

Every Body Holds a Story: Empowerment through Social-Somatics and Community

Dance within a K-12 Dance Education Program

by

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A Bound Document Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

Approved December 2014 by the  
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2015

## ABSTRACT

Every *body* holds a story. Those stories are rich with physical movements to be expressed, and through the physical expression comes self-awareness and transformation. A partnership between Arizona State University and Arcadia High School was the vehicle in which I implemented a curriculum built around somatic experiences and communal beliefs and values. The framework for this investigated curriculum teaches students' embodiment of self, tolerance and acceptance in collaboration, life skills through applied constructivist principles, and increased critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This research involved somatic exercises enabling participants to have insight into natural moving patterns, how such patterns relate to others and outside environments. Research concluded with collective dialogue around individual and shared experiences. I worked twice per week with a choreography class with a four unit curriculum. From varying modes of assessment (e.g., one-on-one interviews, group discussions, journals, surveys, ongoing observations) students' responses to this type of curriculum ranged from excitement and curiosity to frustrating and provoking. Although these areas of research are not necessarily new to the field of dance and education, gaps in dialogue, published work, and reliable resources prove these theories and methods are still valued and necessary. This research demonstrates the imperative demand in dance education for deeper connections of self-discovery.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank God. Nothing was possible in my own strength. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Professor Becky Dyer for the support of my MFA study and research, for her patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my MFA study.

I would like to thank the rest of my committee, Dr. Pegge Vissicaro and Elizabeth Johnson, for their encouragement, insightful comments, and challenging and thought-provoking questions.

My sincere thanks also goes to Professor Pam Sterling, Dr. Stephani Woodson, and Mary Stephens for their support, direction, and leadership in my Certificate in *Socially Engaged Art Practices*.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their continuous spiritual guidance, encouragement, love, and support in this journey.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction and Orientation of Study

Challenging and transformative experiences in dance education have led me to realize a need for further research and knowledge related to the impact of somatically oriented curricular frameworks within secondary dance education contexts. I was first introduced to somatic practices in fall 2007, and subsequently, re-introduced to somatic principles through my graduate program at Arizona State University in 2012. As I investigated exercises and experience, within my undergraduate dance classes, I touched the surface of how somatic knowledge and embodiment improves physical muscle patterning, body awareness, and integration of body, mind, and spirit. Further explorations within my graduate studies have deepened my understanding of somatics. Somatic awareness has offered me relief in my incorporation of natural movement patterning into technical aspects of dance. Through personal awareness my artistic process has improved; I am more effective in my physical training and my sense of Self has increased.

Transformation in my training and education opened up conversation to a more social-somatic viewpoint, leading my interest to examine how the world we live in informs not only how we move but how we hold ourselves, what we believe about ourselves, and how we, in turn, project ourselves back into the world. Emersion into a variety of community dance opportunities started to pin my eyes into new belief patterns on who is allowed to dance, where dance takes place, why dance happens, and more importantly, how dance is used within socially engaged settings. Beautiful collaborations in community settings further drove my interests in socially engaged art. Teaching in



various settings has committed me more than ever in discovering various strategies and pedagogical approaches, which address the needs of today's adolescences. Such progressive thinking is what leads me into exploring new frameworks of curriculum building, implementation, and assessment.

My research is supported from the ideas of critical pedagogy and constructivism, social-somatics, community dance values, community theatre games, and multiple intelligences (MIs). From Mezirow's model of transformative learning to Michael Rohd's (1998) and Augusto Boal's (1992) philosophy in playing games, previous philosophical theories lend support. Howard Gardner's (2006) theory of MIs is a pedagogical approach widely known and used, yet imperative to the study. Gardner's (2006) change from asking "How smart are you?" to "How are you smart?" shifts cognitive abilities to allow for proper assessment, question of learning abilities, and what he calls "intelligence possible, a narrative of the ways in which learners are capable of demonstrating intelligence." (Warburton, 2003, p. 7) This thesis is based on values of community dance, which draw from established approaches of collaborative inquiry, participatory research, and constructivist learning approaches.

Critical pedagogy, described by Paulo Freire (1993), as consciousness of individual connection to society and self, provided deeper inquiry into connection of social-somatics and education. Just as Freire, Piaget, and Brooks, believed in critical pedagogy, and constructivism, the classroom set up reflected similar values, where a constructivist's approach to learning was pertinent to self-knowledge and understanding.

## **Setting of Problem**

Although bringing in an individual agenda is doable for certain outreach programs and projects, true somatic understandings, community building, and hopefully healing through a collective learned experience, is dependent on a successful curriculum that incorporates a facilitative role, effective exercises, and realistic assessment. Facilitation guides participants in pedagogical approaches where they are just as vital as the facilitator to the overall outcome. Collaboration between Arizona State University and Arcadia High School was the vehicle in which I implemented a curriculum built around somatic experiences and communal beliefs and values. The population I worked with was a high school choreography class, twice per week, for 10 weeks. For this collaboration, I have created, implemented, and assessed a dance curriculum fostered from a somatic foundation, investigating communal frameworks in compliance with Arizona State dance standards.

This research involved somatic exercises, enabling participants' insight into natural moving patterns, how such patterns relate to others, and outside environments, concluding with collective dialogue around individual and shared experiences. I have investigated how to design, facilitate, and assess a learning framework that is about students gaining self-understanding through social-somatic and communal approaches within dance education.

## **Rationale**

My desire in this work was to help others embody a healthier way of moving, learning, and being in the world. It would enhance my pedagogical research to work with a range of movers, including those with little or no technical training as well as those

with substantial dance experience. Movement has always been healing for me. Experiencing freedom in creativity, as well as viewing and approaching life is imperative; therefore, expanding the range of accessibility is a necessity. Thus far, I have only seen a small demographic that has access to somatic-based learning. Since learning about somatics in my personal movement embodiment, I have found the execution of dance technique more effective in the longevity of my career, personal acceptance of myself in the world and an enriched understanding for movement to promote well being. Somatically based concepts and experience privileges should not just be kept for collegiate, technical dancers.

Every body holds a story. Those stories are rich with physical movements to be expressed, and through the physical expression comes self-awareness and transformation. To provide an open, trusting space for such exploration, the leadership role of a facilitator was imperative. In a constructivist approach, every student is responsible for his or her own body, learning, and growth. By taking responsibility, they are no longer passive in their education, but empowered in finding themselves as students, learners, and movers.

### **Significance of the Study**

The opportunity for K-12 children to gain self-awareness, collaborative skills, and engaged social learning is few and far between. My experiences teaching in these settings for several years has led me to believe that there are simply not enough educators in schools emphasizing somatics and community dance. K-12 institutions' focus lies in passing state-standardized tests, whereas my work equips younger generations for empowerment in their education through a socio-somatic, communal lens, in hopes of

taking them beyond the four walls of the classroom, toward building more effective citizens for stronger societies.

Classrooms today in the United States are generated from an idea planted decades ago, where students are being told what to do, rather than encouraged to investigate, explore, and question; personal thinking is devalued, instead of honored and appreciated (Brooks & Brooks, 1999, p. 7). I agree with the authors of *In Search of Understanding; The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*, that the “construction of new knowledge is not as highly valued as the ability to demonstrate mastery of conventionally accepted understandings” (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p. 7). Due to this fixed existence of pedagogical methodology, or lack thereof, my research challenges pre-set notions of how students obtain existing information, learn new knowledge, and embody understanding in the relationship of the two. The framework built around this investigated curriculum teaches students embodiment of the Self, tolerance and acceptance in collaboration, life skills through constructivism, and increased critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Personal interviews, conversations, and observations with educators and directors, have led me to question whether somatically grounded experiences are offered to adolescences in dance education, forming an objective to my work to provide these opportunities.

Unfortunately there is a limited demographic that participates in somatic practices, due to varying rationales, but to extend that to reach a younger population was a major motivation for my research. The significance of producing a curriculum enables support for educators and artists in search of incorporating similar ideas into their programs as well. Not much literature currently exists on social-somatic approaches to

teaching in secondary settings. The link that seems to be missing in secondary dance education is dialogue about utilizing semi-structured approaches to curriculum that stem from pedagogical constructivist approaches. This research has proven effective in some groups of K-12 students, but might also serve those looking for a more concrete product to varying approaches, exercises, and dialogue in how to bridge the gap between aesthetics and collaboration.

In my own pedagogical practices, designing this type of curriculum increased my understanding toward socio-somatic applicable exercises and techniques within K-12 education. My pedagogical impact to the educational field brings heightened awareness to student-centered environments. Using grounded theory within a constructivist approach improved my pedagogical methods and advanced the implementation and assessment portion of the curriculum.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The reason I am doing this research is to develop a curriculum based in socio-somatics and community dance practices. Because I am not a psychologist or dance therapist, I take full responsibility of the fact that my research is first and foremost a reflection on how I built, implemented, and assessed exercises. Results and analysis are strictly based on participants' feedback, journal reflections, interviews, and documentation of sessions, along with my observations of the students. As a result of my efforts, a How-To guide will evolve in building and assessing a curriculum. This will serve the field in many ways for those looking to connect with community and social-somatic dance aspects, yet are unsure how to start or what to include in their curriculum.

## **Statement of Problem**

I investigated the relevance of embodied experiences and identity construction within the context of secondary dance education. Data results were largely determined by values of teaching and how I approached learning instruction. My research emphasized teaching and learning relationships and how this shaped and created a learning community thriving in interactive roles. From the perspective of a constructivist learning theory, I explored the following:

1. How to create a framework addressing both social-somatics and collaborative knowledge;
2. How the content in the curriculum fosters embodied self-discovery and identity building;
3. What values and processes from socially engaged art practices and community dance might support this curriculum;
4. What characteristics of personal growth within dance learning and how might growth best occur through social-somatics;
5. How to design learned experiences grounded in community values and draw from social-somatic practices; and
6. What pedagogical theories can be drawn from my research.

## **Limitations**

The primary limitation of this study consisted of the pedagogical methods already set in place by the original teacher. Because this is taking place within an educational institution, there are protocols, rules, regulations, behaviors, and expectations toward the students that hindered or contradicted parts of my curriculum. From time to time, the lack

of actual engagement affected learning and full participation. Despite those limitations, there were always new moments to be discovered and altered. Restrictions from administrators, teachers, and working with a variety of ages, are among other limitations beyond my control, but which realistically happened. The biggest limitation in this research is the cultural style of each school, and how students thus far have learned how to learn. There are habits students have formed due to the values and beliefs of education and community.

A related limitation that affected the study was the reactions of the participants. Going in with lesson plans that depended upon the participation of the students left room for gaps in their progression of collective and individual knowledge. I am aware that their involvement was paramount to the success of the project, yet their participation in the beginning was not fully entrusted to me. There were pre-set biases brought in, which affected participants' perspective and ultimately the lesson plans.

The study was also limited by structural restrictions. The first delimitation is the restraint of time; I choose to limit this study to the time of eight weeks. Although this gave us a finite amount of time to work, it enabled me to focus on a smaller set of data that would be manageable to analyze and interpret. The time that the students and I did have was focused on the content within each lesson plan, even though many areas of exploration arose. Moreover, a delimitation lay within the ethics of this work. Many factors, like race, class, religion, gender, political standing, and culture are indirect foundations with which individuals walk into the classroom. Even though students desired to focus more heavily off-topic, boundaries were set, carefully reverting focus back to the topic at hand. Though a related research area, movement therapy was not my

main focus. I looked through the lens of a facilitator. This curriculum was to provide a safe space of self-discovery, not to diagnose or fix anything that came from investigations.

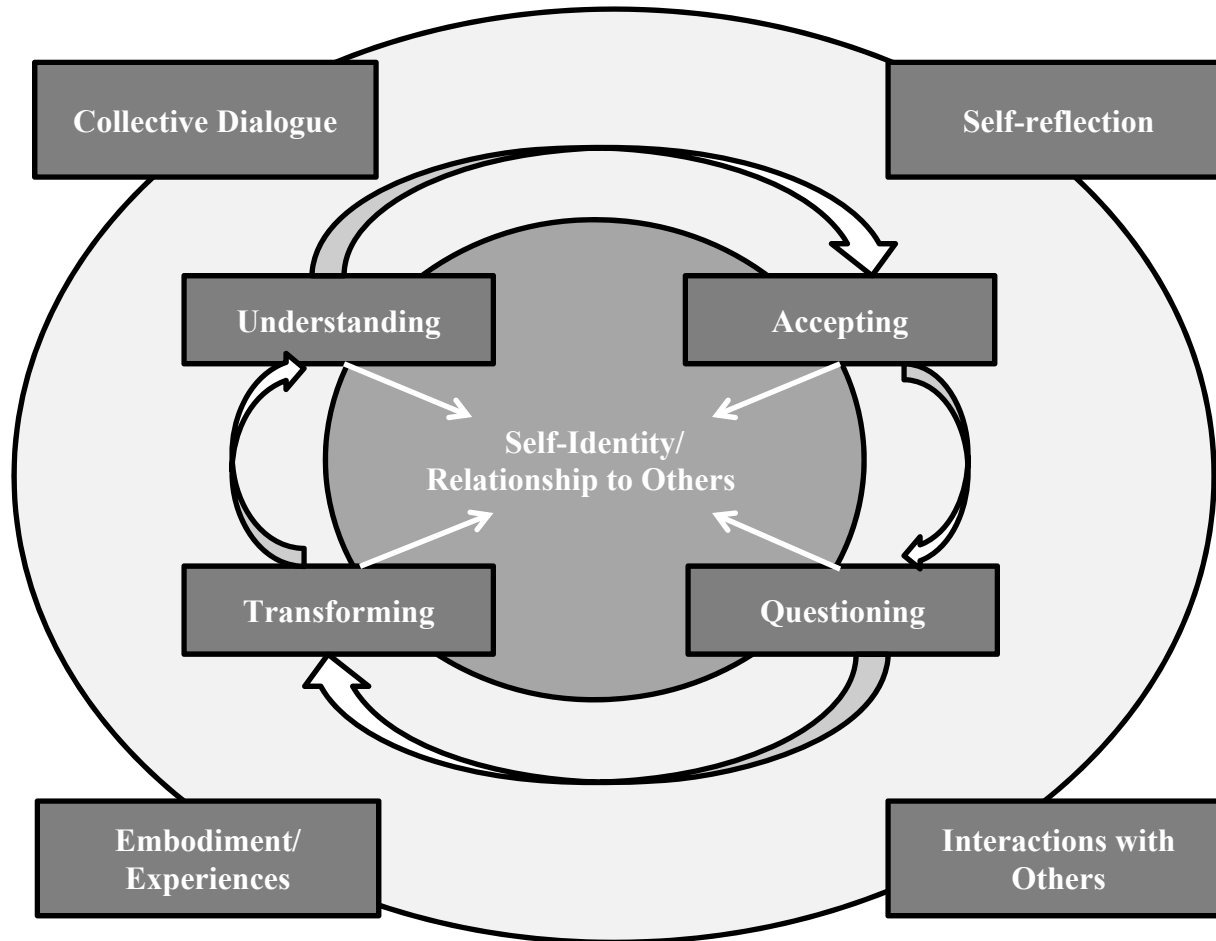
Finally, as opposed to entering the classroom with a totally open agenda, I delimited the study by creating a structured pedagogical framework that encouraged encourage student choice and accountability within it. Although it was based on a student-centered and constructivist philosophy, I designed specific lesson plans that I will approach from a flexible point of view.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Theoretical Perspectives Informing Research**

The philosophical strands that support this research draw from perspectives set forth by pedagogical theorists, such as Freire, Piaget, and Brooks, who developed critical pedagogy and constructivism, social-somatic scholarship, pedagogical theory, socially engaged/community art practices, MIs, and community theatre games. Figure 1 illustrates the ideas that formed the basis of my inquiry.



*Figure 1.* Conceptual model guiding the present inquiry of *meaning-making through movement*, toward self-identity as a function of relationship to others.

As Figure 1 shows, covering all elements of this model is the overarching theme of experiential learning, in which making meaning of one's life is the larger framework and objective. Moving inward toward the main objective of self-identity and the development of relationships with others, four tools help generate certain processes that were used within the curriculum: embodied exercises, self-reflection, interactions with others, and collective dialogue.

Just as philosopher Jacques Ranciere proposed a community of narrators and translators engage each other in dialogue, the classroom's collective dialogue parallels such ideals. These ideals fall under a socially engaged art practice model, in which "empowerment, criticality, and sustainability among the participants" are frameworks to this modality of art and education (Helguera, 2011, p. 12). Ranciere's ideas resonated with my work, such that interactions with others are a tool supported by socially engaged, community art practices, the entire existence of which relies on the dependence of participants with one another. Nonetheless, according to New York-based artist and community practitioner Pablo Helguera (2011), "there is no complete agreement as to what constitutes a meaningful interaction" (Helguera, 2011, p. 13). I disagree with this belief. In a secondary dance setting, meaningful interaction would be building of community including varying perspectives and ideas, such that students gain insight into knowledge outside of themselves.

As a leading activist, teacher, and practitioner of community theatre, Michael Rohd's (1998) perspective and ideas about creating a safe space that supports positive moods of dialogue inspired the group's working processes. I built on Rohd's (1998) work in game-playing in meaningful student engagement and building trust. For example, one

exercise that focuses on energy exchange between individuals is “circle dash”. This game creates group problem-solving, verbal/non-verbal communication, and fosters focus on collective tasks. In the field of theatre for social change, Augusto Boal’s (1992) book *Games for Actors and Non-actors* was another support I regularly executed in lesson plans. Used within my specific population of secondary education dance students, these games supported creativity, fostered trust, and expanded collective dialogue.

Each level of the model shown in Figure 1 informs the next, each synergistically building upon the next, flowing through a continual cycle where personal embodied power, self-understanding, interdependence, and responsibility to others are investigated. The levels of modeling that contributing to investigating self-identity and in relation to others, include *questioning*, *understanding*, *accepting*, and *transforming*. Each of these processes is supported and examined by existing theorists, practitioners, and scholars that aided within my research.

### **Questioning**

My facilitation and pedagogical approaches give room for and encourage students to explore personal questions about fundamental, underlying patterns of behavior, attitudes towards learning experiences, and more specifically, artistic dance movement practices. Instead of using a banking educational system, the classroom inhabited approaches similar to Paulo Freire, an author and theorist. Freire’s (1993) book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* supports critical pedagogy as a progressive method and avenue toward freedom from oppression. This oppression, interpreted in many ways, is reflected in the habitual patterns participants continue to execute in their education, learning, and life from. Just as Freire’s critical thinking is used for liberation, and John Dewey’s

progressive education reform is centered on problem-solving and social responsibility, the community in which I worked with exists as a democratic organism. Educational and social reformer John Dewey's theories supported me in facilitating students' developing knowledge and social skills that they would use inside and outside of the classroom.

Positive social interdependence, defined by social psychologist Morton Deutsch (1998), a social psychologist, as the responsibility taken on by the students for contribution to group knowledge, informed the questions posed by myself and the participants throughout the research process. In the same field as to Deutsch, Kurt Lewin's (2008) findings parallel my research of building a curriculum centered around social-somatic and community art values in proving the importance of understanding the relationship among group members to be successful and carry out learning goals. These foundational educational theories create an atmosphere within learning where personal and communal questions are the crux of social-somatic understanding, lending support toward this curriculum.

### **Understanding**

Building on experiences of questioning, students were led to greater understanding. *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classroom*, written by professors Jacqueline Grennon Brooks and Martin G. Brooks (1999), examples of effective/ineffective constructivist classrooms aided me in facilitating students' toward meaning-making of their worlds. This research explores the truths and prior knowledge of Ann Cooper Albright (2009), dancer/practitioner/scholar, that through somatics, there is a more "mindfulness way of being" where participants are "more aware of self and other" (Albright, 2009, p. 149). Inspired by Albright, my research created

such an environment where participant's ways of being is grounded in social-somatic exercises, reflection, and collective dialogue. Due to professor and dancer Rebecca Enghauser's (2007) article "The Quest for an Ecosomatic Approach to Dance Pedagogy," pedagogical methods utilized throughout the curriculum helped participants to push to find deeper meanings of connectivity with others. Complimentary to Enghauser's position that somatics brings a "new light on how to perceive dance", projecting from a social-somatic approach was one of my primary focuses. This awareness "may be key in sharpening the dance learner's senses, providing a vehicle for transforming the direction of dance training as a whole" (Enghauser, 2007, p. 80). Just as Linda Hartley promotes individuals' limited ability to find full movements within their bodies, I looked to expand boundaries invariably placed upon creativity, movement, and dance education.

### **Accepting**

Once students have built understanding, they are able to choose acceptance or rejection. Accepting understandings and knowledge also involved rejecting those that are no longer relevant or personally useful. Acceptance is a choice; it is not just about what you choose to accept, but noticing what is rejected. Space is required in social-somatic community settings where imposing knowledge is not allowed. Instead, support is found in the inquiry of self, relationship with and responsibilities to others. This learning framework strives toward understandings and aims for freedom in acceptance. A practical, and key support in such settings is the breath. Principle editor of *Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* and Professor Amanda Williamson (2009), author of "Formative Support and Connection: Somatic Movement Dance Education in Community Practice", notes how support in, with, and through breath is the "premise and

discerning feature of somatic movement dance education” (Williamson, 2009, p. 31). Often central in community practice, the “felt and lived experiences of breathing” grounds our bodies and experiences to others and self (Williamson, 2009, p. 36). This involves incorporating the breath, as grounding to the earth, floor and others. Breath pivots this curriculum into building support for the moving body.

We are beings in a world, constantly in relationship with the people and environment surrounding us. It is through our bodies, that we make or break contract with our world. Our bodies are ourselves in this world; they are the source of our knowledge. (Hayes, 2007, p. 2)

From acceptance of our worlds, in making meaning through our somatic experiences, change ignites transformation, moving creativity beyond our limiting views. Honoring scholar, dancer, professor, and activist Anna Halprin’s (2000) words of “mindful expression,” the movement within this curriculum became a “vehicle for insight and change” (Halprin, 2003, p. 18). As defined by Martha Eddy, somatic movement therapist, a somatic approach to dancing “exists when awareness, reflection, experiential investigation and even acknowledgment of feelings are engaged in a holistic context” (Enghauser, 2007, p. 82). Social-somatics is the awareness and consideration of social factors of environment to individual being and learning, and then how such awareness is projected back out into the world of relationships. Similarly, I discovered opportunities for acceptance of self-identity through a social-somatic and communal lens. These lenses are the basis from which my research stemmed.

## **Transforming**

For transformation to occur, one has to look at the whole realm of what is being accepted and rejected. The changes in self-understanding lead to a revision of one's belief systems and actions. Just as sociologist and professor in the field of education, theorist Jack Mezirow stated that students must engage in critical reflection, which in turn leads to transformative thinking and being, such experiences were offered. Within transformative learning, students' meaning schema (i.e., specific beliefs, attitudes, emotional reactions) change, segueing shifts in perspective.

Relating to such shifts is French art critic Bourriaud's definition of relational art and aesthetics. His observations of art, stemming from human relations and social context, reside within transformative theories. The institution where my thesis resides holds preconceived norms, ideas, and concepts of the aesthetics of dance education, training, and performance. Bourriaud's observations around interpretations of relational art supported my research by defining transformation as challenging set notions, attitudes, and thoughts about art, specifically in dance movement. Another theorist within the transformative learning field that brought insight to this study was Etienne Wenger (2000). Learning constructed among a community parallels his beliefs of situated learning. I used Wenger's views on the construction of learning to aid in making meaning of dance and dialogue on student's ideas of art.

My challenges as a facilitator were the abilities to guide participants in asking themselves who they were and how they construct meaning. They were lead to consider how those understandings were related to acceptance of their self-identity and were encouragement towards self-transformation. Stated so beautifully by Helen Keller's



teacher, Anne Sullivan, my interest fell under the same inquiry as an educator; “The greatest problem I shall have to solve is how to discipline and facilitate her without breaking her spirit” (Gardner, 2006, p. 15). It is in the spirit, the natural findings of true Self, how that Self is constructed and destructed, that sparked my passion toward building such a curriculum for a population clothed in preset notions about dance education and training.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Methodology**

My methodology involved developing and implementing a curriculum designed specifically for secondary dance students at Arcadia High School in Phoenix, Arizona. I began my curriculum development by reflecting on my own meaningful experiences learning dance and contemplating the specific needs of the community of learners I would be teaching for this project.

#### **Process Overview**

Development of this curriculum started with an overview of personal meaningful experiences. Knowing that my time frame with participants was eight weeks long, I organized the schedule to include four main Units, each of which lasted two weeks, with four lesson plans per Unit. Table 1 shows an outlined schedule of each lesson within the curriculum. Full lesson plan examples per unit are available in Appendix A. I utilized Bloom's taxonomy as a foundation for writing the objectives (Heer, 2009).

Table 1

*Curriculum Template*

Unit	Main Goal	Lesson	Objective	Understanding Goals
<p>1: Introduction to Laban Movement Analysis (LMA)/Somatics</p>	<p>Students will gain better understanding of personal movement patterning through the embodiment of LMA, while building community in the use of games, collective dialogue, group exercises, and partner problem-solving. Their previous knowledge about somatics, community dance, and personal expression in performativity art will aid in the deeper investigation of what LMA is, and how community dance values are portrayed and executed within a dance classroom setting.</p>	<p>(1) Building Background and LMA Body Categories Part I: Breath, Core-Distal, Head-Tail</p>	<p>Starting our work with a game will build trust, community, and a safe space to create, explore, and inquire about personal movement patterning within LMA Body categories. Discussing background of somatics and community dance values, students' understanding will lend support for further investigation as the unit progresses.</p>	<p>-Students will start to explore LMA Body categories "Simon Says." -Students' previous knowledge will spring-board them into new areas of somatics and community dance.</p>
		<p>(2) LMA Body Categories Part II: Upper/Lower, Body-Half, Cross-Lateral</p>	<p>Investigation further with LMA Body Categories, student's abilities to choreograph dance phrases will expand in movement vocabulary, as well as their comprehension of each body category. Working individually before gathering into groups, students have the opportunity to explore personal interests using an LMA lens.</p>	<p>-Students will increase their movement vocabulary through LMA frameworks. -Students' comprehension of LMA Body categories will increase.</p>
		<p>(3) Somatic and Community Jeopardy Part I</p>	<p>Students will gain better insight into personal movement patterning by choosing LMA body categories to investigate in choreographic phrases. Building community through group work and discussions will be performed throughout the lesson – from the beginning game to the final group teachings. Students will also gain deeper comprehension into somatics and community dance through a game of jeopardy.</p>	<p>-Students will understand, experience, and embody LMA Body categories in personal movement patterning. -Students will gain observational skills through viewing others. -Students' understanding of somatics and community dance will increase through the use of games.</p>
		<p>(4) Moving through One's Body</p>	<p>Students will increase their problem solving skills and ability to collaborate in creating choreography through group phrase work. These phrases are to be inspired from LMA Body categories. Show and tell of final phrases will result in collective feedback, and an intermediate level of subjective viewpoints.</p>	<p>-Students will be able to explain and demonstrate LMA Body categories in everyday movement and in dance. -Students' collaborative and problem-solving skills will increase.</p>

Unit	Main Goal	Lesson	Objective	Understanding Goals
2: Exploration of Self	Allow space and time for students to explore whom they are, their interests, beliefs, likes/dislikes, to embody in/through movement, as well as incorporate into a final choreographic dance performance.	(1) <i>I AM...</i> statements/Stations	Students will gain insight into Self and personal movement choices via using different forms of art (e.g., poems, pictures, writings, music). Students will be able to analyze how different cultures influence dance and how personal choices are made.	-Students will integrate other art forms into choreography. -Students will describe personal choices in creating movement by analyzing how students' <i>culture</i> influences dance.
		(2) Time, Space, and Energy in moving stories	LMA concepts and choreographic elements of time, space, and energy in "moving stories" across the floor will empower students' learning by utilizing their voice in incorporating their exploration of time, space, and energy in improvisational dance.	-Students will gain empowerment in individual learning by taking charge of their personal stories, choices in incorporating their exploration of time, space, and energy in improvisational dance. -Students will be able to demonstrate and describe personal stories while multitasking in cognitive skills.
		(3) Privilege line: Creating a piece from within	Starting to bridge individuality with community, students will gain insight into others' similarities and differences.	-Students will expand knowledge of Self in relation to key characteristic words. -Students will enhance creative processes from personal and group interests in character words.
		(4) Manipulation of stories: Choosing to make choices	Students will manipulate parts of a combination to incorporate time, space, and energy.	-Students will have a greater comprehension on personal likes in time, space, and energy. -Students will strengthen their voices through choice in manipulations.
3: Social-somatics: Relationship to Others	Students will apply personal somatic findings from Unit 2 into collaboration with others, attributing to the influence of social surroundings on their embodiment of Self.	(1) Body Map	Students will organize and analyze thoughts of how their social surroundings in the classroom affect their choices as dancers, students, and collaborators.	-From answering questions on a personal body map, students will discover how their views are shaped from their surroundings. -Students will be able to recognize how the Self and others are connected. -Students will implement findings into choreographic work toward the final performance.
		(2) Body Attitudes	Differentiating body postures along with viewpoints on those postures, students will connect their body attitude to the stereotype of their social worlds and inner thoughts of each posture, allowing for permission in and of personal body posture.	-Students will demonstrate comprehension of different body postures. -Students will infer connections with personal stereotypes of others and their own posture, analyzing how they hold themselves and possible reasons or explanations why. -Students will recognize their own catalysts regarding their body attitudes.
		(3) Move to Touch	Recalling natural movement patterns in dance, students will participate in partner improvisation, giving restraints and freedom to move through touch and initiation of certain body parts. Bridging connections from LMA body categories and social-somatics, students will gain	-Students will apply LMA body categories to improvisational touch exercises to find deeper connections to embodied patterning. -In collaboration with their partner, students will discuss and evaluate certain areas that felt free to move,

Unit	Main Goal	Lesson	Objective	Understanding Goals
			insight into deeper reasons why they enjoy certain movements versus others in a collaborative setting.	whereas others felt restricted. -Students will be able to articulate reasons regarding why certain body parts, body attitudes, and categories were challenging or enlightening.
		(4) Round Robin	Executing a game of Round Robin, students will expand choreographic tools in a group setting and infer to empowerment of voice in choreographic choice.	-Students will be able to work collaboratively in creating dance phrases. -Students will be empowered through making choices in choreography.
4: Connections—Choreography in Relation to Somatics	Connecting previous findings in somatics, social-somatics, community dance, and choreographic tools, students will bridge personal findings with relationships to others for use in choreographing or manipulating the class's final performance piece.	(1) Connect the Dots	Moving forward in creating a final performance piece, students are asked to create a dance based on the connection and interpretations of their past experience thus far. They are to identify artistic choices throughout the choreographic process.	-Students will interpret and identify personal reactions to their experiences thus far in the semester. -Students will be able to explain their aesthetic choices toward their dance piece. -Students will evaluate their choreographic process via reflecting on past experiences.
		(2) Expressive Wall	Using the class's expressive wall (i.e., a place for thoughts, feelings, questions throughout the semester), students will encompass community in making the wall come to life in whatever way they interpret it artistically.	-Students will reflect on their previous thoughts, feelings, and questions to community the wall into action. -Students will interpret other art forms into a dance.
		(3) Jeopardy Part II	Students will review material from Units 1-3 through a game of jeopardy. Via game-playing, students' abilities to work together and tap into banks of knowledge will enhance. This final game will integrate information across Units for one last culminating experience.	-Students will utilize community dance values in inclusiveness to work as a group in a jeopardy game. -Students' understanding of somatics, social-somatics, and community dance will be articulated via the use of a jeopardy game. -Students will continue to build community while working together in teams to answer quiz questions.
		(4) Artistic Statement	After reviewing beginning assignments of <i>What is dance?</i> and daily journals, students will begin to write their artistic statement: <i>What type of artist are you in today's world?</i>	-Students will be able to culminate a semester's worth of understanding through a final assignment. -Students' transformation of <i>what was</i> to <i>what is</i> will enhance from reviewing their beginning thoughts to their final reflections in the class. -Students will have clarity to articulate themselves in dance through movement and in a community setting.

Pulling from theatre professor Pam Sterling's course at Arizona State University, *Theatre for Social Change*, each lesson began with a one-word check-in. Focusing the group and automatically engaging students, I relied heavily on games which built trust and created a safe environment to work. An important theory I kept in mind from the beginning was creating a true student-centered learning environment. Relying on community artist Stephani Woodson's (2014) insights into power structures already upheld in U.S culture and society, approaches to facilitation were repeatedly reviewed and analyzed throughout each class. As Woodson (2014) stated about the US American mainstream values, "adults automatically have more power and more rights than young people;" therefore, having the importance of awareness of these power dynamics is a must when working with youth (p. 21).

To maintain a student-centered classroom, where certain power dynamics were closely observed, I started offering options as to how the class exercises would allow them to choose what they were more interested in while I planned around the main topics we investigated. For example, one lesson was about grounding the Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) concepts previously learned. They had three options as to what exercises they wanted to explore, with myself supplying the content in each exercise. This opened up the environment for a much more conducive approach to a student-centered classroom. MIs research reveals a concept I have read about, explored and discussed in a number of my educational courses. The MIs concept helped me to build exercises in the curriculum. Just as Edward Warburton (2003) and Howard Gardner (2006) offered insight, suggestions, and explanation to utilizing MIs, lesson objectives from each unit included varying types of intelligences. Taking from Warburton's (2003) article

“Intelligence Past, Present, and Possible,” I used the eight MIs (i.e., linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist intelligence) as a guide in building embodied exercises and group work.

After several months of curriculum development and eight weeks of instruction, the project culminated in the creation and performance of a dance work. Every exercise built upon movement toward this performance. Keeping in mind my larger goal of investigation, these four units fall under categories of *Somatic and Community Dance Introduction, Exploration of Self, Social-somatics, and Connections*.

### **Curricular Units Developed and Taught**

**Unit 1: Somatic and community dance introduction.** The unit Somatic and Community Dance Introduction included my background as a dancer, student, and investigator in this research, explanation of a student-centered classroom, what values/beliefs are encompassed in community dance, and instruction on what somatics is, with examples of where somatics is found in our everyday lives. Because of my graduate degree’s heavy emphasis on LMA, my starting point was an introduction to the LMA body category. This gave students a basic understanding of how their bodies are organized and connected with the ability to embody somatics on an introductory level.

One exercise that accumulated through a couple lessons was the embodiment of the LMA body patterns; breath, core-distal, head-tail, body half, upper- lower, and cross lateral, in choreographing movement phrases. Students added onto the movement phrases in groups of four, and shared with the whole class. These phrases were then used to string together a dance piece for Arcadia High School’s Dance Show in November. I felt the beginning unit was imperative in setting the tone for my facilitation style, expectations

from the students (and their expectations of me), and their power to make personal meanings for themselves throughout the whole curriculum. Processes I used in making personal meaning came from Jacqueline and Martin Brooks's (1999) Book, *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*. I found it extremely helpful when planning lessons to follow Brook's five overarching principles in keeping a constructivist classroom: (a) teachers seek and value student's points of view, (b) activities challenge students' suppositions, (c) teachers pose problems of emerging relevance, teachers build lessons around primary concepts and "big" ideas, and (d) teachers assess student learning in the context of daily teaching (Brooks & Brooks, 1999, pp. ix-x).

The other part of Unit 1, community dance values/beliefs/embodiment, came in the form of "show and tell" of choreographed movement phrases, and our communal expression wall: butcher paper, colored pens, and the freedom to express whatever, however, whenever, showing differences of every student's voice, while holding a communal presence in class. An inclusive term, community cultural development (CCD), originally developed by Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard, and used frequently by Stephanie Woodson (2014), expresses that building community is within the "collaboration of others to express identity, concerns and aspirations through the arts" (p. 31).

In line with this definition, I looked at the activities that did just this, and created further opportunities for CCD to occur. Leaning heavily on Diane Amans's (2010) book, *An Introduction to Community Dance Practice*, this process-oriented practice provide foundational values of community dance; focus on the participant, collaborative



relationships, inclusive practice, opportunities for positive change, and celebration of diversity (Amans, 2010, p. 6). As she states, the importance of this work is “all about the values, over the ‘who’” (Amans, 2010, p. 15). One example of how these values played out in class was during show and tell of phrase work with the whole class. Discussion led toward valuing everyone’s opinion in what they view in each other’s work while posing questions about how each group worked collaboratively.

**Unit 2: Exploration of Self.** Having a base of LMA, with a foundation of a community dance environment, the class ventured into exploring the individual Self. I found the book *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*, by Steph Lawler (2008), interesting in explaining in theories of storytelling about ourselves as a way of forming identities. These ideas became my springboard for how the curriculum’s tools/exercises were utilized, discussed, and connected in this unit. Although I disagree with some statements, such as identity being something separate from our social worlds, I support Lawler’s (2008) belief that *how* we see ourselves in stories we tell others and ourselves, all shape a part of ourselves that we carry throughout the world (p. 12). Through examination of each participant’s ‘story’, exploration of the Self began, and grew as the through-line in creating movement, collaborations, and connections.

This unit started with an “*I AM*” poem. The structure of the poem was given to students as they filled in the blanks, such as, “*I AM* [Use two descriptive words for your personality]” and ‘stations’ exercise; stations are created throughout the room, involving instructions at each one. One station involves singing a childhood song, whereas others involved creating gestures for certain lines from the *I AM* poem, moving out a memorable

story from an individuals' past, and embodiment of characters culminating in the class final performance piece.

The embodiments of larger concepts of somatics grounded students' understandings and created possibilities and journal writings and investigations into themselves. For example, a couple journal entries included these prompts: *How do your impressions of your 'self' show up in your movement choices? What challenges did you find in these exercises? How can your experiences support your movement choices and choreographic aesthetics?* Each lesson concluded with an individual free-write in their journals, which was shared in small groups for collective dialogue, or as a cohesive community. Still accumulating all movement toward our final dance piece, students were led through show-and-tell of phrase work to find common themes among each other to create the storyline for their dance pieces.

**Unit 3: Social-somatics.** A homework assignment on somatics at the conclusion of Unit 2 introduced Unit 3, which was focused on *social*-somatics. Opening their perspectives from Self to others, students gathered pictures of three different body postures to describe in a few words their initial reactions/judgments to each posture, along with their explanations. The theatre game by Michael Rohd (1998), *Cover the Space*, explained social-somatics in how relationship between self and others affect an individual's being. The game's main goal is to walk around the room, making sure there is little to no floor space not being covered. Here, guided questions encourage students to expand their focus from just themselves to their classmates, noticing other's walking patterns, eventually working together to cover the space. As the game progresses,

relationships are created in which one individual is being followed while another is following—all without letting each other know who is who.

Segueing from the beginning lessons of what social-somatics entail, one foundational lesson was the ‘permission’ class (see Appendix A, Unit 3). Students related their previous homework of postures and body attitude definitions to themselves and others, being prompted to question reasons to grant or reject permission of movement in one’s bodies. Other embodied experiences included tools from Liz Lerman, Elizabeth Johnson, and Suzanne Lacy’s work, involving improvisational mirroring, choreographing exercise Round Robin/equivalents (e.g., putting a movement/gesture to every word in a sentence, accumulation of movement into phrase work), and community breath/space/time/energy investigations. Having a stronger sense of their classmates, we started working more on piecing together previous phrase work—which led to the beginning stages of their dance piece. With the theme being one of “crazy/insane asylum”, movements were manipulated to show the intention of the piece.

As part of my assessment, I started conducted one-on-one interviews with students during this unit. Those who wanted to participate met during lunchtime to discuss their process thus far and to provide feedback regarding the curriculum exercises and my facilitation skills. To make sure any biases were not being supported, a range of students were asked to participate in these interviews.

**Unit 4: Connections.** *Connections* was an obvious ending-unit title for this curriculum. By this point, students had learned the basic categories of LMA and social-somatics; embodied community dance values; and were revisiting some of the earlier exercises done to make meaning of themselves, their discoveries, and their lingering

inquiries. Focus on choreographic tools and elements in relation to somatics and community dance created a foundation for this part of the curriculum. Lesson plans centered on progressively manipulating their dance in progress to incorporate level changes, different tempos, retrograde, repetition, varying energies, transitions, and formations. Students made choreographic choices were made to further communicate the piece's intent which was a group trapped in an insane asylum. The *I AM* poems, an end survey, and an artistic manifesto were revisited to reveal any changes in perspectives from the beginning of our work together. Looking back over the last three units, the *connections* unit supported the previous groundwork laid through embodied experiences, self-reflection, interactions with others, and collective dialogue. Many students questioned why certain exercises were done, such as the stations and their connection to their ideas of dance. We used the material gathered from the stations' lesson to connect movement with the final performance piece. Once students saw the connections between dance and the tools used to create and inform their dance, they became open and engaging more fully in the process.

### **Assessment**

Assessing the effectiveness and importance of this curriculum was twofold: (a) looking at the students' outcomes, or their reaction to curriculum exercises, and (b) the effectiveness of my facilitation skills in embodied experiences, collective dialogue, self-reflection, and interaction with others, which were tools I used to create a safe space for making meaning of the Self. The national dance educator's organization assessment format helped in my creation of structuring measurements of my own assessment. In addition, Sherrie Barr's (2009) article, informed my methodology of assessment, which

focused on daily assessments; positive and specific language used toward participants when giving feedback; and openness in lesson objectives, expectations, and assumptions. Relatedly, Alison Skrinar (1988) proposes, “motor learning research has found that when students understand objectives, skill acquisition can actually be more efficient and effective” (Skinar, 1988). Guided by Barr (2009), I developed questions for my participants within journal entries, group discussions, and one-on-one interviews.

The first part of assessing students’ outcomes/reactions to exercises was to take a pre and post survey, with similar questions for comparison over time. This survey was meant to reveal previous and new obtained knowledge about participants’ perceptions of art, dance, somatics, social-somatics, community-dance values, and self-awareness. The difference between the two surveys was that questions in the end survey focused on what participants gained from the curriculum, new insights and *take-aways*, and any questions that remained. Daily journal entries with free-write, group discussions, our communal *expressive board*, and comparison of body maps were other tools of assessment used to examine students’ growth and the effectiveness of exercises.

One-on-one interviews created a foundation for assessing my skills of facilitation. I engaged in ongoing self-evaluations where my observations after each lesson were recorded and analyzed for common themes of my facilitation. Although not an essential part of my overall assessment, working with the regular teacher of the classroom brought another level of evaluation from an outsider’s perspective. She observed me closely on my ability to direct the class in activities and my clarity in providing information to students within the lessons.

## CHAPTER 4

### Data Analysis

The modes of assessment utilized to evaluate this curriculum took the form of one-on-one interviews, group and class discussions, on-going assessments, and student journal entries. What I was looking for in each unit varied; however, a through-line was created through emphasis on evaluating student participation and level of engagement throughout their experiences with the curriculum. Recognizing that each student might demonstrate engagement and participation differently, I used various types of evaluation. Data collected from my ongoing assessments of Units 1, 2, and 3, informed my final unit. Specifically, my analysis of the first three units informed how I would move forward to design and implement strategies and experiences for Unit 4.

#### **Unit 1: Introduction to Somatics and Community Dance**

This unit focused on the beginning stages of learning modes of LMA and an introduction to what community dance is by embodying its values through exercises in each lesson. Unit 1 modes of assessment included a beginning survey, individual journal entries, small group and class discussions, and daily on-going assessments from my observations. These on-going assessments will later be discussed in Chapter 5 in making meaning of the overall facilitation of the curriculum, and themes that arose. Intentions of introducing somatic and community dance concepts were the foundation of this unit. I looked for not only the styles and patterns of my personal facilitation and pedagogical methods, but students' abilities to investigate these concepts through exercises unfamiliar to them in a dance class. This included looking at their *Ah-ha!* experiences, challenges, obstacles, and enjoyment in the lessons.

As all participation was voluntary, assessment of journals, surveys, and in-class lessons varied in numbers. There were a total of 30 participants; from these, 11 surveys and seventeen journals entries submitted. The survey consisted of questions around student knowledge about dance, somatics/social-somatics, community dance, and how they wished to challenge themselves in the class. All 11 respondents expressed dance as a tool in self-expression through movement. A total of 3 of 11 respondents wanted to challenge themselves to think outside the box and learn about Self in dance. Eight others were looking only for product-based goals, such as flexibility, memorization, multiple dances, and different dance styles. More detailed results of survey items follow:

In response to the question *What is somatics/social-somatics?* 4 of 11 participants left this answer blank, 3 responded as talking with others through movement, 2 believed it is internal body awareness, and 2 others researched what they believed was the “correct” answer. In responding to the prompt *What is community dance?* 9 of 11 respondents answered that it is “dancing and working together,” 1 explained the values of inclusiveness and a non-judgmental environment, and 1 left the item blank. When responding to the question *Rank (on a scale of 1-10; 1 being lowest, 10 being highest) your level of awareness to self and others*, 8 of 11 participants selected values that were *above average*, whereas the remaining 3 selected *below average*.

In this unit, students focused primarily on working individually and in groups to explore aspects of the LMA body category regarding personal movement patterns. Fifteen out of 17 students in their comments on journal writings noted an increased sense of awareness of personal movement restrictions and a newly found range of movement vocabulary. Although most students found LMA exploration “interesting,” “exciting,”

“challenging,” and “revealing,” two students did feel that it was “repetitive,” “already done,” and “boring.” Other journal entries asked for personal experiences and obstacles throughout this unit. For example, one student wrote that the *What is dance to you* exercise was “a great opportunity to take risks.” Similarly, another student conveyed feelings of pressure in following others to “know what was correct or wrong.”

Small group discussions seemed to be more successful versus whole class discussions in the beginning of the curriculum. In small group discussions, students were given prompts to discuss the prompts amongst themselves, while I floated around giving more detail or clarity if needed. After small group discussions, the class reconvened to find similarities or differences as a whole. The data proved this to be true: Only 20% engagement was evident with the entire class discussions, whereas 80% engagement was apparent in small group discussions. Students privately communicated their discomfort to “put themselves out to be judged or misrepresented so early in the semester.” They expressed that when they felt more open in the classroom community they hoped to “gain the courage to speak up.”

## **Unit 2: The Exploration of Self**

The main goal of Unit 2 was to explore the Self through movement. Time and space were allotted to investigate how desires, goals, and present identities as movers and dancers were either enhanced or hindered in this unit’s exercises. The evaluations were comprised of 17 *I AM* poems and journals, collective dialogue through entire class discussions, and daily on-going assessment from my observations. Moving into a deeper investigation of the Self, I looked for higher levels of student engagement with the exercises, deeper levels of conversation in discussions, and an openness with students’



thoughts/feelings/ideas toward certain exercises. To signify this deeper level of engagement, I looked for clear, well thought-out answers to discussions, grounded ideas explored in certain exercises, and students curiosity about themselves and the lessons. As a facilitator, I focused more on creating a student-centered classroom by allowing students to take charge of the beginning games and choose which exercises to complete throughout the lesson plans. This pedagogical method produced a higher percentage of engagement from students. There were parts of this student-centered classroom I anticipated, with others becoming a learned process. For example, the data showed that my choice to allow students to guide the beginning games revealed themes of respect, and relatability. This I did not anticipate, but was a happy surprise.

The *I Am* poems revealed how students described and perceived themselves. Everyone communicated openly about their desires, wishes, hopes, and aspirations for their lives. Prompts for the *I AM* poems were “*I AM* [Describe your personality in two words],” “*I AM* [Describe something you wish to accomplish],” and “*I AM* [Describe three things you see].” These desires were revealed through writing after further reflection into their poems; knowing this would not be shared with the whole class, students did not hold back in their honest responses.

Following the *I AM* poems we moved to the stations lesson. The stations lesson involves parts of the classroom divided into stations with certain prompts on the wall. A couple of these prompts were to whistle a childhood song, act out their family order, and embody certain body postures. Eventually, groups put together dance phrases using these stations as inspiration. I noticed students were more hesitant and looked around for approval from their peers. Reading the journal entries regarding their experiences with

the stations, 7 students found them very confusing as to why this exercise was in a dance class, 10 students hesitated with certain stations that were “too personal,” and 13 students loved having new ways to create movement and did not mind an uncertain outcome. Of those 13 students, 1 in particular testified the difficulty in having to feel sadness, hurt, and frustration toward one station. When asked what she considers *culture*, she revealed stereotypes about herself as being just a “white girl in a multi-cultured world.” Due to the sensitive subject matter this lesson produced, the class’s discussion was split into two groups, allowing each group to ask each other questions about their experiences.

Observations throughout this unit showed timid participation, peer pressure, and lack of risk in the beginning stages of exercises. One example is the walking stories lesson, where students walked across the floor while shouting out facts about their lives. Eventually concepts of energy, time, and space were incorporated. While there was 100% participation in the beginning, engagement decreased as prompts increased in revealing more personal information. Having limited time overall in each class, I questioned how to lead students to look beyond superficial research of themselves. I pondered, ss the class size too large? Does each exercise need more time to marinate in the concepts? Was I asking the wrong questions in discussions? My hope for student engagement in this unit was probably the highest in terms of anticipation for new revelations and higher levels of thinking throughout class discussions and journal writings. Although the data did not necessarily prove these goals were not met, personal assessment of my facilitation proved the difficulty in guiding students through uncomfortable areas of exploration.

### **Unit 3: Social-somatics**

Unit 3's overall goal was for students to apply personal somatic findings from previous units into collaboration with their peers in order to contribute to their social surroundings. These correlations between the first two units were intended to explore how students' social worlds affect their personal choices, particularly in movement. Assessment of this unit cumulated in an end survey that was compared to the beginning survey, one-on-one interviews, and previous modes of assessment from Units 1 and 2.

An interesting discussion took place in a popcorn-style discussion, in which students shout out one-word answers without raising their hands, following the Round Robin and Move by Touch exercises. Students said one word that their experiences in a process what theatre professor Pam Sterling calls a *privilege line*, which then segued into choreographing tools, utilized by Elizabeth Johnson, Round Robin and Move to Touch Improvisational frameworks. For example, Round Robin is an accumulation of gestures from two lines. One line is marked "Choreographers" and the other "Movers". Each mover rotates through the line, accumulating gestures to create a phrase.

Move by Touch, first explored and introduced by Tim O'Donnell, uses improvisation and guided initiation by a partner to explore movement phrases. For the first time in a discussion, there was 100% participation, with enthusiasm in the engagement of their opinions. "Scared," "free," "new," "enjoyable," "hard," "frustrating," "confusing," "revealing," and "exciting" are a few examples of what came out from that particular discussion. The popcorn-style discussion let them "feel supported and safe to just shout out words," according to one student's journal entries.

This unit segued into stronger community, when we looked at how others affect personal choices, particularly in movement. It was important to group students with those with whom they had never worked before, to open up the sense of community. From these two exercises, one pair of partners surprisingly found it extremely fun and inspiring to work together in ways they never have before. When having to switch partners, their verbal response in class was, “We work so well together, let’s find how to re-connect in these exercises.”

Comparing the ending survey at the completion of Unit 3 and the beginning survey from the start of the project, my analysis led me to recognize students’ increased sense of understanding of what somatics and community dance are. However, data showed little increase in student understandings of social-somatics. Interestingly enough, the end survey answers showed conflict with class attitudes, engagement, and discussions. Students particularly took to the social-somatics concepts and exercises (Unit 3), while questioning the beginning work of somatics focused on understanding LMA concepts (Units 1 and 2).

The difference between the end survey answers and in-class knowledge also showed up in the one-on-one interviews. Here, five students participated: three males and two females. All five students agreed that if this were an option for another dance class, they would want to participate in this type of curriculum. Another theme voiced by all five students—and even more from journal entries and class discussions among the whole 30 students—was the desire for knowing the final product of every lesson; they communicated their need for seeing how learning experiences produce *something*, and how they are supposed to look for success in those exercises. Individually, all

interviewees expressed their personal thoughts about working in this type of classroom, ranging from heightened awareness of Self and others, frustrations in choreographing in collaboration, childhood memories embraced by the games, and added movement vocabulary from learning how to create through a variety of choreographic tools.

### **Common Threads**

Throughout the curriculum, there were themes that emerged from analyzing data for Units 1, 2, and 3. From my observations and collected data, I have concluded that students thrive in exercises, as evidenced by boosted levels of engagement, when there is a product. In this product-driven educational setting, allotted time to explore uncharted waters within their dance education curriculum was not accepted wholeheartedly by students. Student discomfort was expressed as form of rebellion through negative attitudes, disrespect to classmates and to me as the facilitator, and minimal responses to questions. Overall, students all wanted to be correct, know they are doing everything right, and fulfill expectations of preconceived notions of correctness.

Although I did not have any expectations as to how phrases would look, or how the process of investigation would unfold, there were certain expectations of myself, I found to be hypocritical to my facilitation. These expectations are ones I was unaware of. In practicality, what I considered engagement or participation conflicted with my premature values before even beginning my work with the students. I realized that my pre-set notions of value in art would set the tone of my perspective toward material discovered in the classroom. If only looking at in class data (e.g., journals, discussions, observations of lessons), one might conclude that this curriculum was rarely embraced,

but allowing for multiple areas of comfort and honesty to appear (i.e., through private meetings and one-on-one interviews) this curriculum was enjoyed and accepted.

## CHAPTER 5

### Meaning-making

Looking through the lenses of my statement of problem, I was able to accumulate meaning of all data collected, accompanied by broader implications and theories I am continuing to form. Along with new discoveries, and the impact of them in furthering my practice, I believe the knowledge gathered from my pedagogical research can offer the field tools and insights other educators and dancers to utilize.

My investigation focused on how to design, facilitate, and assess a learning framework that is about students' gaining self-understanding through social-somatic and communal approaches within k-12 dance education settings. Taking the position and role of a facilitator rather than teacher helped carve out space for a student-centered environment to evolve. Looking back at my statements of problem, I am able to compare my desires for this curriculum versus the actual results produced.

A couple of key questions I asked myself in the beginning of this study were: *What values and processes from socially engaged art practices and community dance might support this curriculum? What are the characteristics of personal growth within dance learning, and how might growth best occur through social-somatics? How is the content in the curriculum fostering embodied self-discovery and identity building?* Most exercises stemmed from community dance and socially engaged art values. These values helped ground the theories I was exploring in a practical way for students to relate and investigate on their own within each exercise. For example, one value of inclusiveness was executed through accumulation of our final performance piece. Every student brought ideas to formulate sections of the piece. Through building this dance, everyone's

opinions and ideas were valued. Working from a place of collaborative relationships, opportunity for positive change, celebration of diversity, inclusiveness, and participant focus all supported the working processes and overarching goals of this curriculum.

Characteristics of personal growth were the hardest questions to address. Wanting a curriculum that is framed from a critical pedagogical foundation, addresses power structures and personal beliefs about learning engagement, and value judgments about what is good (vs. bad) and mature (vs. poor) art, was a constant internal battle. I discovered that looking for growth based on my opinion of growth limited true assessment of students' outcomes in exercises. When this conflict was recognized, perspectives changed in the way I viewed assessment to be subjective. Although I would like to say this conflict has been resolved and conquered, I sadly have realized this is something that I will be ever-evolving. The characteristics of growth for dance learning I have identified through this research are higher order thinking in critical inquiries (e.g., discussions evolving from *what* and *who* to *why* and *how*), higher interest in problem-solving in collaboration with others (e.g., utilizing each other's strengths and weaknesses to grow deeper understandings), and increased curiosities for future investigation.

I return to one of my primary questions, how can social-somatics foster growth? Social-somatics offers insight into personal decision making in relationship to the world around us. I found students connected with topics of unfamiliarity when in a group setting, which involved acquiring increased levels of focus when exercises were scaffold with social-somatic contexts. One exercise that accomplished this was what Pam Sterling calls a Privilege Line. In this line, words are called out, ranging from facts (e.g., birth month, age, grade level) to relational connections (e.g., family, morals, challenges in



life). Students are to step forward when the word called relates or affects them. Students' responses from their journal entries proved effective in this exercise in relating to others. Students found acceptance in Self, while at the same time questioning their beliefs. This research has strengthened my belief in learning through Self in relation to social settings through seeing growth in students that engaged in higher order thinking, increased interest in collaboration, and further questioning.

When building this curriculum, I first questioned what practical exercises I would include, and how would this specific content foster embodied self-discovery and identity building? After the first couple weeks, it dawned on me: Self-discovery and identity building can be seen in the simplicity of asking oneself questions in the context of certain topics. Guiding each unit, lessons focused on topics that first related to the individual, gradually building to group work. Even though a risk of comparison with others could (and at times, did) arise, students voiced in discussions their feelings of “safety” and “motivation” in diving deeper to ask themselves and others questions about their relatability or differences brought forward in the exercises.

A challenging turning point in the practicality of exercises that fostered opportunities for self-discovery was building movement phrase work from the *I AM* poems. Students created movement phrases using their poems for inspiration. As a class, we started creating our performance piece. During the choreographic process, students started implementing their ideas from phrase work, followed with questions and input, such as “How do you think the audience will perceive our movements?” “How do the *I AM* poems relate now to our themed dance?” “I use to love to move only to music, but now can see how creating without music is cool too,” “I like seeing the final product now

and can connect the poem,” and “Ideas came to me after spending time with my poem, I saw how much I don’t talk about, but am thinking.” Keeping content focused on the individuals’ likes, dislikes, desires, and questions created many openings for self-discovery arose.

Broader implications for my research arose from analyzing from my data. Critical pedagogy, as a key theory and method, constantly challenged me internally and externally throughout the curriculum. With hierarchical structures so embedded in student’s minds and behaviors, as with my own, optimal reach in critical pedagogy varied from lesson to lesson. Some days, my facilitation felt free and unguarded, whereas on others, I witnessed closed body language, bitter tone in voice, quick temper in talking when teaching, and frustrations in students’ timing.

Transformative learning was another theory supporting this research. The devaluing of student voices and their learning experiences were things I was thinking about previously in my dance teaching and learning experiences. I can now see there are a number of ways student learning can be honored, yet there seems to be conflicting methodologies in place that minimize opportunities for learned knowledge to be challenged, pushed, and deepened for critical problem-solving. Data suggest that students rarely take responsibility of their learning when teacher expectations are not guiding their aesthetic choices. This leads me to question varying factors in creating a constructivist (student-centered) classroom: i.e., age, time, pre-set judgments, and values.

Proving the banking system is alive and thriving in educational settings, my research suggests struggle resulted when students felt lack of expectations were given and when instruction was “not strict in what dance is supposed to look like.” These struggles

pushed my theory and former belief in facilitation. Realizing a total constructivist approach (100% all the time, every class) is not absolute and would be extremely difficult to accomplish. Importance in adapting my efficiency in facilitating aided lessons where, as a community, we hit a cross-roads in investigation. Where I once would have left all decisions up to students, believing without such openness a constructivist environment is not created, I now see the meaning in finding balance between structured and semi-structured instruction. An interesting observation about such facilitation was how my passion toward the lesson plans, and overarching goals drove a type of presence in the room. It is said that most conversations are told more through body language and posture; how true this idea proved correct! When my posture did not match my words (e.g., usually due to strong desires toward comprehension), it blinded my ability to guide students to draw meaningful connections in the material. The impact on my practice was a widely expanded perspective as a facilitator, the creation of meaningful experiences founded in social-somatics and community dance values, and practical exercises inside the classroom. I am looking forward to investigating my lingering inquires of pedagogical methods in dance education in the future. I will further my investigation of critical pedagogy and transformative learning next semester through my student teaching.

Beyond impacting my personal practice, this research can lend aid to the field of dance education. A curriculum built from social-somatic frameworks, grounded in socially engaged art and community dance values, provides guidance for educators looking to foster self-discovery and empowerment within a dance program. My lesson plan examples, curriculum template, and outlined diagram of overarching goals might assist teachers and artists in search of ways to incorporate similar ideas into their

programs. As stated, this research was designed to prove effective for those looking for strategies and tools or varying approaches, exercises, and dialogue that addresses the theoretical and practical gaps between pursuing dance aesthetics and engaging in collaboration.

My goals for creating, implementing, and assessing of a curriculum centered on making meaning of *Self* in relation to others. I sought to discover practical exercises, develop realistic and effective facilitative approaches, and strengthened pedagogical methods. Overall, these areas of research are not necessarily new to the field of dance and education, yet gaps in dialogue, published work, and reliable resources prove these theories and methods are still valued and necessary. The research presently undertaken makes imperative the demand for continued and deeper connections of self-discovery in dance education for future generations through social-somatic and community focused pedagogical processes.

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APPENDIX A  
LESSON PLAN EXAMPLES

**Unit # 1**

**Unit Title: Somatic & Community Dance Introduction**

**Weeks or Dates: Week 1-2**

<p><b>Main Unit Objective:</b> Students will gain better understanding of personal movement patterning through the embodiment of Laban Movement Analysis, while building community in the use of games, collective dialogue, group exercises, and partner problem solving. Their previous knowledge about somatics, community dance, and personal expression in performativity art will aid in the deeper investigation of what Laban Movement Analysis is, and how community dance values are portrayed and executed within a dance classroom setting.</p>
<p><b>Unit Understanding Goals and Generative Topics</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Student's will understand, experience and embody LMA Body categories.</li><li>2. Student's will comprehend personal ways of moving utilizing LMA body categories as a foundation.</li><li>3. Students' previous knowledge will spring board them into new areas of somatics &amp; community dance.</li><li>4. Students will be able to explain and demonstrate LMA Body Categories in everyday movements as well as in dance.</li><li>5. Students' collaborative and problem solving skills will increase through group work in choreographing dance phrases.</li><li>6. From viewing each other's phrases, students will obtain an increased sense of subjective feedback.</li></ol>
<p><b>Description of Curricular and Pedagogical Layers:</b> This unit begins by utilizing a constructivist approach in building a student-centered classroom through personal exploration in movement patterning grounded in LMA body categories.</p>
<p><b>State Standards:</b> Strand 1: Concept 1 PO 4.304, 2 PO 3.303, 4 PO 1.301 Strand 3: Concept 1 PO 5.205, 2 PO 1.201</p>
<p><b>Ongoing Unit Assessment Plan:</b> Modes of Assessment for Unit 1 will include games such as jeopardy and Family Feud, daily journals turned in twice throughout the unit, small group discussions, and on-going assessment from the facilitator's notes and feedback.</p>

**Unit 1: Somatic Understandings**

**Lesson Plan Example 1**

**9/15/14**

Facilitator: Katie Chilton

**Global Goal:**

1. Students will be able to understand, embody, and analyze personal movement patterning in relationship to self and others.



2. Students will gain deeper insight and personal experiences into Laban Movement Analysis and community dance values.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. How can students better understand, comprehend, and compare LMA body categories?
2. How do students embody LMA body categories within choreographing?
3. How can we further build upon community dance in a secondary dance education setting?

**Main objective for lesson:** Students will gain better insight into personal movement patterning by choosing LMA body categories to investigate in choreographic phrases. Building community through group work and discussions will be performed throughout the lesson – from the beginning game to the final group teachings.

**Understanding Goals/Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

1. Student's will understand, experience and embody LMA Body categories: Upper/Lower, Body Half, Cross Lateral
2. Student's will gain observational skills through viewing others
3. Student's will comprehend personal ways of moving in comparison to LMA body categories

**Arizona Dance State Standards:**

Strand 1: Concept 1 PO 4.304, 2 PO 3.303, 4 PO 1.301

Strand 3: Concept 1 PO 5.205, 2 PO 1.201

**Lesson Vocabulary/Definitions:**

*LMA Body Categories:* How the body is organized and connected, held and active body parts, body actions, and movement initiation and sequencing.

*Upper/Lower* - builds grounding, strength, and intention through Yielding and Pushing into the earth. It patterns an ability to connect the upper and lower halves of the body through movement. It enables one to have momentum and propulsion

*Body Half* - organizes the body to be able to work with one side stable while the other side is mobile; patterns sidedness functions in the brain, aids in clarifying issues.

*Cross Lateral* - develops diagonal connection through the body and gradated rotation in the proximal joints to facilitate three-dimensional movement and the ability to spiral with complex level change and locomotion; prepares one for multidimensional relational thinking and commitment to action

**Visual Aids, Props, and Music:**

Background music from iPod

**Exercises:**

45 min. lesson

**Introduction experience:** (15 min.)

*A. Objective* – Define LMA definitions, articulate somatic knowledge, and embody community values through the use of game playing.

Students will participate in a LMA Jeopardy game. Divided into two groups, each group will choose one of four categories: Somatics, Body Categories, Games, Community. Within each category, students will have 1 min. to answer questions regarding previous lessons and content given to them.

*B. Objective* – Embody LMA categories through improvisational warm up

Students will be lead through an improvisational warm up, using Upper/Lower, Body Half, and Cross Lateral categories. Emphasis will be on moving students through the space to generate blood flow and an increased heart rate. Allowing each student to have their own voice in movement, questions will be asked such as: How can you move across the floor initiating cross lateral in your body? Find differences in your movement between Upper/Lower and Body-Half.

**Core experience:** (10 min.)

*Objective* – Embody LMA Body Categories of Upper/Lower, Body-Half, and Cross Lateral through choreographic intent, and tools

Using LMA body categories: Upper/Lower, Body-Half, Cross Lateral, students will pair up to generate movement phrases. Each pair has the choice to investigate movement in their bodies in only 1 category or all three. Within these phrases, they are to use previous knowledge of choreographic tools to incorporate within the phrase. Setting intent for the movement will be a prompt as well for each pair.

**Culminating experience:** (20 min.)

*Objective* – Build community in the classroom through working in smaller groups, compare differences between each person’s movement choices, and analyze how differences affect own movement choices.

Students’ will match up with another set of partners to form groups of 4. Each pair will teach one other’s movement, creating one large movement phrase. Discussing the two choreographic intentions, each group will use communication to create an overarching intent. Using nonjudgmental viewing skills, students will view, and analyze through dialogue, differences between everyone’s movement in relationship to their own.

## Unit # 2

### Unit Title: Exploration of Self

Weeks or Dates: Week 3-4

<b>Main Unit Objective:</b> Allow space and time for students to explore whom they are, their interests, beliefs, likes/dislikes, to embody in/through movement, as well as incorporate into a final choreographic dance performance.
<b>Unit Understanding Goals and Generative Topics</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Describe personal choices in creating movement by analyzing how their 'culture' influences dance</li><li>2. Students will gain empowerment in individual learning by taking charge of their personal stories, choices in incorporating their exploration of time, space, and energy in improvisational dance.</li><li>3. Students will be able to demonstrate and describe personal stories while multitasking in cognitive skills.</li><li>4. Students will expand knowledge of self in relationship to key characteristic words.</li><li>5. Students will have a greater comprehension on personal likes in time, space, and energy.</li></ol>
<b>Description of Curricular and Pedagogical Layers:</b> Multiple intelligences were utilized in somatic exercises, fostering a safe environment for varying learning modalities. A constructivist approach is the through line in the pedagogical approach for the entire curriculum.
<b>State Standards:</b> Strand 2: Concept 2 PO 2.402, PO 3.303 Strand 2: Concept 4 PO 2.302
<b>Ongoing Unit Assessment Plan:</b> Assessments are shown through collective dialogue at the end of certain lesson plans, evaluations and/or feedback from sharing phrase work, daily journal entries turned in twice a unit, and on-going assessment from the facilitator's notes.

## Unit 2: Exploration Of Self

### Lesson Plan Example 1

9/24/14

Facilitator: Katie Chilton

#### Global Goal:

1. Students will be able to understand, embody, and analyze personal movement choices in relationship to self and culture.
2. Students will gain deeper insight and personal experiences into choreographic tools through the collaboration of other art forms.

#### Guiding Questions:

1. How do students' perceptions of themselves affect and/or relate movement?

2. Will students' find connections to their culture and movement choices?
3. How can students' create movement using other forms of art?

**Main objective for lesson:** Students will gain better insight into 'self' and personal movement choices through using different forms of art (poems, pictures, writings, music). Students will be able to analyze how different cultures influence dance, and personal choices made.

**Understanding Goals/Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

1. Student's will investigate what cultures they associate with
2. Student's will integrate other art forms into choreography
3. Student's will describe personal choices in creating movement by analyzing how their 'culture' influences dance

**Arizona Dance State Standards:**

Strand 2: Concept 2 PO 2.402, PO 3.303

Strand 2: Concept 4 PO 2.302

**Lesson Vocabulary/Definitions:**

*Culture: The behaviors and beliefs characteristics of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.*

**Visual Aids, Props, and Music:**

Background music from iPod

**Exercises:**

45 min. lesson

**Introduction experience: (15 min.)**

*Objective* – Students are beginning to examine their personal and social influences through other art forms, i.e. – poems/writing.

Starting this lesson off, students are given an "I AM" poem to fill out. This poem is to be done individually and taken with them along the stations to follow for building movement from. The poem includes fill in the blanks: I AM.....(use 2 verbs to describe yourself)/(what is your utopia?)/ (Where do you come from?)

**Core experience: (20 min.)**

*Objective* – Students will integrate other art forms into choreography, while exploring how "culture" can be expressed through dance – starting to create a dance by their personal influences and/or social experiences.

Stations around the room with different art forms give instruction to students at each station. At each station, students are asked to create movement, build transitions to choreography, and/or develop new dance ideas towards their final performance dance.

Couple examples of these stations are: Sing a song from your childhood, if you were a patient in an insane asylum, how would you move? Build a phrase from your I Am Poem, and create movement from the song you sang in the previous station. After 2 min. everyone will rotate to new stations.

**Culminating experience:** (10 min.)

*Objective* – Students will collaborate with others in building community through collective dialogue, and objective feedback in viewing classmates’ station movements.

After spending time in each station individually, students will come together to share with the whole class and dialogue on their experiences. Participants have their choice of sharing any stations they want. Collective dialogue will be guided in questions such as: What station did you find challenging and why? How do you see choreography tools be expressed through these stations and which one specifically would you personally utilize?

Finishing this lesson, they are assigned a journal entry as homework on an extended version of their personal experience and if more time were allotted, what they would want to explore further. They are to describe how movement varies within different cultures – values, beliefs, morals, social contexts, gender, and race?

### Unit # 3

#### Unit Title: Social Somatics: Relationship to Others

Weeks or Dates: Week 5 & 6

<b>Main Unit Objective:</b> Students will apply personal somatic findings from the previous unit into collaboration with others, attributing to their social surroundings affect on their embodiment of 'self'.
<b>Unit Understanding Goals and Generative Topics</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students will be able to recognize how self and others are connected.</li><li>2. Students will infer connections with personal stereotypes of others and own posture, analyzing how one holds themselves and possible reasons/explanations as to why.</li><li>3. Students will apply LMA body categories to improvisational touch exercises to find deeper connections to embodied patterning.</li><li>4. Students will be able to articulate their reasons as to why certain body parts, body attitudes, and categories were challenging and/or enlightening.</li><li>5. Students will be empowered through making choices in choreographing.</li></ol>
<b>Description of Curricular and Pedagogical Layers:</b> This unit dives deeper into utilizing a constructivist approach in building a student-centered classroom through previous personal exploration in movement patterning grounded in LMA body categories to present social exploration of community.
<b>State Standards:</b> Strand 2: Concept 2 PO 3.303 PO 3.304 Strand 2: Concept 4 PO 1.101 PO 1.401
<b>Ongoing Unit Assessment Plan:</b> Modes of Assessment for Unit 3 will include daily journals turned in twice throughout the unit, small group discussions, on-going assessment from the facilitator's notes and feedback, and one-on-one interviews.

### Unit 3: Social Somatics

#### Lesson Plan Example 1

10/8/14

Facilitator: Katie Chilton

#### Global Goal:

1. Students will apply personal somatic findings from the previous unit into collaboration with others, attributing to their social surroundings affect on their embodiment of 'self'.
2. Students will be able to articulate how their physical posture relates to their inner posture/body attitude.
3. Students will enhance their viewpoints of different body postures in relationship to self and others.

#### Guiding Questions:

1. Will students be able to view different body postures within the same context of a dance class?

2. How can students understand stereotypes placed on body postures?
3. How can students make connections between their pre-set judgments/opinions/views on body posture with their personal way of being in their bodies?

**Main objective for lesson:** Differentiating body postures along with ‘viewpoints’ on those postures, students will connect their body attitude to the stereotypes of their social worlds and inner thoughts of each posture, allowing for permission in and of personal body posture.

**Understanding Goals/Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

1. Comprehension of different body postures will be executed by students.
2. Students will infer connections with personal stereotypes of others and own posture, analyzing how one holds themselves and possible reasons/explanations as to why.
3. Students will recognize own catalysts as to their body attitudes.

**Arizona Dance State Standards:**

Strand 2: Concept 2 PO 3.303 PO 3.304

Strand 2: Concept 4 PO 1.101 PO 1.401

**Lesson Vocabulary/Definitions:**

**Body Attitude:** Maintained and habitual stances or constellations of body parts from which the individual moves and to which she/he returns. A characteristic body stance that is persistently used and from which all activity develops and returns. It is what is maintained in the movement. It is a cultural indicator. Body attitude is also a type of readiness expressed in the body.

**Body Posture:** Body posture is a relatively small and simple aspect of the human body that can have a major impact on overall health and wellness. Posture is how a person holds his or her body upright, whether sitting, standing, or lying down

**Visual Aids, Props, and Music:**

Background music from iPod

3 pictures of different body postures

**Exercises:**

45 min. lesson

**Introduction experience: (10 min.)**

*Objective* – Students will start to view different types of body postures in relationship to self; they will explore pre-set judgments they bring into the classroom.

Beginning the lesson will start with sharing of the homework, which is to bring in three pictures of different body postures. They are to share in small groups and exchange ideas on their opinions of each one.

**Core experience: (25 min.)**

*Objective* – By embodying different body postures than their own, students will explore the physical, mental, and/or emotional qualities of those postures. This will then be expressed through writing their thoughts, leading into more complex improvisation.

All groups will start to embody each posture (3 per person) after choosing which three they wish to explore. From there, they will walk, crawl, sit, stand, and lay in those postures. Journaling of their physical, mental, and emotional experiences, will occur directly afterwards. Following the first journal entry, they will start to move from each body posture, in more advanced dance improvisation.

**Culminating experience:** (10 min.)

*Objective* – Students understanding of different body postures in relationship to self will deepen, obtaining better comprehension of personal posture and the views they put onto those postures.

Finally, students will create movement phrases that intertwine their three chosen postures. They will build phrases in their groups to expand into the next lesson. At the end of class – they will ask to share with the whole class. The viewers will have an opportunity to write down questions/comments that come up from viewing the different postures in dance for discussion next class.



## Unit # 4

### Unit Title: Connections: Choreography in Relationship to Somatics

Weeks or Dates: Week 7 & 8

**Main Unit Objective:** After reviewing beginning assignments of “what is dance” and daily journals, students will begin to write their artistic statement: What type of artist are you in today’s world?

#### Unit Understanding Goals and Generative Topics

1. Students will be able to explain their aesthetic choices towards their dance piece.
2. Students will interpret and identify personal reactions to their experiences thus far in the semester.
3. Students will utilize community dance values in inclusiveness to work as a group in Jeopardy.
4. Students will be able to culminate a semester’s worth of understanding through a final assignment.
5. Students’ transformation of what was to what is, will enhance from reviewing their beginning thoughts to their final reflections in the class.
6. Students will have clarity to articulate themselves in dance through movement and in a community setting.

#### Description of Curricular and Pedagogical Layers:

Culminating a foundational support of a student-centered classroom, this final unit is layered with M.I and constructivism, through bridging LMA body categories, body attitudes, and social somatics to choreographic tools and community dance values.

#### State Standards:

Strand 1: Concept 1 PO 4.304, 2 PO 3.303, 4 PO 1.301

Strand 3: Concept 1 PO 4.404

**Ongoing Unit Assessment Plan:** Modes of Assessment for Unit 4 will include comparison of beginning surveys to end surveys, journal summary from whole curriculum, small group discussions, artistic statements, on-going assessment from the facilitator’s notes and feedback, and final one-on-one interviews.

## Unit 4: Connections

### Lesson Plan Example 1

10/29/14

Facilitator: Katie Chilton

#### Global Goal:

1. Connecting previous findings in somatics, social somatics, community dance, and choreographic tools, students will bridge personal findings with relationships to others for use in choreographing and/or manipulating the class’s final performance piece.
2. Students will articulate their aesthetic choices to further develop their artistic statement as dancers in today’s world.

#### Guiding Questions:

1. How can students reflect on previous work to inform present views of dance and choreographing?
2. Will students be able to communicate their ideas of certain aesthetics into writing skills?
3. How do students understand their aesthetic choices when analyzing the semester's process (exercises, discussions, reflections, 'ah-hah' moments)?

**Main objective for lesson:** After reviewing beginning assignments of "what is dance" and daily journals, students will begin to write their artistic statement: What type of artist are you in today's world? Students will be able to see themselves as movers and artists with empowered knowledge in how they create work, and collaborate with others.

**Understanding Goals/Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to culminate a semester's worth of understanding through a final assignment.
2. Students' transformation will enhance from reviewing their beginning thoughts to their final reflections in the class.
3. Students will have clarity to articulate themselves in dance as movers and artists.

**Arizona Dance State Standards:**

Strand 1: Concept 1 PO 4.304, 2 PO 3.303, 4 PO 1.301

Strand 3: Concept 1 PO 4.404

**Lesson Vocabulary/Definitions:**

**Aesthetic:** Of or pertaining to the study of the mind and emotions in relation to the sense of or relating to the science of aesthetics.

**Artistic Statement:** A statement informing others of the artist's views, ideas, methodologies, and/or beliefs towards their work. Informing others of how the artist works.

**Visual Aids, Props, and Music:**

Journals

Pens

Stopwatch

**Exercises:**

45 min. lesson

**Introduction experience: (5 min.)**

*Objective* – Students will generate broad ideas to start narrowing in on for their statements – allowing connections between what they have done in the past to culminate ideas for the statement.

Free write will begin, allowing students to answer questions within a one-minute time frame. They are asked to remember a time where they felt safe, free, open, and challenged as dancers and movers. They will reflect back on places of discomfort and

explore why that was. They will be asked to 'jot' down broad themes/ideas that first come to mind with who they are as artists/movers/dancers/students.

**Core experience:** (25 min.)

*Objective* – Students' connection between all units will enhance from reflection, discussion, and drafting of an artistic statement.

Student will then pick a couple themes that they resonate with to start drafting their first statement. They are to look back over their journal entries, certain exercises done in class, discussions with myself as the facilitator, and classmates to discover any new information.

**Culminating experience:** (15 min.)

*Objective* – Collaboration will increase a sense of community through sharing rough drafts with peers for feedback. Students will gain insight into further edits towards their final draft.

The class will share their statements with each other for peer feedback and any further edits needed. This will be guided through asking questions about their intentions and meaning behind their statements.