, the ability to use positive self-talk is important to practice because it is beneficial to any environment or situation.

The session began with a warm-up in which each dancer was given a specific area of the body to lead in the warm up. This was done on the spot, as having to make something up on the spot can be stressful. After the warm up, the participants were each asked to choose a genre of dance from a list that they have had experience with, but would feel the least prepared to choreograph. They were then each assigned a song and asked to choreograph 30 seconds in their chosen genre on a fellow participant. The participants were asked to keep track (in their minds) of their initial reaction to the activity as well as their thoughts during the task to see if their thought patterns remained the same or if they changed.

I observed various reactions during the time each person had to choreograph in a style in which they were uncomfortable. Some seemed to jump into the activity, while others looked uncertain and hesitant. Each completed the task of creating 30 seconds of choreography in their assigned genres in the allotted time. Each group showed their choreography, and a discussion followed. They were then asked to recall their initial reactions to the prompt for the activity. Participant F found it challenging and noticed he had little self-confidence because he was not used to choreographing hip hop. Participant D was "excited" and did not feel pressure to be perfect but instead was eager to experiment. Participant E stated that it was hard because she had less experience from which to draw, and therefore a smaller source of inspiration, but pushed herself to "think outside of the box." Participant C, who had limited choreographic experience,

said she found it easier to choreograph from improvisation and muscle memory[7], but because she had little muscle memory to rely on for her chosen genre, she tried to draw from movement she had previously seen.

The participants were then asked what they remembered about their thoughts during their choreographic processes. Participant B said that it became easier as time went on, and found things upon which to draw inspiration, but was then challenged because she was uncertain of how to teach it. She fluctuated between confidence and uncertainty. Participant D, who was initially excited about the prompt, said that her thoughts changed because she became nervous about the time restraint, as it was a style she was not used to and wanted more time to think. Another agreed that the time restraint made her nervous. Participant F, who had little confidence regarding the activity, said he was nervous and insecure at first, but when the dancer was getting into the movement, it helped him through the process because he gained trust in that dancer.

After this discussion, the guest gave a short lecture on self-talk, speaking about key terms related to self-talk and self-concept, such as self-efficacy, cognitive appraisal, self-esteem, stress, and anxiety (Appendix G). She informed the participants of the importance and relevance of self-talk and ways they could potentially talk themselves through stressful situations. She talked about the repatterning of negative thoughts into positive ones, gave examples, and asked the participants to think of one of the negative thoughts they had during the exercise and try to repattern it into a positive thought. The goal was to help the participants to become more aware of their own self-talk and to give them tools for practicing positive self-talk on a regular basis so they are more equipped to handle higher stress situations.

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[7] Some research says muscle memory does not exist.

This was followed up with the second activity where the dancers were given six minutes each and prompted to revisit their initial task. They were again asked to follow their thought processes. They were also asked to talk themselves through a negative thought if they became aware of one, and/or to grasp onto positive thoughts throughout the activity. During the second discussion, four of the seven participants volunteered to share examples from the activity where they re-patterned their negative thoughts to help them through the exercise. Each participant seemed to have a more positive experience in the second round after asking to engage in positive self-talk with him or herself.

Meeting 7: Problem-Solving. The ability to effectively and quickly problem-solve is one that will be useful in many different life situations. In this study, problem-solving was explored with a strict time constraint because there will undoubtedly be many instances in a person's professional or personal life where the time restraint is more serious than in our meetings. There are also many instances in an undergraduate education upon which a student's problem-solving capabilities will be called; therefore, being aware of past experience to draw from can potentially give him or her confidence and strategies to work through future problems.

The exploration of the concept began immediately at the start of the session. Participants were given five minutes to do their own focus activity for the day, so that their minds were ready for the meeting. Prior to this, I lead and guided them through a focus activity at the start of each meeting. They had to quickly figure out how to focus for the next two hours.

The primary problem-solving activity dealt with choreographic devices. I gave everyone a list of 18 choreographic devices (Appendix F). They were given ten minutes to read the sheet and decipher what each meant if they were unfamiliar with any. The participants had varying levels of experience with choreographic devices. All had worked with some of the devices prior

to this study, or at least understood what some of them meant, but all were also unfamiliar with some as well. Therefore, the first part of the problem-solving task was to learn what each device meant in terms of its usage for choreography. I asked them to circle the three devices with which they had the least familiarity. After this, the participants were asked to work together to create a movement phrase based on the idea of identity. They were not given other instructions aside from this, were restricted from asking me any questions and were given ten minutes to complete the task. The directions were intentionally given this way so that if they had questions, they would work together to decide the best course of action. For the next layer of this activity, the participants were to work individually, use the movement phrase that was just created as source material to be manipulated using the three devices they circled earlier. Again, they were restricted from asking me any questions and were given ten minutes to complete this task. For the last layer of this activity, the participants were prompted to use the individual phrases they just created to produce a short group piece. Again, they were restricted from asking me questions and were given twelve minutes to complete the task. The goal of this activity was not only for the participants to be required to problem-solve quickly, but also to see how choreographic devices can be utilized in the process of choreography as an aid in the creative process.

After showing the piece, we had a discussion about the activity. They were asked what challenges and problems arose and how they navigated the tasks. I asked if there were any questions they had during the activity that they decided to disregard since they were restricted from asking me questions. I asked if anyone did not complete the individual task of using three choreographic devices and why. I wanted to know how they solved the problems in a group versus how they solved them during the individual activity. I asked how they could apply the methods they used to solve the problems in other areas of their lives. At the end of the session, I

prompted them to write down one realistic goal for the upcoming week as well as how they might go about achieving that goal. I followed up on that goal during the next session to see who succeeded and how. I asked these questions because it was important to this study that they could articulate how they were able to problem-solve and how they could connect their thoughts and ideas to other situations. This discussion stemmed from experiential and active learning methods that advocate for the reflection process and the formulation of new ideas to implement in future situations.

Some of their answers were as follows: they had to rely on each other because they could not ask for information from me. Deciding how to set up the process as a group was difficult, but they took the time to problem-solve and believed they set themselves up for success. My prompts were vague, and while they wanted to ask questions, they had to take it upon themselves to "think critically" and work through the problem on their own and take "ownership" of the solution offered. They had to hold each other "accountable" if someone got distracted and give gentle reminders of the time. Participant D said it was at times frustrating if one participant came up with a solution, but the rest saw it clearly in a different way, so it was important to take everyone's way of understanding it into account. Participants A and E preferred working individually—they said they were calmer and could problem-solve better. Participant E said it was overwhelming to problem-solve in a group for her—if she had a question, she decided to set it aside and did not take "ownership." She did not understand part of a task and therefore did not think her ideas could contribute to the group. She let others take the lead until she gained confidence in herself to help with the task. Others (Participants B, D, F, G) noted how they preferred working in a group to problem-solve, as they were more decisive, and it was easier to confirm something they doubted about the activity when they heard an answer from someone

else. These responses showed that even though the concept for the meeting was problem-solving, they clearly stated other related life skills that were relevant to the activity and demonstrated their awareness of these other skills as they were working through their mental processes and physical practices in the exercises.

Participants used the creative process of choreographing to understand what skills were important for enhancing their ability to take ownership of their work. By incorporating a variety of life skills into activities related to the creative process in choreography, I was hoping to find what strategies work well for the educator in designing lessons, as well as how a student progresses in their growth as choreographers, their development as universal skills, how these two items relate to one another, and to what extent the participants' ownership over their work had been enhanced in the process. A summary of findings and an analysis are given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Findings

I structured the ten-week study in a way that built on experiential and active learning theories and asked the participants to build on previous learning experiences throughout the study. I found that students made connections between the content discussed and their life experience outside of our meetings. I believe this helped to further their development in various life skills and affected the ownership they had over the work with which they were engaged during the study. I also found evidence of growth of their choreographic abilities by way of the exploration of life skills. Because this was a study, there were certain outcomes for which I was looking. Because this study was structured like a ten-week course, it seemed natural to organize the findings in terms of projected learning outcomes and their connection to the life skills in succeeding in those learning outcomes. In this small study, the students had a sense of owning this information so in the future are more likely to draw upon those experiences when they are challenged.

By the end of the study, all seven participants adopted a heightened sense self-direction in the learning process. There was increased development of their awareness of their individual learning styles, a successful collaboration with their peers, an increased ability to use their knowledge in one area to help in others, and an increased level or awareness of how they learn as individuals. I was, of course, looking for an improvement life skills such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and organization. They improved their abilities to give and receive feedback through critical thinking and gained a better understanding of how to connect educational material with personal experience. They also increased their understanding of the fundamentals of choreography. This, in turn, helped enhance

the participants' own unique choreographic voices, which increased their abilities to utilize the creative process in other ways for personal growth and development. All of these successes were attributed to the exploration of life skills through the creative process in choreography.

Learning Styles. Participants have increased their level of awareness of learning styles. Five of the seven participants mentioned the utility of exploring different learning styles. Four mentioned becoming more aware of their specific learning styles during the course of the study, as well as how they hope to continue to improve in other areas. For example, three identify themselves as visual learners who want to improve their auditory or verbal-linguistic intelligence. Participant A mentioned that she had an instructor who taught in a manner that favored auditory learning, and therefore she struggled in that class. She noted the importance of improving in other intelligences and learning styles in order to adapt effectively to different situations. Participant D mentioned the desire to enhance her ability when choreographing to tailor her rehearsals so that she continue to gain efficiency when working in the creative process with people with different learning styles. While the participants began the study with an inherent respect for each other, I observed that in the activities throughout the ten weeks, there was an increase in sensitivity toward their fellow participants, especially when collaborating or in their individual choreography groups.

Collaboration. Participants successfully collaborated with their peers. All seven participants mentioned that they felt they improved their ability to collaborate with others, especially in terms of creating choreography. Since they were asked to work together in each session, they had significant practice in this area; therefore, it was not surprising they would sense improvement in this skill. Some participants said that they also felt they became more comfortable with expressing their opinions to the group, including not being afraid to disagree

with someone. This finding was also not surprising because as the study progressed, all the participants were asked to speak about their experiences, and they became more familiar with one another. As the researcher/facilitator, I played a role in the creation of a comfortable environment, and this too contributed to the feeling of success in collaboration process. The outcome may have been different with another group of participants. Participant A noted the importance of supporting others but also letting others support her too. Participant F said he was more willing to allow others to share in the experience than before the study, saying that others have ideas they can offer in his choreographic process. The practice of collaboration in this study helped to enhance the confidence levels of the participants who previously preferred to work alone, such as Participants A and E. They found value in their own opinions and their contribution to the group activities. Participant A said, "even if you are independent, it is important to have people around you who care and want to help."

Connecting Educational Knowledge to Other Areas of Life. Participants increased their ability to use their knowledge in one area to help in another area. This included a heightened awareness of the connections between multiple areas of life. Participants gained a better understanding of how to connect educational material with personal experience. One of the primary connections the participants made with the study and other areas of their lives was positive self-talk. All seven participants mentioned at least one time in their self-evaluations that their awareness of their negative self-talk outside of our meeting times increased and were actively seeking to repattern it into positive self-talk. This was also the most consistent connection brought up in self-evaluations and in interviews. They were using positive self-talk not only in the study, but also in their personal lives or other academic coursework both in dance and outside of dance. Participant D even mentioned that she was making an effort to notice

negative self-talk in her peers and offered them positive thoughts and comments to potentially help them. Participant C mentioned that she had become more open to new experiences, giving an example from her biology class—the class was studying the Mediterranean ecosystem and went on a marsh tour. She mentioned how in the past she would not participate in these events, but because of her change to positive self-talk, her interest had grown, and she desired to have new experiences outside of class that related to the course content. Participant A made connections by writing in a journal to help her organize her thoughts. In this process, she became more aware of the connections between thinking and doing and applied positive self-talk to other areas of her life.

The level of awareness of their self-talk, whether negative or positive, increased for all participants. Some mention that at times they did not focus on the repatterning of negative thoughts to positive ones, but noticed a heightened awareness and sensitivity to their own thoughts and the spoken thoughts of others. Two (Participants A and E) of the seven improved their positive self talk from the start of the study to the end of the study. The other five remained about the same—three of which (B, D and F) claimed to not have too many negative thoughts at the start of the study. Even if it remained at the same level as the start, each talked about their conscious awareness of it and their attempts to maintain it and improve upon it in other parts of their personal or academic lives.

Participant E mentioned that she had become a better problem-solver in other aspects of life and thought she improved upon this skill and felt more prepared for future situations that require quick thinking and problem-solving. This same participant said that she was trying to take the feeling of the safe environment from the study and to find the confidence to bring that feeling into other situations with higher pressure. Participant B knew she had strong leadership

qualities, but had not practiced them in a dance setting before (despite being a senior), so she worked on bringing what she already knew from experiences outside of dance into the dance environment. Participant F said that he was slowly making an effort to utilize the lessons he learned in the study in his daily activities. Participant D realized the importance of the manner in which the teacher created the environment as well as the eagerness of the students to learn. She focused this comment on engagement, saying that it was very noticeable in other dance classes when the students were not engaged or the teacher was not creating an atmosphere malleable to a diverse group of students. She said she wanted to implement strategies that she has learned from this study and from an education class she took because the way a teacher interacts with students can be either beneficial or inhibit progress.

However, many of the participants did mention that once they began working on their choreographic projects and were struggling with the time constraint and pressures related to wanting to create a good product as well as outside stressors related to the end of the quarter, they did not draw back to the activities they did earlier in the study to help them through the situation. It seemed that while there was a heightened level of awareness and connections being made from the activities and concepts in the study, with added stress toward the end of the study, it was easy to let the previously gained experiences fade into the background. That said, the fact that the students had already recognized this day after the study concluded provided hope that in future situations they might remember to draw from positive past experiences to help with present ones.

Life Skills. Participants improved skills such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, positive self-talk, etc. The skills that seemed to be most prominent and visible in the study were problem-solving, leadership, compartmentalizing, and

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self-talk. There was some cross over among the various skills, as they were asked to call on multiple skills at a time to successfully complete the given tasks. Participants were asked to constantly problem-solve—this included thinking quickly, making decisions and managing the time constraints. Some of the participants were already effective problem-solvers when the study began, but they noted that the constant practice in the study and that choreographic problems within the study were new, and they were pushed to find effective ways to solve problems. Participant E mentioned that the positive atmosphere that the participants created helped her to maintain a sense of calmness in order to effectively problem-solve.

In addition to what was mentioned regarding leadership in the previous section, Participant C noticed a great change in her leadership abilities. Prior to the study, she mentioned that she was comfortable being a follower and never wanted to lead. After she finished leading her second and final activity in the study, she said she wished she could lead more of them because she enjoyed it. She said:

> "I believe I am a bit more confident now in myself to actually want to lead a class. Leading group activities has really helped me find my own voice and has helped me realize that I do have good ideas and that I can create a fun and inspiring environment for dancers. The dancers will never know how to perform unless you have an open conversation with them and allow them to open up about what they think would benefit the piece."

Participant F, who was somewhat comfortable with leading prior to the study, said he found new ways of leading. While the participants were required to lead activities and be choreographers (which is a leading role itself), as a whole, everyone was able to improve in this ability to some degree.

The participants noticed that in the second half of the study, they needed to focus on their ability to compartmentalize. As a part of the choreography project, everyone was required to be a choreographer for one piece and a dancer in three pieces. They had to quickly jump from one

rehearsal to another, reorient themselves in the piece, and maintain focus in the movement as dancers and choreographers. Participant A said that she was still in the process of growing, but jumping around from dancer to choreographer forced her to be quicker in mind and more flexible in the way she prepared to work. Each participant succeeded in this to varying degrees.

Feedback. Participants further developed their abilities to give and receive feedback through sustained critical thinking and analyzing. This outcome was limited to conscious and intentional practice in only two activities during the course of the study. Of all the areas of development seen in this study, this was the area that saw the least direct growth. While I planned to have other opportunities for the participants to give and receive feedback in regards to their presentations and their choreographic projects, time constraints restricted this, and I made a decision to omit it from two session plans to focus on other areas. That said, during the sessions that did directly incorporate the application of critical evaluation of work, all participants gave examples of feedback they gave and feedback they received, mentioning to what degree of success the feedback had. Participant C gave the most feedback that day; this was interesting because she also seemed to have the lowest level of confidence in her own work. She mentioned that this helped her feel validated in her opinions, which also helped her to build confidence in her own creations. I also observed participants giving and receiving feedback from their peers in smaller group activities and during rehearsal for their choreographic projects. I am uncertain of whether they were conscious of this or not, but because of the environment created, they were comfortable offering feedback as well as receiving it.

Choreographic Voices. Participants enhanced their individual creative voices through the exploration of life skills through basic exercises in collaborative choreography and increased their sense of personal growth. While self-confidence as a whole either remained the same or

improved for each participant according to the self-evaluations (Appendix E), there was an overall spike in confidence based on what they said in their interviews. Here were a few of the examples they mentioned: gaining confidence in the value of the creation; more confident in testing new ideas and being okay with changing them; confident in the decisions made as a choreographer so the dancers could build confidence in the work; confidence in the dancers' contribution to the creative process and their embodiment of the movement; confidence because there was no time for self-doubt; confidence in being a leader as the choreographer and that there was something of value to say; bolder in choices as opposed to resorting to movement that was already comfortable.

Participant C talked about how she avoided taking a choreography class for the last one and a half years because she never wanted to share her work. In a previous choreography class, they shared their material in groups and she hoped she would get lost in the background. During this study, she appeared to become more confident in what she had to say and found inspiration from the choreographer on whom she selected to present. That choreographer's process helped guide her in her own choreographic project for this study. Participant E said she was not expecting to learn so many different approaches to choreography, nor was she expecting this study to be as educationally helpful as it was. Participant G said that the choreographic tools and methods discussed in the study helped her to explore concepts in different ways, see things differently and has been more inspired choreographically than she had ever been. Participant B said she had moderately grown in the ability to translate an idea into movement quickly as well as expand on the material she generated to further construct a choreographic work. Participant D said that the impromptu creation of phrases used to be intimidating, but became easier with practice. Participant F said that while he used to choreograph by picking and choosing

movements he liked, he has challenged himself to experiment with choreography based on what he learned from the participant presentations about other professional choreographers. He thought that in being a part this study he was able to find a more natural way for the dancers to translate the movement without him needing to be as specific. He thought this allowed him to accomplish more than he would have before and that his dancers were confident in the material. A few participants talked about the value of the time constraints when choreographing, as they did not second-guess their decisions as much. They each found something within the choreographic process that was discussed to apply to their own approaches to their choreography. Two of the participants (F and G) said they were less selfish in the process than before, as they said they used to see choreography in terms of how they looked when performing their own work. They began to see the value of experimenting with movement based on the dancers with whom they were working. Based on these comments, I believe the participants gained confidence in their abilities to choreograph, collaborate, and grow as artists. Their perceptions of themselves as choreographers changed in a positive way; they believed they had a voice with something meaningful to say as well as more tools to help them express their ideas.

Self-Directed and Lifelong Learning. Participants moved visibly toward a habit of self-directed and lifelong learning**.** In regards to learning, several participants mentioned that a person never stops growing or learning and that it was important to decide what to take from experiences. This was a key moment in this study because it showed their qualities as lifelong learners. All participants said that they were more open to challenging themselves in their choreography, and many said they had become more open-minded as well, which are important qualities to have not only for choreography, but also in other classes, work environments, and their personal lives. This theme of a new openness to challenges relating to choreography was an

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important finding because the content discussed and the environment created seemed to help them come to this realization. This appeared to be a recurring theme based on my observations and the interviews with the students. A few were visibly self-directed learners already, which I believe aided them in their growth during this process and helped them to take ownership of their learning and of their choreographic work. Participant B believed education to be a holistic experience and that because of interactions with a diverse group of people, she could discover more about herself and how she wanted to continue to grow. As she was moving toward more specialized area in terms of her career path, she recognized the importance of integrating what she learned previously into what she wanted to learn in the future. She believed it came from being engaged, being independent and realizing that others had a greater knowledge than she. At the beginning of this study, three participants (C, F, and G) seemed to have a narrower pursuit of knowledge in general, not just regarding choreography, and learning than the other four. By this, I mean that they seemed to be almost singularly focused on their dance technique when asked questions about the purpose of a college education. As I observed and interviewed them a second and third time, I noticed small changes in how they thought about learning and their dance education. All talked about concepts they wanted to pursue after this study as a way of continuing their development in their choreography, coursework and personal lives. The fact that they all found ideas they wanted to continue to develop and pursue choreography beyond this study was encouraging.

CHAPTER 4

Summary and Conclusions

The successful methods from a study exploring life skills through the creative process in choreography can be part of an educational foundation from which dance students can enhance ownership of their learning. Students not only developed their critical thinking, communication, and intra- and interpersonal skills, but also actively improved their dance composition skills. They learned to take greater initiative and to take advantage of leadership opportunities, worked collaboratively with peers and instructors, and increased self-confidence. They heightened their awareness of their own learning processes during activities, understood the importance of reflection, and learned how to utilize other resources.

The results give evidence of growth in the participants' ability to utilize various skills in activities and had a positive influence on their level of confidence. Because many of the comments in the interviews focused on a heightened sense of self-concept and a greater awareness of self-talk, I believe this lends itself to an enhanced sense of ownership of their work within the study and to some extent outside of the study. Based on my findings, I cannot say whether their ownership was maximized based on the ten-week study, but there was a clear growth in the participants. Participant A mentioned that she "took ownership" of her choreography in a positive way. Participant D talked about ownership in terms of her responsibilities as a student in the study, and how she carried it into other coursework as well—evidence of a student taking ownership in her work that was brought about during this study. Participant B spoke about her appreciation of the space given to her and the rest of the participants to let the skills of creation and knowledge develop at their own pace and to figure the meanings of concepts out for themselves. She said honing in on that self-awareness that

surfaced from this helped her develop her sense of ownership in her work. Because of the above-mentioned comments made by the participants, it seems that the methods, structure and activities utilized in this study were helpful to the students in terms of enhancing ownership in their choreographic work, including how they went through their processes, as well as connecting the concepts in the study to other areas of their lives. Dance students exploring the fundamental aspects of the creative process while also being aware of how to use them in the context of future coursework, jobs or other aspects of life was the undercurrent that drove this research topic.

The choreographic works created in this study became part of a concert event that fused their works and incorporated choreography of my own. Though it was not included in the ten-week study because the research question was related to a classroom environment, the concert allowed an audience to learn about this project both in a choreographic presentation and discussion forum. It would be interesting to learn how any of the results might be different if the study related to a concert-making process as opposed to coursework.

Regarding future research, knowing the results from this study will help me tailor any future project akin to this one in which I would like to track the progress of the participants over a longer period of time. I am interested in a study that investigates the effect life skills have on an undergraduate student's choreographic development in a more in-depth manner. Similarly, I wonder how the exploration of life skills would affect the understanding and retention of course content. I would also like to explore life skills in a more explicit way in a dance technique class.

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APPENDIX A: Sample Interview Questions

Pre-study

What do you hope to learn from the courses you take in the Dance major?

In what way(s) are you being prepared for your post-graduation endeavors?

What are the skills you are acquiring?

Are there skills that need more attention and integration into your courses? If so, which ones?

If you had the opportunity to make a suggestion to a specific class with something that needs to be integrated into the course, what would it be?

How can the experience of dance help you grow as a person?

What is the purpose of a college education for you? Define the role of the student in relation to that purpose.

Mid-study

1. What skills have been addressed in this study for you and in what way(s)?

2. Would you say these skills have been greatly enhanced, somewhat enhanced or not enhanced in your own development?

3. What growth—if any—have you noticed in yourself since the beginning of this study?

4. What skills have not been addressed in the study thus far that you think are important to your dance education?

5. What connections have you made, if any, between this study and anything outside this study?

Post-study

1. What skills have been addressed in this study for you and in what way?

2. Would you say these skills have been greatly enhanced, somewhat enhanced or not enhanced in your own development?

3. What growth—if any—have you noticed in yourself since the beginning of this study?

4. What skills were not addressed in this study that you think would have been beneficial?

5. What connections have you made, if any, between this study and anything outside this study?

6. Do you have any new thoughts/ideas regarding how you want to continue to develop beyond this study?

Study Description

The development of life skills can be a foundation upon which students can maximize ownership in their education. The dance educator can guide students in creating a conscious approach to self-directed and lifelong learning through the integration of experiential and active learning. This research considers how students learn, some of the life skills that may be required and gained through dance education, and the role of the student and the educator. Students exploring the fundamental aspects of the creative process while also being aware of how to use them in the context of future coursework, jobs or other aspects of life is the undercurrent that drives this research.

Content and Assignments

Content:

Participants will use the creative process of choreographing to explore universal skills important for enhancing a sense of ownership. This will incorporate the fundamentals of dancemaking facilitated by the researcher and presented through exercises that draw on experiential and active learning theories and techniques.

Assignments:

Participation in daily practice and activities on the fundamentals of choreography
Facilitation of two activities throughout the 10 weeks, complete with written activity plan
Choreographer Presentation and Movement Activity
Choreography Project Written Proposal
Choreography Project

Participant Expectations

Student participants are expected to:
- be punctual and attend all meetings for the full two hours.
- bring their journals, wear dance clothes and be ready to move each meeting.
- be active participants during each meeting. This includes, but is not limited to, partaking in three one-on-one interviews with the researcher, filling out written activity assessments, completing activities and projects to the best of your abilities.
- complete a choreographic project and contribute design ideas that will be part of the thesis concert in May.
- respect themselves and their fellow peers involved in this study.
- be willing to try, experiment and be open to risk and trust.
- question and inquire about activities and projects, ensuring their utility in both this study and for personal growth.

Projected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this study, participants will have:
- moved visibly toward a habit of self-directed and lifelong learning.
- increased their awareness of how they learn as individuals.
- increased their ability to use their knowledge in one area to help in others.
- increased their level of awareness of how they learn as individuals.

- improved universal skills such as leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, organization, etc.
- further developed their abilities to give and receive feedback through sustained critical thinking and analyzing.
- a better understanding of how to connect educational material with personal experience, which can lead to a more fruitful learning experience.
- a basic understanding of choreographic devices and how they can be utilized to further the creative process when choreographing.
- enhanced their own unique choreographic voice.
- increased their ability to use the creative process as a means of personal growth and development.

Methods and Procedures
Meetings will consist of improvisation activities, creation of phrasework, readings, journal writing, video viewing, written activities, discussions, group work, and guest speakers. The researcher and, on occasion, participants will facilitate activities.

Evaluation and Assessment
Student participants will be assessed through the individual interview process, researcher observations of daily activities, and written and/or verbal self-evaluations and activity assessments.

Interpersonal Communication

(1) Focus/Warm-Up – Guided exploration of Body category *(15 min)*

(3) Clarity Activity *(5 min)*
Intention. Instruct the students to do a specific gesture. Give them different intentions and have them perform the same gesture with different intentions, i.e. greediness, caring, dismissive, hunger.

(4) Improvisation Activity 1 (in 2 parts)
Part 1: Using what you just explored in the warm up, in pairs, create a movement conversation. No talking. Partner 1 will "say" something. Partner 2 observes ("listens"), then paraphrases what Partner 1 said and responds. Then Partner 1 paraphrases and responds, etc.

Part 2: Working with same partner, create a phrase together without talking or miming. The phrase has to communicate something. Decide what you want to communicate (speaking allowed) then begin.

(5) Discussion
Did you find anything challenging about this activity? What was the intention? How is communication important, in work environment and with choreography? *(10 min)*

(6) Activity 2 *(50 min)*
Keeping the body category in mind, this activity will focus on the choreographer/dancer relationship. Same groups. Step 1: each choreographer has 10 minutes to create a phrase based on a prompt that is meant to communicate something specific to the viewer. Step 2: the choreographer has 10 minutes to teach the phrase, with the goal of trying to be as clear as possible so that the dancer can communicate the given idea clearly. Step 3: Dancer performs. Step 4: Assessment focusing on the choreographer and process of communication. What worked well? What might be done in the future to help improve?

(7) Reflection – continuing the discussion from Activity 2. Write down anything you felt was valuable information for you.

Self-Talk, Self-Confidence

(1) Focus/Warm up Exercise (15 min)
Each person has to do part of warm up and have a specific part to warm up – their knowledge of anatomy and kinesiology. They do not know what part of the warm up they will be asked to do in advance, nor when they will be called on to lead.

-head, neck, shoulders	-arms	-spine	-hips/legs
-feet and ankles	-full body stretch		-conditioning/strengthen

(2) Activity 1 - Prompt and Directions. (35 min)
Directions: Students choose from a list of dance genres and asked to choose the one they are most unfamiliar with. They will be paired with another student and asked to choreograph a phrase in that genre on their fellow student. After one person goes, they will switch roles. Each student is both dancer and choreographer. (12 min per group and 10 minutes or so to show)
Story Ballet (task to make a new "four little swans") - Classical Jazz - Modern (Release or Contemporary Modern) - Musical Theater (Hairspray, West Side Story, Chicago)- Hip Hop - Waltz - Commercial/Pop

Students asked to focus on/notice the following thoughts primarily in the choreographer role:
What first thought about when approached the task? Does thought pattern remain the same? Change? How?

(3) Discussion and Christine Mini Lecture (25 min)
Discussion questions:
What did you think about when coming up with the movement?
What did you think about when performing the movement?
What thoughts went through your heads when seeing the other performances? especially those in the same genre?

(4) Activity 2 - Revisiting activity 1 (18 min)
Revisit the first activity. Make any changes you want. Add any new material. Part of the reflection can be how their thoughts changed from the first round to the second since there will be more context and discussion in between the two activities. To revisit it, they can go in with a critical eye, modify, add on, completely change the choreography.

(5) Reflection – Re-patterning for Self-Talk (15 min)
Write all the de-motivating self-talk and change it to positive self-talk.

Problem-Solving

(1) Focus – Decide how you would like to focus your attention today. (5 min)

(2) Warm-up – Participant F leads (10 min)

(3) Activity (45 min)
Hand out choreographic devices sheets. Participants read the hand out and decipher the meanings of each device. (10 min)
Create a phrase together. All participants have same material. Based on the theme of identity. No questions. (10 min)
Prompt: Participants must use 3 devices (the ones they are least familiar with) to manipulate the phrase. Show in 2 groups. No questions. (10 min)
Prompt: use these individual phrases to create a short, dynamic group piece. Use any 2 choreographic devices as a group. No questions. (12 min) Surprise moment, one more choreographic device they have to incorporate - retrograde– (3 additional min.)

(4) Check in/Discussion (20 min)
What were the challenges/problems needed to solve of the activity? How did you navigate the task? Are there any questions that you had that you decided to just disregard since you couldn't ask me questions or did you work through it? Did anyone not complete the individual task with the choreographic devices? As a group, how did you solve problems v individual? Same or different? Did choose devices based on easiness? How can you apply how you solved the problems to things outside?

(5) Reflection
Write down one realistic goal for the upcoming week and how you might go about achieving this goal?

APPENDIX D: Self-Evaluation Form

NAME: DATE:

	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal Communication					
Self-Confidence					
Self-Talk					
Initiative					
Problem-solving					
Improvisation/Quick Thinking					
Insight					
Critical Thinking					
Responsibility					
Risk-taking					
Collaboration					
Decision-making					
Play					
Persistence/Drive					
Attitude					
Listening					
Learning					

Scale:
1 – almost none   2 – little   3 – somewhat   4 – much   5 – very

Individual Progress:	Interpersonal	Self-Confidence	Self-Talk	Initiative	Problem-Solving	Quick Thinking	Insight	Critical Thinking
A Evaluation 1	3	2	3	3	4	3	3	4
A Evaluation 2	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
A Evaluation 3	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	4
A Evaluation 4	4 1,5	1,5		4	4	4	4	3
B Evaluation 1	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	4
B Evaluation 2	4	3	3	4	5	5	4	5
B Evaluation 3	4	4	4	5	4	4	5	5
B Evaluation 4	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	4
C Evaluation 1	2	3	4	2	4	3	3	3
C Evaluation 2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
C Evaluation 3	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	5
C Evaluation 4	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	4
D Evaluation 1	5	4	2	4	5	4	3	4
D Evaluation 2	3	3	2	4	3	3	4	5
D Evaluation 3	4	4	2	5	5	3	4	5
D Evaluation 4	4	3	2	5	5	4	5	5
E Evaluation 1	3	2	1	1	2	3	3	3
E Evaluation 2	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent
E Evaluation 3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4
E Evaluation 4	3	4	3	4	5	5	4	4
F Evaluation 1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3
F Evaluation 2	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	3
F Evaluation 3	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	2
F Evaluation 4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
G Evaluation 1	3	2	2	4	3	2	3	3
G Evaluation 2	4	2	4	2	3	3	4	4
G Evaluation 3	5	4	3	3	4	5	3	2
G Evaluation 4	2	1	1	3	3	3	2	2

Responsibility	Risk-taking	Collaboration	Decision-maki	Play	Persistence	Attitude	Listening	Learning	Focus
4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	5	3
4	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
4	3	5	4	3	4	5	5	5	4
4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3
5	5	3	5	3	5	5	4	4	5
4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4
4	4	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	4
3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	5
3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	3	5	5	2	4	3	5	4	5
5	4	4	5	4	3	4	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	4
5	3	5	5	2	4	5	5	5	5
4	4	5	4	4	3	4	4	3	4
absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent	absent
4	2	4	3	4	2	2	3	4	4
4	4	5	5	4	4	3	3	3	2
3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	5	3
2	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
2	2	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4
3	1	4	1	2	1	4	4	2
3	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	5	4
2	5	5	3	5	3	3	3	3	2
3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4

APPENDIX F: Sample List of Choreographic Devices

Augmentation/Expansion – Lengthen time values of some or all movements, i.e. through slow motion or pause. Increase the range (shape or space) of a movement of phrase

Diminuition – Lessen time values of some or all movements, i.e. through fast motion or deletion of pause. Reduce the range (shape or space) of a movement or phrase

Repetition – Perform a movement or phrase several times

Canon – One dancer or group repeats the movement or phrase several counts later

Rhythm – Vary the speed or change the rhythm of the movement

Transposition – Change the facing, level, or planar orientation of a movement

Translation – Perform the movement of one body part on another

Inversion - Perform the spatial opposite of a movement

Mirroring – Perform a movement or phrase on the opposite side

Isolation – Develop one aspect of a phrase, i.e. only perform upper-body movements or perform the phrase with no arms

Retrograde – Perform the phrase in reverse order, as if playing a video in reverse/rewinding

Insertion - Insert new movement into a phrase

Subtraction – Take away movement from a phrase

Embellishment – Layer new movements onto existing phrase

Scramble – Change the order of the movements in a phrase, or phrases within a dance

Development – Carry a part or parts of a phrase to a new choreographic intention. The unfolding of movement or thematic material. A work's progression from beginning to end

Opposite Actions – Perform a movement, do the opposite and then connect the two

Concept Contrast – change the space, time or force of a movement

Key terms:
Self-Efficacy
According to the American Psychological Association, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment.

Cognitive Appraisal[8]
A theory of emotion, which implicates people's personal interpretations of an event in determining their emotional reaction. The most important part of this theory is the way we interpret the event (aka, was the event a positive or a negative occurrence?) as well as what we think caused the situation. Cognitive Appraisal can relate to self-efficacy in terms of how one appraises his/her abilities in relation to the challenge presented.

Self-Esteem[9]
Refers to the degree to which one values oneself. There are different sub-categories of self-esteem:
Domain specific (i.e.: your level of esteem as a dancer)
Domain general (i.e.: your level of esteem has a person in society/larger world)
Trait (inherent level of esteem based on character and temperament)
State (i.e.: level of esteem in a given moment)
Social (i.e.: level of esteem in relation to others/in social situations)
Appearance (i.e.: self-image/ body image)
Self-esteem can be affected by your belief in your capacity to accomplish/overcome challenge. You can have high esteem in one area and not the other(s).For example, level of self-efficacy in dance will affect your *domain specific* esteem, but not necessarily your *domain general* esteem. Even further, your *state* esteem may be low in ballet, but you may have high esteem in your role as a modern or jazz dancer.

Emotional/Psychological states that may affect self-efficacy and esteem:
Anxiety: a negative emotional state characterized by nervousness, worry, and apprehension and associated with arousal
Stress: the relationship between a person and the environment that is appraised as taxing personal resources and threatening well-being (imbalance between demand and capability)

Ways to combat anxiety and stress[10]**:**
Psychological skills training:
-Goal-setting
-Relaxation

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[8] Williams, J. M., & M. B. Anderson. 1998. "Psychosocial antecedents of sport injury: Review and critique of the stress and injury model." *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 10.1 (1998): 5-25.
[9] Peter Lovatt on dancers' self-esteem | Dance UK TV (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2015 from http://www.danceuktv.com/peter-lovatt-dancers-self-esteem
[10] Weinberg, R. S., and D. Gould. 2011. *Foundations of sport and exercise psychology.* Human Kinetics. Kindle file.

-Imagery
-Self-talk* (focus of session): a person's internal dialogue, which can be positive and motivational or negative and demotivating. Turn negative self-talk (known as cognitive interference) into positive self-talk by using cues that help you focus, maintain confidence, and stay calm in stressful situations.