Dance as an Interdisciplinary Tool in Drama Class: Learning Acting Skills Through Dance Movement Experiences

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DANCE AS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY TOOL IN DRAMA CLASS: LEARNING ACTING SKILLS THROUGH DANCE MOVEMENT EXPERIENCES

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

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College of Visual and Performing Arts
School of Theatre Arts and Dance
Dance Education

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This Thesis by: Amandie Jolene Campbell

Entitled: *Dance as an Interdisciplinary Tool in Drama Class: Learning Acting Skills Through Dance Movement Experiences*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Theatre and Dance, Program of Dance Education

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Accepted by the Graduate School:

_____________________________
Linda L. Black, Ed.D.
Associate Provost and Dean
Graduate School and International Admissions
ABSTRACT


Actors must be able to engage with their audience through their stage presence and showmanship on stage. It is important that actors are able to fully embrace the physical character they are portraying, not just the mental and verbal entities of the character. The goal of this thesis argues and defends the use of dance in a drama classroom to effectively develop movement efficiency in a character’s physical development. Those who experience educational dance, personally or through observation of other students, see that dance enhances a lifestyle positively and creates students of courageous and respectful value to society. Students also will come to find their innate ability to dance and the endless array of life skills that are enhanced through their experiences in an acting class taught through dance skills.
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Heather Warren (Sister)

Scott Campbell (Husband)

Pamela Warren (Mother)

Rodney Warren (Father)
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Goal of Thesis

High school drama courses allow novice actors to explore a variety of acting skills. An actor’s identity develops as she learns to refine and best utilize acting skills: vocal tone and pitch, clarity in diction, development of the imagination, and expressivity. These acting skills are explored through movement exercises and readings provided by the teacher. Teaching movement exercises is often approached by drama teachers based on movement exercises found in stage movement books. Movement efficiency tends to be the hardest skill to teach through the medium of a page in a drama training program, consequently high school actors are lacking in their ability to express their characters physically (Snow).

The purpose of movement training in actors is to strengthen and release tension in the body, invigorate creativity, give actors tools to develop the physical life of the character, and to give them a variety of skills and dance steps within their acting skills (Snow). Using dance as an interdisciplinary tool in drama classes could help teachers develop purposeful movement in actors. This could be done by bringing in a dance specialist to teach movement units or by having a dance specialist training drama teachers to teach dance movement units.

In the world of performing arts, it is important for dancers to engage with their audience by connecting with emotions and reasons of the piece; this is imperative if they
want to excel as performers (Horwitz). In other words, dancers need to have strong stage presence and showmanship on the stage in order to engage with their audience. This is true for actors as well. Actors on stage must be able to engage with their audience through their stage presence and showmanship. Robert Cohen encourages that “Dance, in any fashion, is most helpful to the beginning actor because it teaches a physical mode of performance” (11).

Often in the world of professional theatre, “when performers make the physical component of their work as important as the intellectual they become far more convincing” (Gladstone). It is important that actors are able to fully embrace the physical character they are portraying, not just the mental and verbal entities of the character they are playing. If they are not able to make a connection to their acting skills, then actors don’t need to take more dance classes in technique to become better actors; it is not necessarily important for an actor to be an exceptional dancer. “The craft of acting will only move forward when actors’ bodies become as articulate as their language” (De Vries 2). Therefore, it seems dance may be more beneficial if integrated into a drama class.

The goal of this thesis argues and defends the use of dance in a drama classroom to effectively develop movement efficiency in a character’s physical development. The researcher became interested in this topic while seeing her dance students develop acting skills inherently through dance curriculum. Furthermore, she recognized her acting students did not inherently learn to move effectively through drama class. As stated earlier, Cohen claimed that taking dance will encourage the development of an actor’s physical being.
Incorporating dance into a drama curriculum could give high school actors the foundation to be purposeful movers as actors as well as the skills needed to refine their ability to move on stage and develop their characters (De Vries 4). However, “the connections between movement and acting which go beyond a [dance] technique class, are not usually demonstrated and implemented in these classes” (De Vries 3). Therefore, when dance is incorporated into the drama class it should not be presented as a dance technique class but as a tool for movement development in acting skills. Furthermore, actors will also reap other benefits of dance experiences when implemented into their curriculum.

Those who participate in dance will find that dance gives students an opportunity to personally integrate their learning by simultaneously engaging body, mind, and spirit throughout their practice and experiences in and out of the dance classroom (McCutchchen 4). Those who experience educational dance, personally or through observation of other students, see that dance enhances a lifestyle positively and creates students of courageous and respectful value to society. Thus, the inherent value of dance will persevere through these experiences. The students will come to find their innate ability to dance and the endless array of life skills that are enhanced through their experiences in dance classes. The personal skills and experiences gained through a dance class include but are not limited to; persistence, interpersonal and public communication, self-motivation, self-efficacy, stress and anxiety reduction, spatial awareness, artistic exploration, respect, (Mainwaring and Krasnow 4) brain-body connection, (Mainwaring and Krasnow 7) and improved memory and balance (Gilbert “The Creative Dance Center”).
In the magazine *Dance Education in Practice*, Typhani Harris states “Character building spawns growth in intelligence and understanding that enhances dance education and also bolsters students’ life skills and opportunities for success in whatever they pursue” (15). Dance inherently provides opportunities for personal growth physically, mentally, and socially. Furthermore, Anne Green Gilbert’s BrainDance can assist actors in numerous ways. Anne Green Gilberts dance studio, The Creative Dance Center, has a website, creativedance.org, that states the following benefits to the BrainDance:

The developmental movement patterns wire the central nervous system laying the foundation for sensory-motor development and lifelong learning. When patterns are missed or disrupted there may be missing gaps in a person's neurological development. These gaps can cause neurological dysfunction that may later appear as learning disabilities, behavior disorders, memory problems, sleep disorders, speech, balance or filtering problems, and a host of other difficulties that may disrupt the flow of normal development. Cycling through the BrainDance patterns on a daily basis may correct flaws in a person's perceptual process and reorganize the central nervous system to better develop proprioception, balance, attention, memory, eye-tracking, behavior, sensory integration, and motor skills. Neurological re-patterning coordinates all parts of the brain and body for emotional, social, and cognitive balance. (Gilbert “The Creative Dance Center”)
Lastly, the use of Laban’s Eight Efforts can also serve to benefit actors and their movement efficiency. Rudolf von Laban’s movement analysis theories provide a training method for actors. Laban's Eight Efforts, by focusing on qualitative changes in movement, can be an effective tool to this end. Laban looks at things this way. This helps develop these perceptions. These perceptions help understand purpose, which can then be applied in developing movement. Additionally, through the exploration of Laban’s Efforts, actors are able to begin thinking in the language of physical expression, to resolve how their body operates as a being in space, while developing and enhancing their kinesthetic awareness and proprioception (Royston 5). These efforts can be used for generating or describing movement and as an educational tool to link dance to acting in any drama course (Konie).

**Purpose of Study**

Dance is occasionally seen in high schools through an interdisciplinary format. For this study, a Dance for Acting Skills class was created in an effort to expose high school actors to dance movements. Dance is not a new medium for exploratory work in drama courses, although it seems it is not often a marriage found in high schools. Historically dance and theatre were not compartmentalized as our current American academia has made them (Empey 3). The collaboration of these two forms of communication, voice and movement, created classical Greek performances (3). During the Roman Empire, Pylades of Cilicia, credited with inventing pantomime around 22 BC, was a professional dancer who trained actors and dancers of tragedy (Kassing 59). The Middle Ages also had dance and drama integrated into entertainment in the form of secular dances (77). Things changed when “after the turn of the 20th century, dance as
educational tool, viewed as physical culture, was supported through the writings of dancers, physical educators, and other educators” (189). This aided in the support for dance as education and was a catalyst for further dance education in public schools. Although in America, the rise, fall, and struggle of dance education seems to stem from the actions of the federal government and many states inability to financially keep dance sustained within their school systems (Hiroki 12).

Over the past seven years of choreographing musicals, the researcher discovered that drama students express a fear of learning choreography. Students exhibit this fear of movement in auditions and later in rehearsals. Often just the word “dance” causes an immediate response of unease because students are not convinced they use their bodies well (Fox 34). While enhancing their overall acting skills, teaching drama students more concrete dance movements also aims to help their ability to make better acting choices. In dance class, students gain the tools and understanding to express themselves more creatively through movement (Heald 9). Actors’ hesitation to dance can be eliminated if they are more confident in their innate ability to move.

Another goal of this study is to attempt to develop the acting students’ kinesthetic awareness through the use of dance skills, the BrainDance, and Laban’s Efforts. By developing kinesthetic awareness through the BrainDance, dance movement understanding, and Laban techniques students can develop their acting skills as well as stimulate the actor’s imagination (Adrian 1). More specifically, teaching drama students a new way of moving with Laban’s Efforts could give them the tools to better develop their movement (Eitzen 17). This study aimed to teach Laban’s Efforts through a dance perspective of understanding. It could create a heightened kinesthetic awareness among
the actors, in addition to increased confidence in their ability to express their characters through movement. Finally, a broad purpose of this study was to expose the acting students to the benefits of dance, and allow them to have the opportunity to experience dance in their lives.

**Significance of Study**

As instructors teach and study dance in the twenty first century they should not be concerned with creating dancers who are recital or professional ready, rather they should be concerned with developing individuals with the power of physical expression through the study of dance (Mertz 12-13). Unification of theatre and dance can begin in secondary educational programs by developing a curriculum that focuses on educating one’s sense of self, in essence their physical and mental self (Heald 10). In return, this study could be a clear example for a high school course to find interdisciplinary benefits from dance movement.

Laban observed how the body moves relative to, “physical condition, environment, cultural issues, communication with other bodies, and how the universe at large affects the body physically and emotionally (Adrian 1). Education needs more perspectives such as Laban’s; more physical and mental collaboration in classrooms (Stephenson). Even simple “brain breaks” throughout a class period have proven to assist mental development in students (Meagher). A drama class and curriculum has the potential to be the ideal environment for actors to engage in physical experiences. One might conjure that a drama class is primarily experienced through spoken word. Some drama teacher may thrive on spoken word as the central theme in their curriculum. This may be common, but omitting movement and movement exploration makes acting
classes less effective, producing less meaningful actors. While this is a fruitful goal in educating students to be actors, it does not provide students with all the tools needed to be creative and expansive in their acting skills. The collaboration of both acting and dance creates increased options for possible ways to convey a message to an audience and to “achieve a proactive and engaging approach to performance” (Empey 5). Expressive movement, physical theatre, and dance embody a universal expression of humanity not always found in the spoken text, thus movement should be central alongside spoken word when developing curriculum for a drama class (Heald 12).

This study may serve to bridge a gap between acting and movement efficiency in secondary education through the use of dance. Studying dance allows students to refine their movement skills to be physically articulate, learn challenging steps and combinations, and eventually to choreograph movement, which in turn develops creative thinking from a physical perspective (Heald 13). Because movement is inevitable through human action, then movement, when learned in dance experiences, can enhance acting skills. Dance experiences support mental and physical cognitive expansion and teach students how to create from physical perspectives (Heald 10). This study will help to develop a global understanding for dance as an interdisciplinary tool in high school drama classes.

Finally, the significance of this study is to add to drama research fields and the global study of educational dance research. In essence, this study will add to the body of knowledge currently surrounding movement efficiency in actors through the use of dance and drama as united art forms in secondary education.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Brain Development and Physical Activity

Children are becoming increasingly unfit and unhealthy as physical exercise is being pushed to the side and cut from curriculum (Stephenson). Dance not only helps students to become physically fit but also mentally fit, especially when educators plan a brain-compatible dance class (Gilbert, *Brain Compatible Dance Education* 11). Studies show that maintaining a consistent exercise regimen can lead to less atrophy within the aging brain (Chaddock-Heyman et al. 1).

Dance develops the entire human essence as it serves all ends of personal development by advancing the physical self, exciting the imagination, challenging the mind, developing aesthetic understanding, and strengthening emotional quality within a person (Mertz 12). Allowing opportunities for a child to get up and move within the school day is critical for neurological development and also for cognitive abilities crucial to academic improvement (Stephenson). Furthermore, Sandra Minton states in the introduction of her book, *Using Movement to Teach Academics: The Mind and Body as One Entity*, that studies show The Arts like music and visual arts engage specific areas of the brain, but that highly complex movements like dancing, engage even more of the brain (6). Why then would schools not do everything in their power to offer dance courses to their students? Given the opportunity, dance has the potential to be integrated
into multiple facets of interdisciplinary education, increasing the possibility for dance to be experienced by all students as well as honoring kinesthetic and tactile learning needs.

School districts often have programs that allow for interdisciplinary approaches to meeting standards and aligning with current curriculum. For example, the Natrona County School District in Wyoming has an enrichment program called Discover. This program brings presentations by professionals into the student’s schools when teachers have in-service duties that require them to be gone from their classroom (About). One purpose for the Discover program is to eliminate the need for substitute teachers while enriching the students’ experiences and minds. The program is currently being reorganized and the biggest change is that presenters are being asked to align with the current curriculum and standards. This is an excellent opportunity for a dance educator to implement movement into students’ daily schedules.

In the magazine, Dance Education in Practice, Sharron Miller discusses interdisciplinary approaches within a New Jersey school (18). The principal of the school acknowledged that the younger students were kinesthetic learners and needed more opportunities to move within their curriculum (18). Miller and her teaching assistants found they weren’t thinking in terms of dance initially, rather initially in terms of math, therefore movement became a creative academic endeavor (18). In her book, Using Movement to Teach Academics: The Mind and Body as One Entity, Sandra Minton provides movement components that can be practiced by an educator so they can learn to transform their academic concepts into actions (1). Minton clearly explains that “the kinesthetic sense can be used in teaching and that many popular educational theories can be approached through movement-based lessons” (1). Furthermore, using movement in a
teacher’s curriculum is an approach frequently referred to as active learning. It can be infused with academic concepts in geography, multicultural studies, history, science, social studies, math, reading, writing, visual arts, music, and drama (1).

**Proprioception and the Kinesthetic Sense**

The body is the most important tool for human life. As proclaimed by Branislav Tomich in *The Body Can Speak*, all that an individual human body encompasses every thought, emotion, and feeling, determines how one’s “experience is expressed in some form of action through this amazingly articulate instrument that we call our body” (Mertz 80). Many humans are not comfortable with their bodies; they reject them, abuse them, or ignore them. This should be considered unfortunate, because the body is what carries us through life. Understanding the importance of one’s body and studying it may encourage a person to take better care of them self.

Sometimes referred to as “muscle memory”, the kinesthetic sense is the awareness of one’s movement (Sauerburger). Relatedly, Joseph Bennington-Castro states that proprioception is “the sense of position and movement in our limbs and trunk” (Bennington-Castro). It also includes “the sense of effort, the sense of force, and the sense of heaviness” (Bennington-Castro). Furthermore, muscle spindles, a type of sensory receptor within the muscles, cause proprioception to work (Bennington-Castro). The brain also communicates with the muscles through Golgi tendon organs. These tendon organs allow the brain to receive information about muscle tension (force), the amount of effort required for a certain motion (effort), and picking up and moving objects (heaviness) (Bennington-Castro). Dance contributes a strong connection to kinesthetic awareness and proprioception (Axe; Beauchamp).
In *Dance Imagery for Technique and Performance*, Eric Franklin states that “proprioception, the sense of limb positioning, to a considerable extent, can compensate for defects in the inner ear” (115). Furthermore, he continues that using the latissimus dorsi muscle sensors can allow for enhanced movement acting as a balance organ or “a pair of vast wing-like proprioceptors” (115). He continues that the more conscious one is of their own body in its full shape the better balance they will develop through proprioceptive engagement (115). Proprioception and kinesthesia are inadvertently practiced in everyday lives of students as they walk, reach, bend, and move. They are also further developed through physical education (PE) classes. While PE classes have value and importance in the American educational system, they also pose a threat to individuals who find it challenging to engage in a traditional PE class. Not all students find satisfaction or normalcy when participating in sports and furthermore feel it is a threatening experience. Some also feel less confident in themselves when in the competitive environment that sports present. An inherent threat is found in students who lose a desire to participate in the PE class, reflecting in an unsatisfactory grade given by the teacher.

PE tends to include a curriculum of exercise through sports. Sports can become competitive and stressful for some, which in turn causes the brain to release a brain cell destroying chemical, cortisol (Gilbert, *Brain Compatible Dance Education* 275). A positive alternative is brain-compatible dance education that allows students to learn to move with ease and fun.

Brain-compatible dance education is a philosophy about and an approach to teaching dance, which integrates current research on how the brain learns into the teaching of dance concepts and technique. Students learn best: through a multi-sensory approach (hear, see, say and do); when the material is authentic and
meaningful; when they are emotionally engaged and given opportunities for reflection; through social interaction and collaboration; when the material is challenging but achievable; when the feedback is positive, specific, timely, and learner-controlled; through novelty and repetition; when the material is developmentally appropriate and student-centered; when the material is presented sequentially and holistically, rather than randomly and in sub-parts; through a variety of teaching strategies. (Gilbert, “Brain Compatible Approach to Studio Dance”)

Dance, when taught in a brain-compatible way, causes the release of serotonin, a chemical that enhances a feeling of well-being and self-confidence (Gilbert, Brain Compatible Dance Education 275). Unfortunately, PE classes often do not explore an artistic way of exercising the human body. When the teacher recognizes each of the personal learning styles of the students, dance has the ability to enhance physical learning through an artistic process (Mainwaring and Krasnow 18).

Dance has been pushed aside as a valid art in education for too long. Not only is dance a valuable art form, but also it is a valuable form of educating students about their physical selves (Penrod and Plastino vii). Dance teaches individuals about their physical selves as a hands-on practice as well as about their artistic selves through creative explorations (Heald 9). This is similar to a drama class. Although as previously stated, drama classes often are lacking in their development of movement efficiency. Including dance in drama classes can have a lasting influence on the student’s movement skills and their personal skills. Skills of a dancer include physical abilities as well as cognitive skills related to controlling an individual’s body in an environment (Bläsing et al. forward). Having a cognitive perspective of one’s body can influence personal understanding beyond the physical and extend into the mind’s awareness of their body within relationships and communities. This in turn can lead individuals to new perspectives and new outlooks on life.
Skill Development through Dance

High School Students are typically vulnerable to lack of confidence and self-esteem. According to 11 Facts About Teens and Self Esteem, “Low self-esteem is a thinking disorder in which an individual view him/herself as inadequate, unlovable, and/or incompetent. Once formed, this negative view permeates every thought, producing faulty assumptions and ongoing self-defeating behavior”. Having better self-confidence and understanding of their bodies can help them to become positive and fruitful individuals as well as improve classroom culture (Meagher). Students need opportunities in a classroom to reinforce positive body image and develop body awareness; in return students attain self-effacing life skills with positive self-image and self-esteem, including developing support and respect for others (Mainwaring and Krasnow 15).

In Troy Dobosiewicz’s dissertation, Constructivism in the Acting Classroom: A Comprehensive Approach to Teaching Practical Aesthetics, Voice, and Movement, presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy, he presents information that individuals can develop habits that will allow them to overcome obstacles through discipline and perseverance (12). Furthermore, focusing oneself on any particular area of life will force an individual to develop good or bad habits, changing the brain physiologically (13). Dance has proven time and time again that it inherently enhances many life skills and personality traits through practice (Warburton 67; Penrod and Plastino 2; Gilbert, “The Creative Dance Center”; Mainwaring and Krasnow 15). Thus, the preceding information makes one wonder why dance is not a staple in public education? Perhaps the lack of an American cultural dance form, or the lack of dance in schools is in part due to the lack of an American dance
heritage, fear of what a body is capable of, or simply misconception of the role dance can fulfill. Please note it is understood that many schools throughout the United States have implemented dance classes in their daily schedule. For example, the Utah public school system has graduation requirements that incorporate dance as an elective alongside music, theatre, and visual art in their K-12 public school system (USOE). Thus, schools that implement dance into their core subject area are demonstrating their belief in dance as beneficial to students’ well-being. Considering the multiple advantages to implementing a dance curriculum, school districts need to become proactive in considering dance as an elective or interdisciplinary option.

**Relationship Between Dance and Drama**

One place dance is predominantly seen in schools is in the drama department, namely musical productions. Musicals were initially seen in American theatres as minstrel shows in the early nineteenth century (Kassing 163). *The Black Crook*, a musical mixed with German melodrama, scarce dialogue, and a slender plot connected by several ballets and tableaux’s, had a wonderful box-office success (Kassing 163). Almost eighty years later choreographers seized the Americana essence and “transported dance to the musical theater stage, creating new American hybrids of style”, incorporating jazz, modern ballet, tap, folk, ethnic, square, and other dance styles into works (Kassing 217). Today musical theater is used for enjoyment, confidence building, and as a means of learning (Speert). In an article titled *Benefits of Musical Theatre: Education*, the following is asserted.

Working on a musical production when the classroom is included improves learning skills necessary to high education. History teachers emphasize research as a tool in learning about a show’s time frame (*Hair* prompts discussion of the
nineteen-sixties), or in looking at how the theme of a show ties into today’s world (Porgy & Bess: how race was, and is, perceived in society). In English class, Shakespeare can be discussed as literature and performance when The Taming of the Shrew becomes Kiss Me, Kate. In math, algebra becomes immediately useful when related to a light board or blocking. Musicals can be an instrument of academic learning when the school or community theater productions include, or even allude to, what students are doing in the classroom (Speert).

Musicals inherently include dance and if approached and directed correctly can produce a student-centered comprehensive dance education (McCutchen 8). McCutchen further clarifies that “Comprehensive means that dance education is broad in scope, covering the many facets of dance including diverse styles and experiences” (8) and that in order for it to be student centered, educational dance curriculum must maintain four critical aspects for teaching and learning dance: kinesthetic-motor development, aesthetic-artistic development, cognitive-intellectual development, and psychological-social development. (64). Musicals provide an ideal situation/environment for a comprehensive student centered learning education of dance. Participating in a musical allow students the opportunity to develop their kinesthetic-motor development by learning, practicing, and performing dance. By making character choices in their acting and dance rehearsals and performances, students engage in aesthetic-artistic development. Cognitive-intellectual development is enhanced as students’ lines, blocking, and choreography are learned, memorized, and recited. Furthermore, students engage in a comprehensive dance education as they develop their psychological-social selves through experiences with fellow cast-members and directors. Unfortunately, musical theatre participation is usually experienced as an extracurricular activity after school and not a class option during the day.
Drama and dance both come from theatrical roots (Royston 1). They are both performing arts that communicate with the body as the primary tool. Drama and dance both encourage students’ bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, known as “the ability to use one’s body in highly differentiated and skilled ways, for expressive as well as goal directed purposes” (Gardner 206). A drama class is an area of study in secondary education where students tend to lend themselves to physical movement in task-oriented and creative ways. This means a drama class presents a vibrant environment for dance to be integrated into an interdisciplinary curriculum (Heald 8). A dance influenced acting curriculum, which encourages creative work, may be the answer to developing a high school actor’s full body comprehension and their most complete expression of their art (Beaune 26). White and Battye stated that exposing young actors to expressive movement is the most important tool needed to learn how to become a well-understood and confident actor (93).

Even the most confident actor at times finds it difficult to know what they should do with their hands. This and similar issues disengage the actor’s mind from their body, resulting in, “a gap between physical and verbal expression, and a lack of tools to make a complete character” (De Vries 2). To act without physical competence and efficiency in movement will misconstrue what an actor is trying to communicate (Mertz 79). Dance is a tool that can enhance an actor’s acting skills, especially their movement efficiency.

**Laban and Movement Skills**

Utilizing tools such as Anne Green Gilbert’s BrainDance and Laban’s Efforts could further enhance the understanding of dance as a tool for acting skill mastery. The BrainDance curriculum “is based on fifteen dance concepts adapted from Rudolf Laban’s
movement vocabulary that relate to the other arts, interdisciplinary subjects and to many aspects of living” (Gilbert, *Brain Compatible Dance Education* 11). Laban was a pioneer of physical exploration and known as one of the most important movement theorists of the twentieth century (Potter 73). He observed bodies in action, at work, and at play and discovered that the human body moves for a reason (Laban and Lawrence, *Effort* viii). In *Movement for Actors*, Nicole Potter explains, “A physical action is any move that is calculated toward achieving a goal or satisfying a need. In Laban’s vocabulary, this is the equivalent of elevating a move from functional toward expressive” (73). Laban discovered that movement was the outward expression of an inner motivation; that movement and environment in turn affect the inner life and emotional/mental experience of the mover (Stirling 34). He determined that humans move with effort and that these efforts, or moment-to-moment relations, are influenced by emotions. (Adrian 8). Laban believed that the actions of the body and its structure were some of the greatest miracles to exist (Laban and Ullman, *The Mastery of Movement* 19). He believed that the inner life was directly reflected through every single movement in the body, and that the origin of movement was inner excitement of nerves caused “either by an immediate sense impression or by a complicated chain of formerly experienced sense impressions stored in the memory” (19). Laban further explains efforts of the human body and their impetus in his book *The Mastery of Movement*.

Rationalistic explanations of the movements of the human body insist on the fact that it is subject to the laws of inanimate motion. The *weight* of the body follows the law of gravitation. The skeleton of the body can be compared to a system of levers by which distances and directions in *space* are reached. These levers are set in motion by nerves and muscles which furnish the strength needed to overcome the weight of the parts of the body that are moved. The *flow* of motion is controlled by nerve centres reacting to external and internal stimuli. Movements take a degree of *time*, which can be exactly measured. The driving force of movement is the
energy developed by a process of combustion within the organs of the body. The fuel consumed in the process is food. There is no doubt about the purely physical character of the production of energy and its transformation into movement. (19)

Laban’s Eight Efforts and their components (weight, space, time, energy/flow) are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Energy/Flow</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punch</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
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<td>Quick</td>
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<td>Press</td>
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<td>Glide</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flick</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Float</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Free</td>
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*Fig. 1. Laban’s Eight Efforts and their corresponding components*

Understanding how Laban’s efforts reflect emotional expression, or the way one feels inside, could influence a student’s self-control and help them develop meaningful and articulate verbal and non-verbal communication (Laban and Ullman, *The Mastery of Movement* 68). Actors physicalize a character and the character’s thoughts through their body; they must be able to use the appropriate rhythms, spatial patterns, and energy qualities in their body to articulate a character’s personality (De Vries 5-6). Laban taught his acting students that they needed to know and discover the source of their characters’ actions and this comes from combining intent with physical action.

Laban’s Eight Efforts serve in the educational worlds of both dance and theatre, thereby making it a seamless tool for actors unpacking movement efficiency when developing characters. His influence is attained by individuals that are “properly set-up in offices by ergonomic consultants trained in Laban movement theories, students of the
physical arts (i.e., dancers, mime artists, actors, or professional athletes), therapists, dance historians, musicians, scholars, or educators” (Fernandes 21). Thus his influential theory is entrenched in many professions that deal with general movement, movement awareness, and movement comprehension (21). When developing characters for a scene, Barbara Adrian found the movement theories of Laban, including the eight efforts, provided the “necessary functional and expressive skills that would clarify the actor’s intent and thus create clarity of meaning” (3). She further explains that her desire as a teacher of Laban for actors is to help them

1) Learn what messages they are sending into the world when they move and speak,
2) identify their habitual patterns and how these habits can impinge on new expressive choices, and 3) develop skills related to breath support, tone, range, articulation, dynamic alignment, balance, flexibility, strength, and stamina. (3)

Furthermore, she believes that these skills encourage the actor’s imagination and are applied to enhancing communication with others through body, speech, and voice as well as constructing relationships to kinesphere. Actors can learn and develop movement efficiency when engaging in Laban’s Efforts thus enhancing their acting skills. Furthermore, Laban’s Efforts can also add dance movements to an actor’s movement efficiency in a practical and effective manner.

**Supplementing Acting Skills through Dance**

Effective and clear acting involves a combination of talents: “intelligence, imagination, psychological freedom, physical dexterity, vocal strength and flexibility, emotional depth, and the ability to learn from mistakes, criticism, and observation” (Cohen 1). An actor may be able to enhance his or her physical dexterity by applying dance knowledge to acting (De Vries ii). That is not to say actors take a separate course
in modern dance, but that the class actors take should have a fusion of acting and dance as a means to enhance acting skills by fine tuning movement efficiency. Inherent in the practice of dance are acting skills such as breath support, range of movement, articulation, dynamic alignment, balance, flexibility, strength, and stamina (Adrian 8). In Eric Franklin’s experience of dance, theoretical exercises helped him to attain better dance skills such as conscientiousness of his body surface, directing attention through movement, moment-to-moment change of complete inner body volume, and enhanced movement quality (xi). Comparing the skills needed for quality acting to the skills attained by taking a dance class reveals the ability for dance to influence actors. Specifically, as long as the dance movements are relatable to the actors work in developing their character so they can have “mastery of whole-body responsiveness to stimuli moment-to-moment” (Adrian 1) within a scene.

Movement classes were implemented into American acting programs in the sixties, seventies, and eighties in an effort to enhance “stage movement” but were modeled entirely on a dance class (Adrian 1). Because the dance class was separate of the acting class it had little to do with the content of the characters or acting qualities, therefore the class became a type of physical education for actors (De Vries 3). This inhibited the actors because they were focused on learning exact choreography or dance technique and not the hallmarks of a well-trained actor, which are “moving and speaking on impulse” (Adrian 1). Fusing dance experiences into the structure of an acting class while utilizing movement improvisation, character psychophysical analysis, and choreographic development of movement intentions could serve to connect the skills needed for acting with dance expressivity and practice.
Currently, many American acting programs have found the ability to fuse movement into the physical training of actors through techniques such as: Laban Movement Analysis, Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method®, Body-Mind centering™, and Bartenieff Fundamentals (Adrian 2). While these movement techniques all have valuable use for actors, it seems that dance could serve the same function if planned appropriately. Thus a Dance for Acting Skills class was created for this researcher’s study in an effort to develop movement efficiency and clear character development. The following questions were addressed in the process of this study.

Q1 How does a dance movement based acting class affect students’ acting skills?

Q2 Can students communicate more effectively and develop better non-verbal and verbal communication skills through kinesthetic understanding of dance movements?

Q3 Can dance movement skills improve the students’ non-verbal acting skills in quality of energy, timing, and spatial awareness?

Q4 How can learning dance in a drama course influence a student’s day to day life and their life skills?

Q5 How can Laban’s eight efforts bridge the gap from drama to dance in an effort to develop better movement efficiency?
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This research explored potential in dance movement experiences and enhancement of acting skills, particularly stage movement, through the use of a Dance for Acting Skills class from a qualitative investigation. The study was conducted in a ninth through twelfth grades high school in the Rocky Mountain region with a predominantly Caucasian student population. This study had fourteen students in their third and fourth year drama class. The students ranged from fifteen to eighteen years old and consisted of ten females and four males.

Identified as an International Baccalaureate World School, the high school serves 1,650 students. The school’s drama classroom and theatre auditorium were under construction during the study. These students were in a temporary classroom with concrete floors. It was a forty by sixty-foot space with an adequate amount of space to explore movement from a dance teacher’s perspective. Tables and chairs were stacked to the side each morning at the beginning of the class. The research site’s classroom was quiet and undisturbed during the class time; however, there were several days that the researcher would arrive for the class to discover many students’ missing due to a school-wide assembly or special event held during the class time. This posed a threat to accomplishing all that was planned in the curriculum, thus modifications accommodated
for the time allotted with the students. The class met every other week-day for eighty minutes from 8:20 a.m. to 9:40 a.m.

The teacher of the drama class and this researcher looked at a variety of experience levels to conduct the study with, but eventually decided on a higher level of drama students. This was so that there was a solid foundation of acting skills existing in the classroom. They were also chosen because it was presumed that more advanced students would have more confidence in their acting skills, engaging in the movement explorations with full intention and dedication.

Tools used for this study included one survey, four questionnaires, student interviews, and a teacher interview. Other tools used for organization of the study included schedules for each day. These schedules helped to keep the researcher on task and on time throughout each class. Surveys and questionnaires were given in paper form and completed by the students in longhand, directly on the forms. Each consent form was completed within ten minutes.

The student and teacher interviews were recorded on this researcher’s computer using GarageBand. The Voice Memo application was used on the researcher’s phone for a backup recording. The questions to the interviews were printed and handed out to the students and teacher one week in advance so they had a chance to get acquainted with the questions and time to prepare their answers. Each student was able to finish their interview within five minutes. The teacher interview was finished under ten minutes.

The researcher used visual aids such as handouts, PowerPoint presentations, and terminology posters that were created by the researcher. One handout was borrowed from the teacher, which he had purchased from the Drama Teacher Academy (Drama PD on
Demand). Another handout was downloaded from the National Core Arts Standards online (Elements of Dance). Lastly, the researcher used peer and teacher evaluations during the duet scenes for constructive feedback. These were created by this researcher using a model from Brenda McCutchen’s book, *Teaching Dance as Art in Education* and can be found in the appendices (381).

The instruments created by this researcher were modeled after instruments used in previous studies that have proven their validity. Questions were carefully selected in an effort to avoid subjectivity to any specific answer or outcome. The reliability of the created instruments was sustained by using current theses’ instruments as models. The theses used were published within the last five years. Furthermore, the researcher, her instructors, and the committee chair made fine-tuned revisions to the instruments.

Initially this researcher contacted the drama teacher about conducting her study in his classroom. Once he confirmed, the high school administration was contacted. A letter of approval was received by the administration. At this time the proper protocol was followed according to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the researcher’s institution. Once the IRB approved the research material and all forms involved, the researcher scheduled a day to come to the classroom to make her introduction. At this introduction she explained the extent of the study in their class as well as the scheduled dates the study would take place. She ended by handing out consent forms for the students to have signed by guardians and returned to her at their soonest convenience. Because the class did have some eighteen year olds, some consent forms were signed and collected that day. Students were given one month to have the consent forms completed and returned to the researcher.
The data were analyzed by this researcher by first dividing the surveys and each of the questionnaires and reading through all instruments. She then read through the data again with the goal of dividing the data into similar responses. Similarity was found in word choice; therefore responses were coded and organized accordingly. Lastly, she took any pertinent data that unpacked relevant evidence toward her research questions, and typed this separately or further use within the body of the thesis. All students whose data were used in the body of the thesis were given fictitious names to maintain anonymity and to honor assent forms.

The researcher transcribed interviews by listening to the interviews and typing the responses of each question. Once all interviews were transcribed, codes were assigned based on similarity among all students. Again, answers that could serve as substantial data to aide in answering the research questions were separated for further use in the body of the text. Any students who were quoted within the body of the thesis were given a fictitious name to maintain anonymity and to honor consent forms.

**Understanding Movement and My Body**

Days one, two, and three were designed to focus on the actor’s body and to explore how the body moves. Day one began by having the students spread out in the room, allowing enough room to stretch their arms in all directions. The researcher started by describing and demonstrating basic arm and foot positions in dance, the difference between rotated and parallel legs, and bending of the knees (or “plié” in dance). The researcher asked the class to shadow her positions by executing them as she demonstrated. Positions of the arms included: high fifth arms stretched above the head; second position arms stretched wide at shoulder height; low fifth arms extended long
with hands below the waist; and first position arms extended in a round shape in front of the body and perpendicular to the stomach. Foot positions included: rotated first position with heels together and toes apart making the shape of a \( v \); rotated second position with feet standing wider than hips and toes pointing out; rotated third with feet standing one heel in the middle of the opposite foot with both toes pointed outward; rotated fourth with feet standing one foot in front of the other about a foot length away and toes pointing out; and rotated fifth standing with one heel touching the opposite toe making a sideways \( v \).

They also included parallel: first with feet standing toes pointing forward about a little less than hip width apart; parallel second with toes pointing forward and the feet wider than the hips; parallel fourth standing with the toes pointing forward one foot about a foot length in front of the other; parallel fifth standing toes pointing forward one heel next to the other toes; and parallel sixth standing with the feet directly next to each other with the toes pointing forward. The researcher guided the students through rotation exercises with the leg, specifically the large thigh bone called the femur, and the hip socket. This was done by having the students balance on one leg with the alternate leg outstretched to the side so that the tip of the toe was touching the ground. They were asked to pivot, or rotate, their outstretched leg inward and outward as the researcher explained that this is how the legs rotate in the hip socket.

The researcher followed this with a warm-up. This warm-up started with the Anne Green Gilbert’s BrainDance and moved into more aerobic movements. After the BrainDance they were instructed to shadow the researcher and jump imaginary rope fifteen times, jog in place for fifteen breaths, and perform fifteen jumping jacks. Next they walked around the room giving high fives to their peers as they passed them.
Afterward, the class was lead through a stretch that engaged in: a forward fold with feet hip width apart; a standing lateral stretch reaching the left arm over the head to the right and then the right arm over the head to the left; a hip flexor stretch in runner’s lunge; a wide stance forward fold; a guided neck stretch; ankle circles while balancing; a knee hold in front of the stomach while balancing to release their hip flexor for five breaths and held to the side for five breaths; and quadriceps stretches on each leg, by grabbing the ankle and pulling it toward the buttock.

After the warm up the students were taught basic axial (in place) and locomotor (traveling) dance steps that are found in jazz and modern dance. Axial steps included a pencil turn, pivot turn, ball-change front/side/back, and kick ball-change. Locomotor steps included: walking forward and backward; skipping forward and backward; chassé or gallop front/side/back; prance step; three step turn; body halving; step-cross touch side; and step-cross ball-change. These steps were taught to the students so they had a framework of dance steps to connect to everyday movements used in stage movement, and as a reference to explore during future Laban exercises.

Finally, the class was given a handout explaining the Elements of Dance, found in appendix 9, followed by a discussion of these elements with the class. Then the students were shown a PowerPoint introducing and explaining kinesthetic awareness and proprioception. The researcher then guided a discussion and basic physical exploration surrounding the idea of kinesthetic awareness and proprioception and how they are important to acting. The goal for the first day of class was for students to be introduced to facts, terms, and basic concepts of dance steps, the BrainDance, Laban’s Efforts,
kinesthetic awareness, proprioception, and movement exploration. Students ended the class with the survey found in appendix 1.

Days two and three began by asking the students questions surrounding kinesthetic awareness and proprioception in an effort to refresh their memory and guide their thoughts toward these concepts while they moved. Then the class proceeded in the same way as day one and followed with the same structure and exercises through the axial and locomotor movements. On day two the students were shown a PowerPoint that introduced Rudolf Laban and identified the Eight Efforts he created. After this PowerPoint the students were asked to find another person in the class that had a similar hand size as them and become partners with that individual. In pairs, the students were asked to show each other two movements that resembled the effort the researcher called out. The researcher called out each of the eight efforts (punch, press, slash, wring, dab, glide, flick, and float) while giving sufficient time for each partner to demonstrate two movements for their partner between each effort. Students were instructed to create unique movements that were different from each other’s and were not literal mimicry of the effort. For example, students were not allowed to do a karate chop for slash or to punch their fists forward for punch. The students finished the day two with their first questionnaire.

On day three, after the usual warm up and dance exercise practices, the students were reminded of Laban’s eight efforts by identifying and defining them with a PowerPoint. They then participated in two exercises that the researcher created, in pairs, called Bodythinking and Bodyspeaking (McCutchen 76-77). These terms were found in Brenda McCutchen’s book, Teaching Dance as Art in Education found in appendices
eleven and twelve (76). At this point the researcher was able to begin making connections toward her first research question: How does a dance movement based acting class affect students’ acting skills?

Knowledge and Comprehension:
The Actor as a Choreographer

On day four and five the researcher began class in the same fashion as previously done through axial and locomotor movement explorations. Next students were given a fill-in-the-blank poem titled *I am*, found in appendix 13. Students were asked to individually fill in the blanks to their poem. After everyone finished this, they were asked to choose four lines that they liked the best. They were then instructed to choose two that they preferred most out of those four.

Next students were instructed to find a space in the room to create movement that will be performed while speaking the two lines of their poems. They received the rest of class time to work on this and were asked to finish and refine these small works at home. They were instructed to have established, choreographed movement throughout the two spoken lines and to create purposeful movement that conveys meaning. Students were instructed to have these works ready to present to the class the following class period. The students were also asked to memorize lines of a peer’s poem in which they would recite after their peers choreographed phrase was presented. The goal of this was to compare and contrast the poem with and without movement.

Day five began like the previous classes with the warm-up, and carried through axial and locomotors steps. Then students were given a few minutes to review and practice their choreographed works. Each student presented their choreographed poem, followed by their poem without movement recited by a peer. After each student
presented, the following questions were asked by the researcher and verbally answered by the presenting students: Who is your character? What is the physical life of you character? How do they engage in movement on a daily basis? What type of personality do they have? and What are some behavior and emotion patterns of the character? They were also asked to elaborate on some of their moment choices and why they had made them. Other students in the class were then allowed to ask any questions they had regarding their peers’ choreographed poems. The students of the class were then asked to describe, by raise of hand, what they thought was interesting and what they questioned about the performance. The researcher was seeking to find out if students could communicate more effectively and develop better non-verbal and verbal communication skills through kinesthetic understanding of dance movements.

**Comprehension and Application:**

**The Actor as a Choreographer**

Day six began as usual with the BrainDance, a brief aerobic warm up, and a stretch. Then the students were lead through a directed exercise exploring locomotor and axial steps through improvisation with Laban’s efforts. The researcher would call out a locomotor or axial step and an effort and the students would use improvisation to explore the effort layered on that step. After that students engaged in an Impulse Improv that was found in the Drama Teacher Academy resources on Laban, provided by the classroom teacher. The researcher modified the improvisation to match concepts of the class. This improvisation is found in appendix 14.

Students were assigned to arrive to this class with duet scenes of their choice. After the Impulse Improv students were asked to choose one of the two scenes that they like the most. They were then placed into pairs and given instructions for the duet scene
assignment, which was the culminating project of the Dance for Acting Skills class. Students were instructed to read through their scenes with their partners and choose the scene they felt most comfortable memorizing and creating. After this the researcher asked the students to briefly discuss with their partner emotional qualities of the scene, which eight efforts might be related to which emotional qualities, a brief character breakdown, and their character’s movement patterns. Then the researcher handed out two forms for each person to fill out about their character. These were taken from the Drama Teacher Academy resources on Laban. One was a Character Analysis (appendix 15) and the other a Character Psychophysical Profile (appendix 8). They were instructed to write out the answers on a separate piece of paper and given the rest of the class time to start working on these. Students were expected to have these handouts finished and ready to show the researcher by the next class period. Class six ended with the students completing their second questionnaire. The researcher was searching to begin unpacking the following question: Can dance movement skills improve the students’ non-verbal acting skills in quality of energy, timing, and spatial awareness?

Days seven and day eight were used as rehearsal days for the students. Each of these days began with the BrainDance, led into the aerobic warm-up, and then the stretch. Next, students were instructed to work on their scenes with their partners as the researcher moved around the classroom to each group and looked over their Character Analysis and Character Psychophysical Profile. The researcher took this time to discuss the choices students made on paper and were then asked how they intended to fulfill their character’s roles in a physical manner. Each group was instructed to choreograph their scenes in a similar fashion to their two-line choreographed poems. Students were asked to
have purposeful movement established and ready to present to the researcher for the following class period. The next class period, the eighth day, the researcher watched each scene and gave feedback to guide the students using the Teacher Assessment form found in appendix 17.

Day nine and ten were dedicated to the duet scene peer review. Each group presented their duets while their peers in the class watched and gave written feedback using the Peer Assessment form that is in appendix 10. The class was given a few minutes to finish filling out their Peer Assessments after each duet was performed. In an effort to manage time, only three students were chosen to give verbal feedback after each duet scene. The researcher made sure to rotate through all students in the class, giving each student the opportunity to speak. The researcher and the teacher gave additional written feedback to each duet using the Teacher Assessment form as well as verbal feedback after the student verbal feedback was finished. All assessment forms were collected and given to each duet for review. Finally, all students were instructed to rework their scenes according to the feedback they received. These revised scenes were then presented in their final form on the eleventh and twelfth days of class. Peer and teacher assessments and feedback were given and then the final two questionnaires were distributed for completion.

On the thirteenth and fourteenth days the students and teacher were interviewed. These interviews questions are found in appendices 6 and 7. These interviews gave insight to the remaining two research questions: How can learning dance in a drama course influence a student’s day to day life and life skills? How can Laban’s Eight Efforts bridge the gap from drama to dance in an effort to develop better movement efficiency?
Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored potential in dance movement experiences for enhancement of acting skills, particularly stage movement, through the use of a Dance for Acting Skills class within the construct of a qualitative investigation. Working with a classroom of eager acting students made the study more exciting and developmentally appropriate for advancing their acting skills. The construction of this curriculum was motivating for the researcher and integration of dance into stage movement opened the mind of the researcher to the vast possibilities of dance education. Developing instruments for qualitative analysis was inspiring for the researcher and established further knowledge into these tools and their use within a classroom. Curriculum developed for this study will be explored again in the near future to be continually refined.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

Student Survey

The students of the Dance for Acting Skills class were given a survey at the end of their first class with the researcher. The survey was distributed in an effort to understand the student’s previous knowledge of dance or movement, and its relation to acting. The survey was also seeking information to better understand opinions the students had about the class. Lastly, the researcher was interested if any of the students had taken a dance class before. Six students had not taken any previous dance classes while four answered that they had taken dance classes in the past.

All of the students had valuable and interesting perspectives of dance in relation to acting. Some noted comments were that dance: brings acting to life, ties everything together, expresses without words, and that it can strengthens character decisions, as well as helps differentiate character. One student even described dance in relation to acting with a simile. She wrote that she “knew that movement is like the eggs in the cake that is theatre. It mixes with vocals, memorization, understanding, etc., to make a whole product that is (usually) good.”

The second question revealed mostly positive perspectives about taking the Dance for Acting Skills class. Students were excited, open-minded, and felt they had nothing to lose. One student was honest and stated that she wasn’t interested in dance unless it was required for a part she was auditioning for. Other students stated that they hoped it would
help them grow as an actor, develop character analysis, move with determination, and express themselves better. One student even stated that they wished it were a class in school.

**Questionnaires**

**Questionnaire One**

The first questionnaire was given at the end of the second class. This questionnaire was created to determine if the students had a new perspective on movement’s influence on their acting skills. It was also used to determine if their point of view of dance influenced their acting skills. Out of the thirteen completed questionnaires that were finished, ten students believed their point of view had changed, and three students determined that it had not changed.

Students described different ways in which their perspective had changed. Some explained that they were enjoying the class and that they were now more open to movement explorations. One student wrote that it brought “more attention to smaller movements.” Others clarified that they were now able to “better understand how their body could be used as a tool and that movements replace speech.” When discussing character, students attested that it would help them to get into characters in the future and change the way they look at characters when determining how to project feelings. A few other students stated that it allowed them to be more expressive and more open minded. One student admitted that they thought the class would be dumb but afterwards felt it was fun. Finally, one student determined that it made them “sweat and work flexibility but weren’t sure how it applied to acting”, while another felt that their perspective hadn’t changed because they had not learned any new movements.
Questionnaire Two

The researcher distributed the second questionnaire at the end of day six. This questionnaire, completed by nine students, was used to determine if the students were processing how they could use movement to enhance acting skills. Students explained that they will use what they have learned to give their motions motivation, break the awkward shell around their acting, make decisions with their character, and feel less awkward about moving around and using Laban efforts at the same time.

The researcher was also interested in how students were able to explain their understanding about the parallel between movement and spoken text, as well as how movement and spoken text convey deliberate meaning when fused together by Laban Effort intentions. Students attested that they had become more aware of movements to convey emotion and meaning, and that movement inflicts feelings and meaning behind what is being spoken. Furthermore, students believed that “Laban’s Efforts can drive a point or show emotions better conveying subtle meaning not spelled out in text, and bringing forth emotions that convey inner and outer thought to an audience.” A couple of students wrote that they did not feel a connection and that they simply did not understand the question. Students who responded to this question with clear understanding also demonstrated this through their performances. While the student who did not answer the question also admitted in the survey that she was not interested in movement unless it was required for a role she was going to audition for. This student will be referred to as Jamie to keep her anonymity. Jamie was hesitant throughout this entire class. She often complained of the movement’s being painful and uncomfortable, and stated in the first questionnaire that she was becoming a better “bodythinker” and “bodyspeaker” allowing
her to better understand herself, but that “these movements have begun to put pain in my muscles.” This reflection of her experience led the researcher to wonder if she had an extremely low pain tolerance, a lack of physical activity in her life, or if she had a type of physical debilitation. Regardless, this class was constantly a struggle for Jamie and often evoked complaints and negative non-verbal response.

**Questionnaire Three**

Day ten concluded with questionnaire three in which the researcher sought to understand students’ knowledge gained through relationships between the use of time and space in movement and spoken text. Out of eleven completed questionnaires, one student proclaimed, “[T]ext without movement is boring while movement without text can be entertaining.” Other students stated that the relationship between the use of space in movement and spoken text can help strengthen meaning and emotion behind spoken word, that both build off of each other and are used to tell something, and that movement furthers the emotion and energy of spoken text. Students also explained that the aforementioned relationship helps convey emotion more than speech alone.

The student’s testaments gave value to the researcher’s content of the class. The researcher was also able to better understand what the students already knew in relation to what they were learning. One student explained that by taking this class they had discovered that “an actor will be successful if both the relationship between the timing of movements and spoken text are in sync.” Another student asserted, “While not every line requires movement it still must be prepared so that it is planned out to look natural.” One student attested that, “Timing is crucial, if you put a gesture on the wrong line it completely changes the meaning behind the movement.” Another student explained that
timing is part of sending a message through movements. Jamie stated that she felt “it important to get the timing of movements with the words, if not, there are too many pauses.” Lastly one student, called Sarah to maintain anonymity, claimed to struggle with the physical development of her character and stated that “Choreographing a scene feels robotic, but timing it will help the delivery of the text and the movement to move more naturally.” She understood the importance but found it still difficult to mentally and physically develop.

The researcher realized that these students found the idea of choreographing movement, or structuring movement to their scenes, was awkward and not within their natural, most comfortable approach for developing their scenes and characters. This made the researcher reflect on past experiences with dancers when she asked them to speak while they danced. The researcher discovered a struggle dancers had with layering this additional component to their performance. Erin Empey explained that she also “found that the idea of adding voice onstage for dance, and equalizing the communication levels in a dance performance, has been greeted, with some apprehension” (27). She also claims that the sacrifice of one’s self must radiate from the emotional connection to the character, action, or the concept of the work at hand (17). The researcher believes that students such as Jamie and Sarah had a hard time developing physical proficiency due to their mental and physical struggle with the commitment to the new approach. Therefore, they were not able to fully connect on an emotional level to their character’s psychophysical development.
**Questionnaire Four**

The fourth questionnaire was distributed for completion directly after the third questionnaire on day ten. Eleven students completed this questionnaire. The researcher was interested in what students would take away with them from this class, as well as other observations of their peers throughout the class. Some students claimed that after having the Dance for Acting Skills class, they cared more about the character, how they stood and walked, and not just about their characters’ lines. Other students ascertained that they cared more about paying attention to movement and how characters interact, finding the connection between words and movement, the natural movements, and more action in conjunction with the words. Nevertheless, one student claimed that preparing for movement took up more time and that they felt they did not get to really develop their voice and emotion for their character. Lastly, a student claimed to care more about knowing what they were saying, memorization, and understanding of words so that they are sending that knowledge to the audience through movement and diction.

In observation of peers in the class, students felt that they witnessed their peers to be stronger at conveying emotion, more movement oriented, and moving well as their characters. Several students observed that they all struggled but grew from the experience and that everyone took the class seriously and learned about movement. Some proclaimed that in observation of their peers, they learned how much movement can improve a scene. One student said that, “We love what we do, know how to critique kindly, we want to know how to get better, and take critiques well.” Another student simply wrote that if you do not know your character then you do not know your lines or movement.
Interviews

Student Interview

Students were given the opportunity to be interviewed by the researcher. This gave the students a chance to verbalize their experiences and also gave the researcher an opportunity to receive a one-on-one perspective from the students. Questions all had a definite answer, and then a prompt was given by the researcher to elaborate the answer.

The students were thorough and clear in their responses. When students were asked to reflect on the Dance for Acting Skills class and decide if their point of view had changed concerning how movement can influence their acting skills, three said it had not changed while the remaining ten of the class decided it did. The three that stated it had not changed claimed it was because they already knew the importance, and the rest said it had changed because they now knew how important movement was to acting. Some claimed that the class had pushed them more into adding movements into their emotion, many stated they were much more open with their movements and all that is possible, and several claimed that it was nice to know what to do with them self to feel like they were truly creating a character. One student said that it made her think about movement more, but that she believes it will take a lot of reminders and time to learn to do it automatically. Another student found it difficult to reorganize her rehearsal time. For example, she was not able to just sit and memorize but had to stand and work though movement and the physical creation of her character as well. Sarah claimed that,

Before I took this class all I would do is indicate what I am saying with my hands and now I reflect on the character as a person, their natural abilities, and their natural movements. I feel like having taken this class I have become more natural in my acting.
This is a particularly insightful reflection on the class and the influence movement had on her acting skills. While this idea of structuring movement and choreographing it in conjunction with the scene development seemed robotic for her early on in the class, she was able to dig deep and allow it to become a natural part of the scene by the end of the class. Other students felt that they were given the tools to have a broader spectrum of acting, which helped them be less nervous when acting because they now know what to do with their hands and body.

When students were asked how they felt about their movement skills and their ability to incorporate them into their acting skills, all but one student felt they were improved. Jamie felt that she had improved, but that she still needed more work. She said that if she incorporated movement in advance and “not just off the top of my head” then she felt good about it. It was encouraging to hear from Jamie. Although she struggled with ideas of movement and exploration of movement throughout the class, ultimately she still grew and connected to the importance of its integration into her movement skills. One student seemed excited about the discoveries he had made in class. He claimed that he did not glue his arms to his side as much anymore, and that he could see himself working on this over the next two years of theatre performance while he is in college. Overall, students felt they had improved and were eager to continue improving. This encouraged the researcher, as she is most interested in exposing students to the benefits of dance and inspiring them to feel more comfortable about signing up for dance classes in the future.

The fourth question asked if students were able to better understand others in an acting scene after having taken this Dance for Acting Skills class. Again, all but one
student agreed they were able to understand others better. Jamie claimed that as an audience member she felt more emotion and more connection with their characters. This told the researcher that when the audience is able to connect with the character on stage, then the actor can connect emotionally to that character. The researcher believes that emotional connections to one’s character development allows for movements to be natural and relatable to the audience and the other actors on stage. When actors on stage can connect with each other, then the energy of the scene becomes relatable and tangible for audience members.

The next question asked if students would take a dance class if it were offered in school. Every student said yes. One student said that he would take a dance class and that he believed it is something all students would enjoy. Jamie said she would take a dance class if it meant bettering her acting skills. While Sarah said that she believed it would be really fun and would help kids that are not in a drama class with being more confident. Just as the researcher previously stated, having better self-confidence and understanding of their bodies can help them to become positive and fruitful individuals as well as to improve classroom culture (Meagher). Considering self-confidence is typically lacking in the teenage years, it is insightful to read that students believe dance and drama can help to develop positivity among high school students. Sarah also believed that a dance class would help actors get rid of stage fright. She said:

That’s kind of what drama does, it helps people to get up in front of people without judgement and it helps them to speak in front of others for presentations. If they were to take a dance class instead of a drama class I think it would help their shyness in front of others in the same way.
Responses like this are inspiring and valuable to the dance field. The students made it clear they saw dance class to be just as beneficial as drama class. Thus, developing a dance program in a school district and state that does not have dance programs seems within reach when thirteen out of thirteen students individually said they would take a dance class if it were offered.

The final question reflected on whether they believed understanding movements meanings have benefited them and how they would be able to use the skills learned in their everyday lives. All thirteen students believed that their understanding of movement would benefit them in their everyday lives. This included other classes in school, other activities outside of school, and everyday life experiences with friends, family, and teachers. Sarah explained that:

I think better understanding their meanings is going to help me with other people outside of school, because it’s going to help me understand or pick up on their body language too. And having that ability to read body language will help me in a sense of knowing if they are sad or angry and better prepare me for a situation that could happen if I weren’t able to read body language.

Her insight told the researcher that not only has this class helped her to develop as an actor, but also as a person in society, and as the researcher pointed out before, students need opportunities in a classroom to reinforce positive body image and to develop body awareness; in return students will attain self-efficacy life skills with positive self-image and self-esteem, including developing support and respect for others (Mainwaring and Krasnow 15). When students spend all of their classes seated at a desk, they are missing out on the opportunity to develop the physical ability to use their bodies for movement efficiency and strong interpersonal communication skills.
Teacher Interview

The teacher interview gave the researcher an educator’s perspective as well as an insider’s perspective of student’s growth throughout the class. The teacher will be referred to as Mr. James to maintain anonymity. When the researcher asked Mr. James if he thought that the Dance for Acting Skills class benefited the students within his high school acting program and if students’ understanding of movement’s meanings will benefit them in other classes in school, other activities outside of school, and in their everyday life experiences with friends, family, and teachers, he said yes. Mr. James stated that,

I think having, first of all, a system that they can use, helped them out quite a bit to get them thinking about gesture and movement. I like the fact that it gave them tools to explore the physical life of the characters. One of the biggest things we teach in theatre is interpersonal communication and how to effectively communicate with another person. How we communicate with our face and with our body. And all of those tools that make you a successful part of society, I think are embodied in what we did in that class as far as movements and its meaning.

The researcher believed this was gratifying toward development of her curriculum. Furthermore, the researcher was excited that future development of this curriculum could begin where she left off with this study and build upon what already exists. When the researcher asked Mr. James if he felt his students had improved their acting skills after learning about movement qualities and their meaning, he responded with a resounding “yes.” He explained that he believed they were, “more committed to their characters and also the relationship to each other, the scenes felt a lot more natural and that the characters were fighting for something.” The use of the word natural again leads the researcher to believe that the Dance for Acting Skills class can take the actor to a more innate and natural state with their character development.
When Mr. James was also asked what his biggest challenge was when teaching students to act, he stated that:

Getting them to memorize lines. Past that, its embodying that physical life of the character. They’re so animated when they are themselves and when their talking to each other and their friends, but the minute they are “performing” they lock up. So I think getting them to emote physically with their body and facial expressions is probably my biggest challenge.

This statement confirmed the researcher’s belief that the life a student experiences and is exposed to, previous to becoming an actor, determines their development of physical proficiency during character development. If the student does not come from a culture or heritage that is richly influenced by dance, or if they are not enrolled in dance classes, then it is likely they will not be comfortable with movement exploration. As the researcher stated previously, perhaps the lack of an American cultural dance form or the lack of dance in schools is in part due to the lack of an American dance heritage. Maybe fear of what a body is capable of, or simply misconception of the role dance can fulfill, has influenced the lack of dance in students’ lives.

When the researcher asked Mr. James to explain his perception of movement and its marriage to acting skills he stated that:

Its everything. Drama means to act, to do. Right? And it doesn’t mean to talk, and it doesn’t mean to stand there, it means to do something. And I think that if students aren’t looking at what that essential action for their character is then they lose sight of everything else. Then their tactics are tied to what they’re trying to physically get their scene partner to do.

Actors must not always rely on their scene partner in order to develop their own character; they must be proactive about physically articulating their body language as representative of their lines and emotional drive behind the goals in a scene. The previous statements of the teacher’s belief confirm the researcher’s belief.
When Mr. James was asked if he sees dance as an interdisciplinary tool for other courses within a high school and if he believes students would benefit from a dance class in jazz, ballet, or creative movement as an elective choice in high school he made the following statement.

Yeah, I think that it could be. I believe that dance, or movement, getting students kinesthetically exploring subject areas, helps them remember it more. The idea of that mind body connection that kinesthetics can help you learn and retain information, could be utilized in just about every area. I remember doing a workshop once where we did the parts of a cell and we used dance and movement to show how the parts of a cell work and how nutrients go in and out. I think you could use it with history when you’re looking at different battles. Even if you had students choreograph a civil rights struggle. I think there are a lot of ways that movement, or dance if you want to call it dance, can help out those subject areas. I think it’s having non dance teachers of core subject areas to convince them of that fact I think is the tough thing. But I think that once they see it then they see the potential for it. And I absolutely believe students would benefit from a dance class. Not every kid can throw a football, not every kid is good at basketball, not every kid is good at running. I was at my daughter’s track day today and I am watching all of these kids come in fourth, fifth place and some of them didn’t care and some of them were heart broken. I believe there is room in the physical education curriculum for dance and I think a lot of students who feel underserved or they feel as if they’re non-athletic need a place where they can learn the value of physical movement and exercise in a way that is noncompetitive that is communicative, that is artistic. I think that would be a great outlet for kids. And it would help me as a theatre teacher immensely. Because most kids come into the musicals and they have absolutely zero dance experience. And so to get kids from zero dance experience to you know, Broadway quality dance, is impossible. But if they had a foundation of dance in school, during regular class hours like they do in choir and acting, um that would be huge.

Mr. James shares the same belief the researcher has and has expressed previously: dance develops the entire human essence as it serves all ends of personal development by advancing the physical self, exciting the imagination, challenging the mind, developing aesthetic understanding, and strengthening emotional quality within a person (Mertz 12). Allowing opportunities for a child to get up and move within the school day is critical for neurological development and also for cognitive abilities crucial to academic
improvement (Stephenson). Furthermore, Sandra Minton states in the introduction of her book *Using Movement to Teach Academics: The Mind and Body as One Entity*, that studies show The Arts like music and visual arts engage specific areas of the brain, but that highly complex movements like dancing engage even more of the brain (6). Humans are made to move. They are made to stand, bend, run, reach, skip, jump, roll, and so on. The ability for students to explore this part of their human nature in school has been ignored for too long. We are limiting our student’s brains’ abilities to learn by withholding movement, which withholds blood flow, and in turn withholds expansion in the learning process and development of the brain.

The final question asked Mr. James how dance influenced his life experiences inside and outside of the art of acting. His response is as follows.

My personal experiences are much like one of my students. I think I took a break-dancing class when I was in 5th or 6th grade. And that was the extent of my dance training until I got to college. Once I got into college and started learning, I was not comfortable with it, I was not good at it. I wouldn’t say that I’m good at it now. But at least it allowed me the freedom to understand how the physicality of movement can help in acting. Now I enjoy taking dance classes whenever I can. It gives me a sense that even though I’m not athletic, that I can move and I can feel comfortable in my body.

This response told the researcher that much like the experience of his students; a positive self-perception was developed through the experience of dance. The researcher has also seen this through her personal experience. Although she has taken movement classes since she was six months old, she can now reflect that dance was the saving grace of her adolescence, and now adulthood; as she grew into an adult, dance truly saved her life. It has always been the human experience that has made her happy, strong, confident, smart, and mentally healthy. It allowed her to tell a story through physical expression when words were not enough and to find a passion for acting and emotional connection to her
characters when in plays and musicals. This emotional connection to her character allows catharsis for audience members through herself.

Sharing this skill with students is even more gratifying for the researcher, and knowing that this curriculum can be shared as an interdisciplinary approach to acting has presented a variety of possibilities. This is shown through the response of the student surveys, questionnaires, as well as the student and teacher interviews. Initially, students are often hesitant about movement and dance. Dance can seem intimidating because the internet and television often exhibit dance of high difficulty. However, dance that is beneficial to a day-to-day lifestyle does not need to be a representation of high kicks, big tricks, and incredible flexibility. Dance, or movement, should feel good. Dance that benefits humans engages the brain to body comprehension in any subject or area of life. Thus, some individuals may feel good about dance as it is experienced on a basic level, while others may want to pursue a higher caliber of ability. Nonetheless, if students are exposed to dance, or movement, within their school-day, then they will find a better ability to advocate for dance, and other art forms, while at the same time improving their brain and body health.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

This study explored the influence that dance, Laban’s Eight Efforts, and Anne Green Gilbert’s BrainDance had on high school students’ movement proficiency within their acting skills. The perspective of the researcher was that using dance as an interdisciplinary tool in drama classes could help teachers develop purposeful movement in actors. The researcher explored dance in an acting class through the development of a Dance for Acting Skills curriculum. The researcher was not interested in giving the students a supplemental dance class, but to completely integrate the use of dance into an acting course. The goal of this thesis argues and defends the use of dance in a drama classroom to effectively develop movement efficiency in a character’s physical self.

Statement of the Problem

Often high school acting students struggle with movement understanding and proficiency. This acting skill is important to acting because it cannot be done well without movement. While enhancing their overall acting skills, teaching drama students more concrete dance movements also aims to help their ability to make better acting choices. Thus the goal of this study was to attempt to develop the acting students’ kinesthetic awareness through the use of dance skills, the BrainDance, and Laban’s Efforts. This curriculum could be a strong example for any instructor or school district interested in exploring the interdisciplinary benefits of dance movement. Furthermore, this study could serve to bridge a gap between acting and movement efficiency in
secondary education through the use of dance. In addition, this study should also help to
develop a global understanding for dance as an interdisciplinary tool in high school
drama classes. Lastly, this curriculum will add to the body of knowledge currently
surrounding movement efficiency in actors through the use of dance and drama as united
art forms in secondary education. Dance has been ignored in secondary education for too
long, and it is time that dance receives the respect it deserves as a valuable form of
education alongside drama, music, and visual arts.

**Review of the Methodology**

Tools used for this study included one survey, four questionnaires, student
interviews, and a teacher interview. Other tools used for organization of the study
included schedules for each day. The researcher used visual aids such as handouts,
PowerPoint presentations, and terminology posters that were created by the researcher.

Dance for Acting Skills was a daily class over fourteen class periods.

**Summary of the Results**

Interpretations of the findings gave the researcher valuable insight and revealed
higher self-awareness among students, better student cognizance and physical
understanding of movement efficiency for character development, and an overall positive
student perspective of dance after having taken the class. Some students claimed that
after having the Dance for Acting Skills class, they cared more about their character
stance and stride, and not just about their character’s lines. Students also witnessed their
peers to be stronger at conveying emotion, making it easier to connect from an audience’s
perspective as well as an acting partners experience. When students were asked to reflect
on the Dance for Acting Skills class and decide if their point of view had changed
concerning how movement can influence their acting skills, three said it had not changed while the rest of the class decided it changed. The three that stated it had not changed claimed it was because they already knew the importance and the rest said it had changed because they now knew how important movement was to acting. Therefore, all of the students understood the value movement proficiency has on efficient acting skills. Overall, students felt they had improved and that they were eager to continue to improve. These results encourage the researcher to promote exposing students to the benefit of dance and inspiring them to feel more comfortable about signing up for classes in the future to better their acting skills. When the researcher asked if the students would take a dance class if it were offered in school, every student said yes. Students made it clear that they saw dance class to be just as beneficial as a drama class. Lastly, all students believed that their understanding of movement would benefit them in their everyday lives, and enhance their non-verbal and verbal communication skills. Ultimately, the researcher was highly pleased with the results of the class as explained by the students through surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. The students’ responses gave value to the researcher’s belief that dance could influence actors when integrated into their acting class.

**Discussion of the Results**

The relationship of this current study to previous research demonstrates the effectiveness of dance toward acting students. As stated earlier, Cohen claimed that taking dance will encourage the development of an actor’s physical being. However, “the connections between movement and acting which go beyond a technique class, are not usually demonstrated and implemented in these classes” (De Vries 3). This concept of supplementing an actor’s craft by taking a ballet or modern dance class has long been the
perspective of how dance can influence an actor’s acting skills. Nevertheless, although taking a dance class can be beneficial to actors, it is not the only way dance can be integrated into an actor’s development of their craft. Dance can influence acting skills, especially when fused into a class that is explored through basic dance steps, the BrainDance, and Laban’s Eight Efforts. Anne Green Gilbert’s BrainDance can assist actors in numerous ways and the researcher explored this by starting everyday with the BrainDance.

Cycling through the BrainDance patterns on a daily basis may correct flaws in a person's perceptual process and reorganize the central nervous system to better develop proprioception, balance, attention, memory, eye-tracking, behavior, sensory integration, and motor skills. Neurological re-patterning coordinates all parts of the brain and body for emotional, social, and cognitive balance. (Gilbert)

The researcher observed students became more engaged and comfortable with movement after each BrainDance experience. It also helped them to focus on their body in preparation for class. Additionally, the researcher was aware that Rudolf von Laban’s movement analysis theories provided a training method for actors. Exploration of Laban’s Efforts allowed actors to begin thinking in the language of physical expression, to resolve how their body operates as a being in space, while developing and enhancing their kinesthetic awareness and proprioception (Royston 5). Laban’s Efforts also allowed the actors to have a tangible understanding of movement qualities to use when developing character. Thus, use of Laban’s Efforts was integral as a bridge from the acting perspective toward movement clarity. Laban’s Efforts also allowed actors to have a tangible understanding of movement qualities to use when developing character. Finally, arrangement and incorporation of Laban’s Efforts, the BrainDance, and dance
skills pushed students to higher levels of thinking, better kinesthetic awareness, and a stronger appreciation for dance as an art form.

Limitations of this study are also relevant to the discussion. While the class size was sufficient in obtaining data for the study, it was a small sample size. Having twenty to thirty students would have provided a larger pool of data to analyze. Another limitation is that the researcher was also the teacher of the curriculum. This has the potential to create a less stringent researcher environment. Lastly, several instruments were developed by the researcher. Although they were modeled after instruments that have been proven valid by previous research, they have yet to be tested as sustainable.

**Recommendations for Educators**

It is recommended that drama educators integrate dance into the acting classroom and not just recommend it to students as a supplemental class. Educators of all age groups and content areas should learn the BrainDance, explore new approaches and reap its benefits. The BrainDance teaches distinct connections to movement qualities through the educational use of Laban’s Eight Efforts, giving the students something tangible to work with from time to time so they aren’t just working off of description of what a movement should look like. Teachers should educate themselves in dance, by taking a dance class at a local studio or at the nearest college campus. They should also teach movement from a physical understanding, not from a book. Educators should strive to be humble in their practice, realizing that if they cannot teach movement then they should bring a specialist in to work with their students. Instructors should give their students all tools to develop their acting skills, helping them to develop their movement proficiency as well as their
voice, gesture, stance, reaction, and other skills educators find important in developing proficient actors.

**Suggestions for Additional Research**

The researcher believes that in the United States the integration of dance and acting is lacking in public education. She suggests that more dance professionals explore the use of dance steps and dance skills to enhance an actor’s movement proficiency. She encourages them to develop a new and insightful curriculum for actors to develop their movement skills. This could also be explored through the use of specific dance forms, such as ballet or modern, and their respective benefits to actors. Furthermore, the researcher believes the use of BrainDance to be incredibly valuable for all facets of life. Further research surrounding the effects of the BrainDance on actors has the potential to be valuable to both the dance and acting worlds. Lastly, educators must support dance and advocate for dance in any way possible. Dance is innate to the human condition and has been explored and documented in prominent early civilizations like ancient Greeks and Romans, and deserves everyone’s attention and support for further development in the United States and especially in the public education system as it stands today.
Works Cited


APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY 1
Student Survey 1

1) What do you already know about movement and dance in relation to acting?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2) How do you personally feel about the idea of taking this dance for acting skills class?
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

3) Have you ever taken a dance class? If yes, please elaborate on the level and types of
dance classes in which you have participated.
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 1
1. Reflect on the movement/dance classes you have been in thus far and decide whether your point of view has changed concerning how movement can influence your acting skills. Please explain.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. In reflection of today’s class, has your point of view of dance influenced your acting skills? Please explain.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

Code_______

Name________

Student Questionnaire 1

Date_________
APPENDIX C

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2
Student Questionnaire 2

1. After today’s class, how do you feel about movement and how might you use it to develop your acting skills?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. Explain what you know about the parallel between movement and spoken text and how they convey deliberate meaning when fused together by Laban effort intentions?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Code__________  Name__________
Date__________________________
APPENDIX D

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE 3
1. What do you know about the relationship between the use of space in movement and spoken text?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. How do you feel about the relationship between the timing of movements and spoken text?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
Student Questionnaire 4

1. What do you care about in relation to developing an acting scene now that you have taken this course?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

2. Explain some of your observations of other students throughout this class.

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX F

STUDENT INTERVIEW
1. Reflect on this dance for acting skills class and decide whether or not your point of view has changed concerning how movement can influence your acting skills.

2. Has your work with movement influenced your acting skills? Please explain.

3. How do you feel about your movement skills, and ability to incorporate them to acting, after having taken this class? Why do you feel this way?

4. Were you able to better understand others in an acting scene after having taken this dance for acting skills class?

5. Would you be interested in taking a dance class such as ballet, jazz, modern, or creative movement as an elective at the high school level?

6. Do you feel understanding movement’s meanings will benefit you in other classes in school, other activities outside of school, and in your everyday life experiences with friends, family, and teachers? How?
APPENDIX G

TEACHER INTERVIEW
Teacher Interview 1

1. What is your biggest challenge when teaching students to act?

2. What is your perception of movement and its marriage to acting skills?

3. Do you believe the dance for acting skills class benefited the students within your high school acting program?

4. Do you think these students have improved their acting skills after learning about movement qualities and their meaning?

5. Do you see dance as an interdisciplinary tool for other courses within a high school?

6. Do you believe students would benefit from a dance class in jazz, ballet, or creative movement as an elective choice in high school? Please explain.

7. Do you think the student’s understanding of movement’s meanings will benefit them in other classes in school, other activities outside of school, and in their everyday life experiences with friends, family, and teachers?

8. How has dance influenced your life experiences inside and outside of the art of acting?
APPENDIX H

CHARACTER PSYCHOPHYSICAL PROFILE
LABAN

Character Psychophysical Profile

Complete this profile for your extended character. Based on what you have gathered from your text, create answers for the following questions pertaining to your character.

NAME:

Answer these questions in full. Write down the number and then your answer. Be thoughtful and specific. Remember your Laban effort.

1. What do you know about your character?
   a) name  b) age  c) gender  d) life history
2. Describe recurring gesture(s) or movement patterns.
3. Describe what your character looks like and how they move in space.
4. Imagine that you're seeing your character for the first time on the street. What are your first impressions?
5. What is the character's attitude towards others in the world?
6. Which personality traits or qualities appear to be fixed? Which ones are fluid?
7. What are your character's emotional/psychological needs?
8. What thoughts, feelings, or images appear in your character's inner dialogue (subtext)?
9. Describe any conflict(s) your character experiences.
10. What Laban effort applies to the character?
11. Does your character have an opposing Laban effort? (e.g. when they feel a certain emotion) Where and in what situations is it expressed?
12. Where is this Laban effort reflected in the character's actions?
13. Where is this Laban effort reflected in the character's language?
14. Which Laban effort is their public face?
15. Which Laban effort is their private face?
16. Where is your character's center? What part leads your character's movement?
   ___ head  ___ chest/torso  ___ arms/hands
   ___ stomach  ___ pelvis  ___ legs/feet
17. What is your character's breathing pattern? Choose one from each column.
   ___ slow  ___ even  ___ up/down
   ___ moderate  ___ forward/back
   ___ fair  ___ broken  ___ side/side
18. What is your character's energy level?
   ___ low  ___ moderate  ___ high  ___ variable
19. Where does your character direct their energy? Check one or more.
   ___ outward  ___ upward  ___ forward
   ___ inward  ___ downward  ___ backward
   ___ twisting  ___ diagonal
APPENDIX I

THE ELEMENTS OF DANCE
# The Elements of Dance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A dancer</td>
<td>moves</td>
<td>through space</td>
<td>and time</td>
<td>with energy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B.A.S.T.E.**

**BODY**

- **Parts of the body:** Head, eyes, torso, shoulders, fingers, legs, feet...
- **Initiation:** core, distal, mid-limb, body parts
- **Patterns:** upper/lower body, homologous, contralateral, midline ...
- **Body shapes:** Symmetrical/asymmetrical, rounded, twisted, angular, arabesque
- **Body systems:** muscles, bones, organs, breath, balance, reflexes
- **Inner self:** senses, perceptions, emotions, thoughts, intention, imagination

**ACTION**

- **Non-locomotor (axial):** stretch, bend, twist, turn, rise, fall, swing, rock, tip, shake, suspend
- **Locomotor (traveling):** slide, walk, hop, somersault, run, skip, jump, do-si-do, leap, roll, crawl, chainé turns

**SPACE**

- **Size:** large, small, narrow, wide
- **Level:** High, medium, low
- **Place:** on the spot (personal space), through the space (general space), upstage/downstage
- **Direction:** forward/backward, sideways, diagonal, right/left
- **Orientation:** facing
- **Pathway:** curved, straight, zig-zag, random
- **Relationships:** in front/beside/beside, behind, over, under, alone/connected, near/far, individual/group proximity to object

**TIME**

- **Metered:** pulse, tempo, accent, rhythmic pattern
- **Free Rhythm:** breath, open score, sensed time, improvisation, cue
- **Clock Time:** seconds, minutes, hours
- **Timing relationships:** before, after, sooner than, faster than

**ENERGY**

- **Attack:** sharp, smooth, sudden, sustained
- **Weight:** strength, push, horizontal, impacted
- **Lightness:** resist the down, initiate up
- **Resiliency:** rebound, even up and down
- **Flow:** free, bound, balanced, neutral
- **Quality:** flowing, tight, loose, sharp, swinging, away, suspended, collapsed, smooth

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Adapted from Dance Education Initiative Curriculum Guide (1996; Revised 2004) and the ACE Dance Program 2004 – 2006

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APPENDIX J

PEER ASSESSMENT: DUETS
**Peer Assessment: Duets**

Name of Assessor

---

Names of Performers

---

Name of Play and Characters

---

Please Rate your peers on their performance. Please have an explanation for your rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exceptional</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorization of lines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of vocal delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayed in character for entire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement was character appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement furthered the scene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement was natural in appearance</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


APPENDIX K

BODYTHINKING EXERCISE
**Bodythinking:** using the entire nervous system to integrate one’s total expressive instrument to communicate an idea or concept through motion.

**Nervous system:** The nervous system is a complex collection of nerves and specialized cells known as neurons that transmit signals between different parts of the body.

**Think and MOVE exercise:** Draw an effort from the black cards and with your partner come up with 3-4 movements that represent that effort. Repeat until you have done this with all 8 efforts.

**EFFORTS**
1. Punch
2. Press
3. Slash
4. Wring
5. Dab
6. Glide
7. Flick
8. Float
APPENDIX L

BODYSPEAKING EXERCISE
Bodyspeaking: the ability to express oneself nonverbally with intention and clarity, to speak through their movement.

Speak your Moves! One partner will draw an effort (black number) and a body part (red number) and then improvise 4 movements in a row (using that effort and body part). The other partner must guess the effort. Then the next partner goes. Keep switching until you run out of cards. Then stand on two feet facing the front of the room to show you are finished with the exercise.

**BODY PARTS**
1. Tailbone
2. Nose
3. Back
4. Knee
5. Elbow
6. Shoulder
7. Shin
8. Heel

**EFFORTS**
1. Punch
2. Press
3. Slash
4. Wring
5. Dab
6. Glide
7. Flick
8. Float

**LABAN'S 8 EFFORTS AND THEIR COMPONENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effort</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Energy/Flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punch</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slash</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wring</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dab</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glide</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flick</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Quick</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Float</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX M

I AM POEM
APPENDIX N

IMPULSE IMPROV
Impulse IMPROV
(Derived from the Drama Teacher Academy, Todd Espeland)

Directed by the teacher:

Begin by standing, sitting or lying anywhere in the center of the room.
1. Close your eyes and focus on your breath center
2. Feel the air fill your body and escape your body
3. WHEN I TELL YOU TO you will begin moving one body part with the effort I describe
   a. ---PUNCH---
   b. One body part
   c. whole body
   d. standing
   e. Instruct students to Explore a Locomotor step
      ---Walk---Skip---Hop---Gallop---Prance---
   f. Instruct students to Explore an Axial steps
      ---Pencil Turn---Pivot Turn---Ball change---
   g. add sound influenced by your effort
   h. moving all around the room
   i. take away locomotor and/or axial movement
   j. move to one body part and sound only
   k. take away movement
   l. finally end sound and become still
4. REPEAT with new effort....---PRESS---GLIDE---SLIDE---WRING---DAB---FLICK---FLOAT---

Ask Students these questions after each effort:

What did it feel like to physicalize the efforts?

Which efforts were easy?

Which ones were hard?

Did you commit to the exercise? Why or why not?

How will you use the Laban efforts in your future acting?
APPENDIX O

CHARACTER ANALYSIS
Character Analysis

Answer these questions for the character you’re preparing for class.

Hard copies only, please.
Write the number then answer the question. First write down what you can glean from information given directly from the playwright in the script. You may find it helpful to put the page number in parenthesis after such information, but that is not a requirement.

Next, fill in any unanswered questions based on (a) what you have learned from the script, AND (b) using your imagination. Remember your Laban effort.

Make choices that are interesting for you to incorporate and are compatible with what the playwright has provided. Be thoughtful and specific. Some questions ask for more detail that others. Credit will only be awarded for full answers.

**ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS USING THE FIRST PERSON**

1. How old are you?
2. What nationality and race are you?
3. What is your family situation? Are you married? To whom? How long?
4. Do you have children? How many? What are the names and ages of these children? Are they married? Why or why not?
5. Describe your relationship with your parents and siblings.
6. What is your education?
7. What is your societal level?
8. What do you do for living?
9. Do you like your job? Why or why not?
10. What is your financial situation?
11. How would you describe your sense of self-esteem?
12. With whom is the most important relationship in your life? Why? *not yourself*
13. What do you want most out of life? What is in your way to getting it?
14. What is the worst thing that’s ever happened to you? When did it happen? Are you past it now?
15. What is your favorite color? Favorite food? Why? *answer both*
16. What is your favorite way to spend free time and why?
17. What makes you really laugh?
18. What makes you cry? When was the last time you cried? What caused this release of emotion?
19. What in life is most challenging right now?

**ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS USING THE THIRD PERSON**

1. What is the character’s unusual physical characteristic?
2. What unique thing does he or she do as a habit or behavior? How did this come about?
3. What deep-seated attitudes or prejudices do they have? Is the character aware or unaware of them?
4. What kind of animal would this character be and why?
5. Who in the play has higher status than the character?
6. Who in the play has lower status than the character?
APPENDIX P

DUET SCENE CHOREOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT
Duet Scene Choreography Assignment

With your partner you will…

1. Prepare a scene through Character Analysis, Character Psychophysical Profile, and Choreographed movement patterns.

2. Begin by reading through your scene with your partner and decide on character assignment.

3. Once you have chosen characters briefly discuss and classify emotional qualities, character breakdown, and their interpreted movement patterns.

4. Next answer the Character Analysis and Character Psychophysical Profile. These will need to be written long hand by each partner and shown to the teacher by the next class.

5. You and your partner will have the rest of class to work on choreography.

6. You and your partner will return the following class with scenes memorized and will be given the next two class periods to set movement patterns and choices.

7. You will then be assessed according to your first performance and expected to rework your scenes for a final presentation at the following class period.
APPENDIX Q

TEACHER ASSESSMENT: DUETS
Teacher Assessment: Duets

Names of Performers

______________________________________________________________________________

Name of Play and Characters

______________________________________________________________________________

Please rate the performance. Please have an explanation for your rating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exceptional</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorization of lines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation of vocal delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stayed in character for entire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement was character appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement furthered the scene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement was natural in appearance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Explain:
APPENDIX R

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER
DATE: February 8, 2016
TO: Amandie Campbell
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB
PROJECT TITLE: [828528-2] Dance as an Interdisciplinary Tool: Learning Acting Skills Through Dance Movement Experiences
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: February 7, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: February 7, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of February 7, 2017.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Sherry May at 970-351-1910 or Sherry.May@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.