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Creation, Negotiation, Equality: Empowering Young Women Through Dance Improvisation

Marlene Catherine Strang

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CREATION, NEGOTIATION, EQUALITY: EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN THROUGH DANCE IMPROVISATION

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Masters of Arts

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

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ABSTRACT


The purpose of this study was to explore whether a dance improvisation curriculum could help young women strengthen their negotiating skills. Research identifies skills such as confidence, problem solving, creativity, listening, and collaboration as necessary to successful negotiation. This project examined whether students could learn these critical negotiation skills through dance improvisation. More broadly, it assessed the benefits of a dance improvisation practice and how those benefits can apply to everyday life outside of the dance classroom. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze data in this study. The following instrumentation resulted in data that were analyzed qualitatively: pre- and post-test, post-test reflection, student journal, and exit questionnaire. The following instruments were used to collect data that were analyzed quantitatively: pre- and post-survey and pre- and post-director evaluation rubric. The data suggest that the curriculum cultivated a negotiation skillset and appeared to have a positive impact on the students as developing artists, community members, and leaders.
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Kristen and her Advanced Dance Class
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Goal of Thesis

Life is one big negotiation. Whether you are a child negotiating for chocolate milk or a college graduate bargaining for salary and benefits at a new job, everyone needs to hammer out an agreement at some point. In the article “Top Ten Effective Negotiation Skills,” author Luanne Kelchner, posits that the ability to negotiate “requires a collection of interpersonal and communication skills used together to bring a desired result” (Kelchner). This thesis project explored whether a dance improvisation curriculum can be a catalyst to help high-school-aged women strengthen the skills needed to become successful at negotiating. Many studies identify discrepancies between how women approach and implement negotiation compared to men; hence, this project focused on women in an effort to explore ways to level that discrepancy.

Existing research suggests that women are not negotiating as often as men and in general not initiating conversations about their needs. A study conducted by Linda Babcock looked at college graduates from Carnegie Mellon and found that when given a job offer only 7% of women attempted to negotiate their salary, while 57% of men did (Babcock and Laschever 1). Author and negotiation expert Dorothy Weaver conducted a study of 20 professional women to understand “whether and how American professional women perceived that they learned to speak up and negotiate on their own behalf in the workplace” (Weaver 1). When Weaver asked participants about their first chance to
negotiate in the workplace 90% of women in her study did not make an attempt (Weaver 83). Some skills required to successfully negotiate include: problem solving, collaboration, communication, and listening (Clark and Fiske 2–4). Coincidentally, these concepts are major skills of a dance improvisation practice (Biasutti 128).

In her research, “Artistic Expression Through the Performance of Improvisation,” Kendra Collins describes dance improvisation as “the act of creating and performing movement spontaneously, without premeditated thoughts, allowing the artist to explore personal expression, creativity, and freedom” (Collins 1). Collins contends, “The role of the dancer in improvisation is to move honestly and genuinely, establish an open-minded approach, and allow risks to be taken” (Collins 1). Contact improvisation is a style of improvisation in which participants move while touching or by taking the weight of others. The curriculum for this thesis project incorporated many different components of contact improvisation. After working with children on a contact improvisation curriculum, Angel Crissman noticed changes in her students’ confidence:

The children also developed an understanding of self-awareness with how to respond to what was happening in the moment and how to open up the senses to listen and communicate with others. Self-awareness, encouragement to act freely, and the ability to make choices about their own actions and environment they are co-creating led to empowerment. (Crissman 77)

By combining insights about the effects of a dance improvisation curriculum and the tools necessary for successful negotiation, this project underlines the extent to which dance improvisation can be an effective means of developing negotiation skills.

**Purpose of Study**

The researcher intended to develop this curriculum for the following reasons: (1) to empower young women on the brink of their adult lives, (2) to use improvisation as a
stimulus to enable negotiation skills, and (3) to incorporate the state and national dance standards and 21st century skills within a curriculum.

Research suggests that confidence and perspective have an effect on a woman’s ability to speak up for herself. Dorothy Weaver’s study of women in the workplace found that women are especially reluctant to speak up in the workplace and “some women do not believe they need to change how they speak up and negotiate, and this attitude limits their learning” (Weaver 175). Katty Kay and Claire Shipman found other issues in their research article, “The Confidence Gap,” relating to women and why they may be slow to get ahead:

there is a particular crisis for women—a vast confidence gap that separates the sexes. Compared with men, women don’t consider themselves as ready for promotions, they predict they’ll do worse on tests, and they generally underestimate their abilities. (Kay and Shipman)

Researcher Suzette Compton suggests that women have a negative perspective of negotiation:

Women possess the ability to negotiate but have not fully utilized these strategies to increase their salaries. They place a lower priority on salary and often perceive negotiating in a negative manner. This, in turn, may negatively affect their ability to obtain increases in salary needed to decrease the salary equity gap. (Compton 2)

Authors Lee E. Miller and Jessica Miller, of A Women’s Guide to Successful Negotiating, reflect that “Because women typically do not learn to negotiate when they are growing up, as adults they are uncomfortable with their ability to do so” (Miller and Miller 4).

With these findings in mind, this project aimed to support the participants by creating a platform to gain confidence, learn to self-advocate, and explore “speaking up” through artistic freedom. The improvisation curriculum focused on creating a positive, uplifting, and fun environment for participants in order to encourage confidence,
decision-making, collaboration, and many other negotiation skills. Participants were often asked to interpret an idea through movement or direct others by assigning movement dynamics or themes. By creating a positive learning environment, they were encouraged to take risks and not be afraid of the results. During the improvisation sessions, the students were reminded to not shy away if something felt awkward or weird because sometimes the most innovative and exciting movement develops by keeping an open mind. It was emphasized that in order to explore the unknown, they would have to push their dancing to the edge—meaning in order to expand their potential they had to try new things even if they felt unfamiliar or weird.

If women are given the opportunity to explore leadership skills and confidence building in a familiar environment, perhaps they will be more inclined to value themselves at a higher level and approach their future with gumption. Utilizing dance improvisation as a means to develop such life skills is ideal because it is a practice rooted in fast decision-making, conviction, and risk-taking.

In the book *Taken By Surprise*, authors Anne Cooper Albright and David Gere offer readers ways to think about and discuss improvisation:

> improvisation is by its very nature among the most rigorous of human endeavors, and that even those who subscribe to improvisation as preverbal, protomagical activity must admit that it requires the resources both of body and mind...The body thinks. The mind dances. Thought and movement, words and momentum, spiral about one another. (Albright and Gere xiv)

*Taken By Surprise* also explains the skill set an improviser exemplifies:

> it should be recognized for the great demands it places upon a performer, including the demand for nearly instantaneous responsiveness to a broad palette of sensation and perception. The decisions must be made now. This moment. While it is true that virtually all art making demands decisiveness, in improvisation choices must be arrived at without creative block or procrastination. (Albright and Gere xv)
Improvisation is a complex practice and skill; for many students in the study this was their first exposure to the practice. Because the participants were students of dance, this workshop also served as a medium to deepen their dance technique through the improvisation practice. Concepts such as: performance energy, choreographic process, and gaining confidence with their movement were all goals and themes within the curriculum.

Research implies that dance improvisation has many positive effects on its participants, both in terms of confidence and also critical thinking. In the article, “Improvisation in Dance Education: Teacher Views,” Michelle Biasutti found improvisation teachers attest that confidence and intrinsic motivation skills were encouraged by an improvisation practice (Biasutti 128). Interviews with dance improvisation teachers conducted by Biasutti suggest that dancers are motivated by the fact they are creating and sharing with others and confidence is built through the improvisation process if a dancer’s movement idea is repeated by the instructor during the class (Biasutti 130). Playing off of and trying out everyone’s ideas was a critical factor within the project curriculum. For instance, sometimes the exercise called for participants to copy one person’s movement. At other times a leader was asked to speak and everyone had to react to his or her talking, using the leader’s ideas as a basis for the movement. Biasutti also contends that a dance improvisation practice develops certain cognitive skills, which happen to be very similar to those skills required to negotiate. Biasutti discussed the perceptual and cognitive benefits of improvisation:
Improvisation develops also other processes such as feedback, problem solving and divergent thinking ... Dance improvisation stimulates dancers to react to unexpected events and to solve unpredicted situations ... Other reported skills were reflection as well as the development of analytical and critical thinking. (Biasutti 129)

Utilizing a variety of exercises and experiments, this project focused on participants having conviction with movement and choices. Through these experiments participants were required to commit to rapid decision making and act on instinct. In the article “The Confidence Gap” Kay and Shipman conclude that “to become more confident, women need to stop thinking so much and just act” (Kay and Shipman). The authors also contend that in order to be successful you have to be confident, just as much as capable.

This thesis project was also endeavoring to create a curriculum that links 21st century skills, state dance standards, and negotiation skills. Public high school curricula encompass everything from technology to mathematics to world language, yet critical life skills such as negotiation and confidence are not identified as a specific focus of study (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance”). The Arizona Department of Education, however, supports the core curriculum connecting to 21st century skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration, initiative, and leadership (“Standards: A 21st Century Skills Implementation Guide”). Suzette Compton’s research focused on identifying negotiation strategies used by women in administrative positions in higher education. She identified several negotiation strategies, which happen to be similar, if not the same as the 21st century skill set, such as communication and collaboration (Compton 53).

The Arizona Dance Standards are prevalent throughout this curriculum. Improvisation, collaboration, and creating are major themes throughout the Arizona
Dance Standards and were pillars for this project (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance”). Examples of these skills noted in the standards include: “Explore relationships of movement components and concepts through creative processes by investigating various improvisational approaches,” “Collaborate in the investigation and development of the choreographic elements, structures and processes to create a dance study,” and “Create movement from a variety of stimuli” (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance”). The philosophy of this study was to provide a learning experience for participants rooted in a variety of objectives to allow the participants to grow as individuals, artists, and community members.

**Significance of Study**

Helping young women prepare for their future was a critical objective for this study. Women make up 46% of the workforce in the United States (“Quick Take: Statistical Overview of Women in the Workplace”) and according to the U.S. Census, full time working women, make on average 21% less than men’s annual earnings (Sheth and Gould). While there are many factors at play that create the gender wage gap, helping women gain confidence and voice their needs more often could help narrow that 21% margin. The authors of the book “A Women’s Guide to Successful Negotiating” claim: “The more confidence you exude, the better you will negotiate” (Miller and Miller 4). By focusing on the development of confidence, leadership, collaboration, creativity, and many other critical life skills, perhaps the participants in this study will be better prepared to approach their future and find success in anything they choose to do.

Another exciting contribution this study hoped to make is to the field of dance education both in curriculum development and advocacy. Dance improvisation is a
relatively new technique in the field of dance, and there is not an abundance of research focused on the effects of the practice—particularly when it comes to youth. This study is searching for a greater understanding of the different effects the practice may have on students. The hope is that this study would be an important contribution to the dance education field through its unique combination of improvisational approaches in an effort to enhance important life skills. Crissman commented on her personal improvisation practice and how it related to her life in her article, “Explore, Create, Play: A Qualitative Study on Children’s Experience with Contact Improvisation”:

I continually enjoy playing with and sensing how contact improvisation opens my self-awareness and how opening my awareness affects how I relate to others. As my practice continues to develop and grow, I enjoy how contact improvisation incorporates ideas of self-awareness, openness, physical listening and communication, trust, embodiment, presence in the moment, and choice, which directly effects my daily life. (Crissman 3)

Demonstrating to educators and to the community just how meaningful and enlightening dance improvisation can be and how it connects to everyday life skills will hopefully be presented in the results of this study.

The National Dance Education Organization’s report on research priorities for dance education indicates that three areas require further research: problem solving, the creative process, and interdisciplinary education (Bonbright et al. 96). This study took on all of these components. The study attempted to develop participants’ problem solving skills using dance improvisation techniques. Also, the creative process was a central component to the curriculum; students learned to develop improvisation structures that they performed and taught to each other. And finally, this project curriculum is interdisciplinary because it attempted to connect the many attributes of dance improvisation to negotiation and 21st century skills.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss research pertaining to the following themes: women and negotiation, negotiation skillset, dance improvisation pedagogical approaches and learning outcomes, and connections between negotiation skills and other learning areas. The research will highlight how negotiation and improvisation skills are very much comparable and link those particular proficiencies to 21st century skills as well as state and national dance standards.

Women and Negotiation

In the book, Women Don’t Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide, the process of negotiation is described “as, ideally, a collaborative process aimed at finding the best solution for everyone involved” (Babcock and Laschever ix). Evidence demonstrates that women do not engage in this process as often as men in the workplace and other environments. Babcock and Laschever suggest that “women are much less likely than men to use negotiation to get what they want” (Babcock and Laschever ix). Babcock conducted a study where participants were only paid $3 out of the $10 promised, and nine times as many male as female participants asked for more money in this situation (Babcock and Laschever 2). The authors concluded “for men, unhappiness with what they were offered was more likely to make them try to fix their unhappiness—by asking for more” (Babcock and Laschever 3). The reasons vary and are inconclusive as to why women speak up less—some studies suggest confidence plays a critical role. Others
suggest women are concerned with relationships in the workplace. And others say that
women are judged more harshly for being assertive. Regardless of cause, gender appears
to be a major factor in workplace negotiation.

A recent survey from LinkedIn found that “Americans were more likely to be
anxious about negotiating than professionals from other countries. And among the
Americans responding, far fewer women reported feeling confident about negotiation
than men” (Madigan). Even though women represent half of the workforce, they are still
compensated less than men, which may be connected with the process of negotiation
(Bernard). According to a recent survey by Glassdoor:

59 percent of American employees accepted the salary they were first offered, and
did not negotiate. Women negotiated less than their male counterparts. 68 percent
of women accepted the salary they were offered and did not negotiate, a 16-
percentage point difference when compared to men (52%). (“3 in 5 Employees
Did Not Negotiate Salary”)

Confidence may play a major role in the art of negotiation. In an interview with
IBM’s CEO Ginni Rometty, she discusses being offered her first big job and considering
she might not be qualified, “What it taught me was you have to be very confident even
though you’re so self-critical inside about what it is you may or may not know. And that,
to me, leads to taking risks” (Barnett). Authors of the book, “A Women’s Guide to
Successful Negotiating” claim that “confidence is the secret weapon in negotiating”
(Miller and Miller 2). They go on to say that “to be truly persuasive, whatever you say,
you must say with confidence” (Miller and Miller 3). Chief operating officer of
Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg, agrees that lacking self-worth may result in women not
moving up in the workforce, “We hold ourselves back in ways both big and small, by
lacking self-confidence, by not raising our hands, and by pulling back when we should be
leaning in. We lower our own expectations of what we can achieve” (Sandberg 8). She
goes on to say:

For women feeling like a fraud is a greater symptom of a problem. We
consequently underestimate ourselves. Multiple studies in multiple industries
show that women often judge their own performance as worse than it is, while
men judge their own performance as better than it actually is. (Sandberg 29)

While working as a Google executive, Sandberg reflected on her employees:

But feeling confident—or pretending that you feel confident—is necessary to
reach for opportunities. It’s a cliché, but opportunities are rarely offered; they’re
seized. What I noticed over the years was that for the most part, the men reached
for opportunities much more quickly than the women. (Sandberg 34)

Confidence may play a critical role in negotiation, but there are also other factors
as to why women may not be getting ahead. In the study titled “Social incentives for
gender differences in the propensity to initiate negotiations: Sometimes it does hurt to
ask,” researchers Babcock, Bowles, and Lai conducted experiments to find out whether
there is differential treatment between men and women when they negotiate. The findings
suggest that women are perceived in a negative way when they endeavor to negotiate:

women encounter resistance when they attempt to negotiate for higher
compensation because such behavior is a status violation. Men were significantly
more inclined to work with nicer and less demanding women who accepted their
compensation offers without comment than they were with those who attempted
to negotiate for higher compensation, even though they perceived women who
spoke up to be just as competent as women who demurred. (Babcock et al. 99)

Hannah Bowles also discusses current research on women and negotiation in the Harvard
Business Review, suggesting that there are many reasons due to social circumstances and
perception that woman do not negotiate:

Their reticence is based on an accurate read of the social environment. Women
get a nervous feeling about negotiating for higher pay because they are intuiting
—correctly—that self-advocating for higher pay would present a socially difficult
situation for them—more so than for men. (Bowles)
Research fellow, Emily Amanatullah, at Georgetown University also suggests that women hold back when it comes to negotiation. Amanatullah contends, “Men are more likely to negotiate a first offer relative to women, who are more likely to accept without negotiating terms” (DeNisco). In the article, “Negotiating Gender Roles: Gender Differences in Assertive Negotiating Are Mediated by Women’s Fear of Backlash and Attenuated When Negotiating on Behalf of Others,” authors Emily Amanatullah and Michael Morris comment regarding gender differences and negotiation: “gender differences reflect women’s strategic tradeoffs between economic and social costs—a hedging of assertiveness in contexts in which they anticipate incurring backlash” (Amanatullah and Morris 263). Amanatullah and Morris also reported in this article on a study where men and women negotiate a starting salary for themselves and found that the women asked for an average of $7,000 less than the men did (Amanatullah and Morris 261). In an interview with TechRepublic, Amanatullah suggests that the social environment is truly driving women’s decisions to negotiate:

Women who assertively negotiate for themselves are able to garner better outcomes, but it comes at a social cost—they are seen as less attractive, less worthy of hire, and overall in a negative light. This is called the backlash effect, in which women who engage in stereotypically masculine behaviors are socially punished for doing so. (DeNisco)

Clearly the experts contend that there is a disconnect for women and negotiation, whether the cause for this is lack of self-worth, social anxiety, or stereotypes is still debatable.

**Negotiation Skillset**

A myriad of literature is available regarding the preferred strategies for negotiation. The following will highlight some common themes amongst these best strategies. An article published by the University of Missouri’s Department of Human
Development and Family Studies, states that in order to be an effective negotiator one must have “a willingness to work with other people to reach solutions that everyone can live with” (Clark and Fiske). The authors claim that important negotiation skills include: communication and understanding; active listening and declarations that encourage understanding; speaking; clear succinct explanation of the issue, listening; concentrating all of one’s attention on the other person, showing respect; accept the other person’s values and beliefs, seeking a variety of solutions; brainstorming and gathering many creative ideas to collaborate; putting aside differences to work together on a solution (Clark and Fiske).

In the article, “Top Ten Effective Negotiation Skills,” author Luanne Kelchner of the Houston Chronicle suggests the following skills are imperative to successful negotiation: problem analysis, preparation, active listening, emotional control, verbal communication, collaboration, problem solving, decision-making ability, interpersonal skills, and ethics and reliability (Kelchner). When discussing collaboration Kelchner states that, “Effective negotiators must have the skills to work together as a team and foster a collaborative atmosphere during negotiations” (Kelchner). She also discusses the importance of decision-making skills: “Leaders with negotiation skills have the ability to act decisively during a negotiation. It may be necessary during a bargaining arrangement to agree to a compromise quickly to end a stalemate” (Kelchner). Problem solving is also correlated with negotiation skills: “individuals with negotiation skills have the ability to seek a variety of solutions to problems … the individual with skills can focus on solving the problem, which may be a breakdown in communication, to benefit both sides of the issue” (Kelchner).
Similar to the two aforementioned skillsets, the authors of *A Women’s Guide to Successful Negotiating* created a three-step model for negotiation strategies. The steps include: convince, collaborate, and create (Miller and Miller xviii). “Convince” focuses on persuading others that you have mutual values to act in your and the other person’s favor (Miller and Miller xviii). “Collaborate” involves coming up with a solution that incorporates everyone’s values (Miller and Miller xviii). Lastly, “create” involves finding fresh ways to accomplish your objectives (Miller and Miller xix).

### Dance Improvisation—Pedagogical Approaches and Outcomes

Dance improvisation is being taught more often as an established technique within the classroom, from children to adults and also for professional dancers (Biasutti 121). This practice can be defined and described in a variety of ways. Joyce Morgenroth, Assistant professor of dance at Cornell University, discusses the process of structured dance improvisation:

> Structured improvisation is a mixture of conscious choice and spontaneous reaction. It includes periods of sustained concentration and moments of unreproducible magic. By responding to each other’s imagination, intelligence, style, and energy, the dancers find themselves breaking through the patterns of thinking and moving that have limited them. (Morgenroth 15)

Dr. Sandra Minton, comments on the motivation for improvisation in her book, *Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation*:

> Improvisation is a more complete and internally motivated experience than exploration because the choreographer uses his or her feeling response to the inspiration as part of the motivation for movement. In improvisation the creator also has a hand in selecting the inspiration for movement, or at least part of the inspiration, because it’s necessary to relate to the inspiration by using memories and experiences for continued action. (Minton 18)
Author Justine Reeve describes improvisation as a “quick conversation that demands immediate responses, or movement answers” (Reeve 1). Reeve describes this process as an exploration of movement potential to create innovative dance (Reeve 1). Professor of dance, Klara Łucznik, researched group improvisation scores to understand the process of individual and group dynamics interacting through improvisation. Łucznik contends that:

Dance improvisation, as any creative process, starts from each initial point and then it is continually shaped through dancers’ embodied interactions. They create shared temporal structures organizing space, movement and ideas over time, coordinating and negotiating each other’s actions. This process is highly dynamic and negotiated on a moment-to-moment basis rather than as previously determined. High awareness of each other’s presence in the space allows dancers to collaborate closely and co-create in improvisation. (Łucznik 305)

An improvisation practice is critical to an artist for creating choreography, developing a new movement vocabulary, and also benefits the development of the practitioner. Michele Biasutti studied perspectives from several experienced improvisation teachers and found that improvisation develops many skills and competencies. She found that, “confidence and intrinsic motivation skills were encouraged by an improvisation practice” (Biasutti 128). She also addresses the development of perceptual and cognitive skills:

Improvisation develops also other processes such as feedback, problem solving and divergent thinking. ‘Dance improvisation involves the development of the ability to find interactively unusual solutions following stimuli or sudden changes. (Biasutti 129)

Biasutti contends that, “… dance improvisation stimulates dancers to react to unexpected events and to solve unpredicted situations” (Biasutti 129). She goes on to say that the decision-making process is enhanced through an improvisation practice (Biasutti 129).

Other researchers discuss dance improvisation inside their classrooms. In her study regarding integrating citizenship and dance improvisation for dance majors,
Professor of Dance Karen Schupp discusses some possible benefits of an improvisation practice:

Frequently, dance improvisation is thought of as a practice that helps students know themselves as movers and creative artists. Bringing students’ attention to the interconnectivity of dance improvisation and personal and cultural values can promote greater self-understanding and discovery. (Schupp 22)

She goes on to describe the outcomes of an improvisation practice:

Through the exploratory process of dance improvisation, students, taking ownership of their own dancing, become aware of their dance preferences, learn to value multiple outcomes to a problem, relate to their larger community of classroom peers, and gain a wider perspective of dance movement. (Schupp 22-23)

When she integrated improvisation into her higher education technique class, Rachel Rimmer observed many benefits from her experiment:

When returning to dance material out of the context of improvisation, I have observed that students are more confident to test their limits, to travel further, suspend for longer, and to explore a whole spectrum of dynamics and velocities. These tasks offer teacher-facilitated frame-works in which students can collaborate, play, explore, analyze, and solve problems, consequently making their own discoveries. (Rimmer 146)

Major components of improvisation such as problem solving and thinking creatively are found to benefit the brain. Authors Minton and Faber discuss the connection between body and brain in their book, *Thinking With the Dancing Brain: Embodying Neuroscience*. The authors contend that during the artistic process, “Thinking creatively engages divergent thinking, which summons a variety of cognitive functions activating diverse brain regions” (Minton and Faber 139). They suggest that “creativity increases cerebral activity and blood flow throughout brain regions” and “It is impossible to create a dance without a synthesis between mind and body” (Minton and Faber 102). Minton and Faber discuss the benefits to a creative practice:
research demonstrates highly creative people, when compared to controls, have greater activity in the right parietal/temporal areas, and higher alpha brain wave activity during periods of inspiration.” (Minton and Faber 102)

Dance educator and movement therapist, Alma M. Hawkins, comments on the body/mind connection generated through choreography. Her book, Moving from Within: A New Method for Dance Making, states:

In the case of choreography, the inner discovery is presented metaphorically through a newly created dance form. This means that images and felt experiences are transformed into movement elements and qualities in such a way that the movement event presents an objectification of inner experiencing. (Hawkins 41)

**Connections between Negotiation and Other Skills and Content**

There are many similar skillsets that are needed for both negotiating as well as dance improvisation such as collaboration, problem solving, communicating, creating, and confidence. These proficiencies are also highly relevant in education standards and frameworks. According to the Partnership for 21st Century Learning organization, 21st century skills are “knowledge and expertise students should master to succeed in work and life in the 21st century” (“Standards: A 21st Century Skills Implementation Guide”). P21’s mission is to help facilitate 21st century learning and collaboration amongst education, community, business, and government organizations (“Standards: A 21st Century Skills Implementation Guide”). According to the guide, the four C’s are critical components to 21st century skills, and include: critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation (“Standards: A 21st Century Skills Implementation Guide”). Coincidently the four C’s are all essential skills needed for a successful negotiation practice.
Another important framework where the four C’s are highly relevant is in the Arizona Academic Standards in Dance. These dance standards “serve as a framework to guide the development of a well-rounded dance curriculum that is tailored to the needs of students in the diverse schools of Arizona” (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance”). Creativity and innovation skills are imperative within the standards. Standard DA.CR.1.HS3c is an example of how these standards emphasize creativity. It is “Synthesize content generated from multi-faceted stimuli to choreograph a sophisticated and innovative dance composition. Experiment and take risks to discover a personal voice to communicate artistic intent” (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance 1”). DA.CR.1.8b suggests that students should problem solve in dance creation: “Construct and solve multiple movement problems to develop choreographic content” (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance” 1). Communication comes up several times throughout the standards, for example, DA.RE.8.5a states: “Explain (ex: verbally, in writing, visually) how the movements in a dance communicate the main idea. Relate movements, ideas, and context to interpret their meaning using basic dance terminology” (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance” 3). And finally collaboration is a common thread throughout many of the standards. “Work[ing] collaboratively to produce a dance on a stage or in an alternative performance venue and plan the production elements that would be necessary to fulfill the artistic intent of the dance,” is mandated by Standard DA.PR.6.HS2b (“Arizona Academic Standards in the Arts Dance” 2).

The national dance standards also have similar themes to negotiation skillsets and 21st century skills. For example, creating and communication are noted in standard DA:Cr1.1.: “Synthesize content generated from stimulus material. Experiment and take
risks to discover a personal voice to communicate artistic intent” (“National Core Arts Standards”). Leadership is highlighted under standard DA:Pr6.1., “Demonstrate leadership qualities (for example commitment, dependability, responsibility, and cooperation) when preparing for performances” (“National Core Arts Standards”). Finally, collaboration is a common theme within the national standards; standard DA.CR.3.6 states: “Revise dance compositions using collaboratively developed artistic criteria” (“National Core Arts Standards”).

Many of the proficiencies highlighted in the above standards are common themes for artistry skills as well as everyday life. Both the 21st century skills as well as the state and national dance standards were created to serve as a framework in order for students to have success in their future. This study endeavored to provide participants with tools to become successful not only in dance artistry, but also skills applicable to their future and everyday life.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the context of this study and the methods that were used to collect data. This study focused on whether a dance improvisation curriculum could help students gain negotiation skills. The researcher used a variety of data collection devices in order to help understand the process and learning outcomes the participants experienced throughout the study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data in this study. The following instrumentation was used to collect data qualitatively: pre- and post-test, post-test reflection, student journal, exit questionnaire. The following instruments were used to collect data quantitatively: pre- and post-survey and pre- and post-director evaluation rubric.

Before the launch of this study the researcher sought approval from the Institutional Review Board. An application was submitted to the board that included explanations and descriptions of the following aspects of this research project: purpose, methods, data analysis procedures, data handling procedures, risks, discomforts, benefits, research instruments, and consent forms. Once the application was approved the study began. See appendix A to view a copy of the IRB approval letter.

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted at a high school east of Phoenix, Arizona. The school has 2,658 students in grades 9–12. The ethnic demographics at the school were: White
68%, Hispanic 21%, Black 4%, Asian 4%, and Other 2%. This high school has a dance program that was established in 2012, and also offers classes in other performing arts including theater, music, and visual arts. The dance program offers different levels of classes including: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and company. The dance program has two full-time teachers and it includes over two hundred students.

Students from the Advanced Dance Class were the participants for this study. Students were not required to be part of the study; however, everyone in the class committed to the study by completing a parent and student consent form. Twenty-six students agreed to take part in the research; however, not all twenty-six were present for every class. The gender makeup of the group was twenty-four females and two males. Between January and February, the researcher taught nine classes. The classes met twice a week and each class lasted approximately fifty-five minutes. Students ranged from grades 9–12, but the majority of participants were in 12th grade. Students had a variety of dance backgrounds. Some were studio trained and others only had training from the high school dance program. Most students in the study had participated in four years of the high school dance program.

Curriculum Overview

The improvisation curriculum design originally included a total of eight lessons; however, as the workshop began the researcher felt the need to add another session to give students more time to explore the assignments. The researcher and students met a total of nine times.

The first lesson had three major goals: (1) make the students comfortable, (2) start to play and experiment with movement, and (3) administer the director pre-test. These
goals were in place to help ease students into this project and introduce them to the structure of an improvisation class. Starting with comfort, the class began with a fun and silly activity where every person contributed to a story. The class was instructed to stand in a circle and, going around the circle, everyone was asked to contribute one word to form a story. The objectives included making complete sentences and building a coherent story; however, everyone was only allowed to say one word at a time.

The next activity, called “blind leading,” began to cultivate experimentation with movement. During this activity, students lead a partner whose eyes were closed through the space. The leader held onto the partner by wrapping one hand around the partner’s waist and grasping the partner’s wrist with the other hand. The leader had the option of playing with speed, levels, and direction while leading the partner. The leader was prompted by the teacher to give the partner tasks. For instance, the leader could ask the partner to high-five another person, turn a light switch on or off, or pick something up. The leader was encouraged to experiment using voice or body manipulation to direct the partner. The partner was encouraged to keep his or her eyes closed and trust the leader.

The final activity and last goal of this first lesson was to administer the director pre-test. The students were instructed to get into groups of five. These groups would ultimately create and perform a structured improvisation. Each group was given a chart with Anne Green Gilbert’s adapted version of the Laban Dance Concepts (see table 1 below.) The following directions were given to the students for the director activity: one person in the group assumed the role of director and his or her job was to give the group movement tasks. This person had five minutes to direct the group orally without using his or her body to demonstrate movement, and could use the Laban sheet for inspiration. The
teacher gave a few examples for what a director might do including: (1) everyone make a shape on a low level and connect; (2) one person move on a zigzag pathway; (3) everyone ooze to the floor; (4) everyone lift your eyebrows. After five minutes, time was called, and the next person moved into the director role. The new director picked up in the dance where the former director left off. Each director was encouraged to experiment and if she was not satisfied she could make the choice to delete an idea or try something different during her five minutes. It was also emphasized to the directors that anything goes; they were encouraged to try anything from giving their group a word to interpret or adding sounds. It was emphasized to the movers to “say yes” by trying out anything the director asked with conviction and enthusiasm. After everyone directed the group, the students shared their improvisation structures with the entire class.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laban Dance Concepts</th>
<th>Space</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>self space, general space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>big, medium, small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>high, middle, low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>forward, backward, right, left, up, down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>single focus, multi-focus</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed</td>
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<td>Rhythm</td>
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<th>Force</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
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<td>Flow</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
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<th>Body</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher conducted the director test, both on the first day and the last day of the classes in order to evaluate how the students felt about directing, collaborating, decision-making, and their confidence level.

Following the first lesson, each class included different content, but the intent was still to focus on leadership and/or negotiation skills. Some examples of the content for the other lessons were: dance concepts, props, ensemble thinking, contact, text, and voice. “Dance concepts” refers to exploring the language of dance listed on Table 1. For instance, Lesson 2 explored levels: high, middle, and low. Students moved through a series of improvisation structures where the objective was to move on the various levels. “Props” refers to generating movement using a variety of items as inspiration. For example, students used the following items: rocks, kitchen tools, food, office supplies, and toys. After looking, smelling, and touching an item the students had to figure out how to create movement stimulated by that prop, sometimes in duets, solo, or groups. “Ensemble thinking” refers to working together collectively to enhance an improvisation. Discussion focused on leadership or becoming a follower during a group improvisation and how to focus on what the dance needs in terms of space, weight, time, and flow. “Contact” refers to giving and taking weight with partners and also exploring how to counter balance with one or more people. The two contact-focused lessons explored building trust, being a secure and dedicated leader when taking weight, and making choices that allow your partner to have opportunities. Below is an example from lesson four where the focus was on voice and text.
### Lesson 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Warm Up:</th>
<th>Students assemble in duets or trios. Person A begins stream of consciousness talking, talking non-stop for 1 minute. Person B actively listens. When person A is done talking, person B improvises based on what person A said. Switch roles.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection:</td>
<td>Which role was more challenging? What dance concepts did you observe in the solo performed by person B? What surprised you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 1:</td>
<td>Students are assigned to bring in a text. Some examples were text from their school classes such as science or math, or they could bring in a poem or anything they found inspirational. The teacher then reads one of the texts brought in by a student out loud. Students react to the text through movement, gesture, spacing, and relating to one another. After the teacher reads for a while the text is passed to another person in the group who takes over reading before passing it on again. The reader may switch to other documents to read at any time throughout the improvisation. At any time during this exploration students may step out and observe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection:</td>
<td>Students reflect in pairs on the following questions. Did certain text inspire you more than others? If yes, explain. Describe what it was like to be responsible for reading the text? Were you surprised at all by the movement generated or the choices the reader made?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity 2:</td>
<td>Students stand all together in a clump. One person emerges as a leader and proceeds to direct the group, but may only use gibberish to do so. Gibberish is defined as meaningless or nonsensical babble. The leader attempts to get the group to do different tasks, the ensemble must behave like they understand what the leader is saying. The ensemble should look for clues on how to react based on the leader’s tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions. At any time a new leader may take over and interrupt the current leader.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection:</td>
<td>Students reflect in small groups. What made a leader effective in this activity? Was it your preference to be the leader or an ensemble member and why? What did the ensemble have to do to be successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity 3:</td>
<td>Create a score. Half of the students stand to the side while the other half remain in the center of the room. The students on the outside create a score using their voice and ensemble thinking. Students may make sounds, say words, sing, anything goes. The students on the inside must respond to the score and interact with the ensemble. After the improvisation has time to develop, students switch roles.</td>
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</table>
During lessons seven and eight, toward the end of the curriculum, students were given the task of dance negotiation. This activity involved creating a structured improvisation to be performed for the class by negotiating with a partner and directing a group. This creative deal-making activity began by generating a concept list as an entire class. The class brainstormed and made two lists of themes that they wanted to explore with movement. Each list included three concepts. The researcher encouraged students to put anything on this list, such as Laban dance concepts, emotions, or words. For example, students suggested the following for List A: far away, high level, and sharp. For List B they suggested: close or connected, low, and smooth. After the lists were made the entire class got into groups of seven. Within the groups of seven, one person was designated as negotiator A, another as negotiator B; the rest of the group members were designated as the movers. Each negotiator’s task was to direct the movers and advocate for the things on their list. Negotiators had seven minutes to work together to figure out how they were going to accomplish the things on their list. The goal of the negotiators was to incorporate their themes into the improvisation as much as possible; however, they had to work together and collaborate with their fellow negotiator. For example, if negotiator A suggested the group start by crawling on a low level, perhaps negotiator B might counter that half the dancers should start in a high level twisted shape and then drop low. Once both negotiators agree, they move onto the next idea. After the seven minutes, students switched roles in the group and two new negotiators were chosen. After everyone had a chance to be a negotiator the groups performed their structured improvisations for each other.
This creative deal-making activity was repeated two times during the curriculum. The second time, two adjustments were made: (1) students created the lists without the help of the researcher, and (2) there were three lists and three negotiators per group. Students still worked in groups of seven, but with four movers and three negotiators. The following lists were created the second time this activity was implemented: List A (sustained movement, direct eye contact, and counter balance); List B (percussive movement, indirect eye contact, and mirroring); List C (vibratory, eyes closed, and reacting). Students were asked the following reflection journal questions after this activity: Describe your experience with the negotiation activity. Were you successful negotiating with your partner? Why or why not? What did you learn about yourself or your classmates from this activity?

The curriculum culminated with the director post-test. The director activity was administered in the same way as it was on day one. Students were able to do a post-test reflection as a way to compare and contrast their experience with this activity on day one to their response on day nine.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze data in this study. Some instruments were used both before and after the study was completed, including: student survey, tests, reflection, and questionnaire, and a rubric completed by the regular dance class teacher. Student journals were used to monitor progress during the study.

Pre- and Post-Survey

The pre- and post-surveys were given to students before the workshop began and after the final class, respectively. The students were asked to rate themselves on a scale
from 1–5 with 1 being “Not at all typical of me,” and 5 being “Very much typical of me.”

The survey covered the following topics: confidence, problem solving, creativity, listening, collaborating, communicating, leadership, decision making, working with others, and dance improvisation. To view a copy of the pre- and post-survey see Appendix B.

These data were analyzed using a quantitative techniques. The researcher compared the numerical scores, examining before and after variances. The researcher calculated the percentage difference in each category. The findings are located in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

*Post-test Reflections*

Students filled out a reflection based on the pre- and post-test director activity where students had to take charge of a group of people. Each time students completed the assignment they filled out a ten-question reflection. Some examples of prompts from this reflection include: Were you comfortable as a director? Explain. Describe your experience as a group member? In what ways did you work together to accomplish the assignment we just completed? Describe what it was like to direct your group?

To view a copy of the post-test reflection questions see Appendix B.

The researcher used qualitative analysis to understand the data from these reflections. Common themes or ideas were examined to understand if the students had any change or growth as a result of this activity. These findings are reported in the discussion chapter of this thesis.
*Pre- and Post-Director Evaluation Rubric*

Another instrument linked to the pre- and post-test was the pre- and post-director evaluation rubric. The students’ regular high school dance teacher completed a rubric for every student during the pre- and post-test director activity. This rubric had three areas of assessment: confidence, decision-making, and collaboration. Students received points based on whether they were beginning, emerging, or proficient during the pre- and post-test. To view a copy of the director evaluation rubric see Appendix B.

These data were analyzed using a quantitative technique. The researcher compared the numerical scores from each rubric to uncover whether there was a difference between students’ performance before and after the study. Percentage comparisons of these data were reported in the discussion chapter of this thesis.

*Student Journal*

Throughout the workshop students composed a journal. The researcher wanted to give students an opportunity to discuss any themes or ideas that came up throughout the experience. Students were encouraged to create their own topic or follow the leading questions that the researcher provided. Some examples of journal topics include: Did you take charge during the gibberish activity? Why or why not? During the small group pet peeve activity, which role was your preference—speaker, observer, or mover? Explain. Do you participate in class discussions? Why or why not?

Qualitative methods were used to analyze the student journals. The researcher looked for common themes that emerged through the journals in order to understand more about the participants’ journey and how they felt week to week.
Exit Questionnaire

A ten-question exit questionnaire was administered after all of the lessons were complete. The researcher sought to understand student learning outcomes, and whether the curriculum made an impact on the students. Students took this document home and submitted it within a week. Some example items from the questionnaire include:

Describe any success, growth or challenges that came up throughout the workshop? Can you apply anything you learned in this workshop to your everyday life? If yes, explain.

Describe what it is like to work collaboratively. To view a copy of the exit questionnaire see Appendix B.

Qualitative methods were used to assess the exit questionnaires. The researcher identified common themes and ideas in order to better understand the impact the project had on the participants.

Summary

This chapter provides a report on the context of this study and the methodologies used to gather and analyze data. The critical components of the dance improvisation curriculum are highlighted along with the instruments used to gather data from the participants. The discussion chapter examines the findings from this study through a qualitative and quantitative lens.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore whether a dance improvisation curriculum could help young women strengthen their negotiating skills. The curriculum was created by considering which improvisation explorations might connect to negotiation, dance standards, and 21st century skillsets. Throughout the nine meetings with the students, the researcher prompted reflection to understand learning outcomes and possible affects the students were experiencing as a consequence of the lessons. Although there were twenty-six students enrolled in the class and study, not all students were present for every class and therefore did not always turn in the completed instrumentation. Some students’ ideas were not included in the following discussion either because they did not turn in documentation or because their comments were extremely brief. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze the data that were collected from the participants and their regular dance teacher.

This chapter examines data collected during the beginning, middle, and end of the project, including the progression of students’ self-reflections and recurring quantitative assessments such as the pre- and post-survey and pre- and post-director evaluation rubric. This rubric was completed by the regular dance class teacher. This chronological organization of the following discussion highlights the cognitive and emotional journey that the dancers experienced.
Beginning of Study

The first day of the study, students were assessed with the director pre-test and then completed the post-test reflection. Students were tasked with two roles: the first being the director of a group in which they asked the group to move in certain ways in order to build a structured improvised dance; and the second in which they worked as a mover and took guidance from the director while working collaboratively with the group to interpret the director’s instructions. When the lesson was over, students filled out a post-test reflection where they were asked a series of questions about their experience with this activity. This form can be found under Appendix B. The following will describe the concepts that emerged from these reflections by examining four major themes: (1) why some students felt uncomfortable as a director; (2) what skills were necessary to be an effective director; (3) how to be a successful collaborator; and (4) how the skills from this assignment apply to everyday life.

Some Students Felt Uncomfortable as a Director

The students were asked if they felt comfortable as a director during this activity. A total of ten students reported being uncomfortable with the director role while fourteen reported that they felt comfortable directing the group. Students that reported discomfort suggested that judgment, quick thinking, and confidence were factors at play. Student #1 reflected that acting as the director “was hard because I felt as if I was being judged by people because I was doing weird things and cool or normal things.” Student #2 also reflected on confidence:

At first I was not comfortable as the director because I’m not really an outgoing person. I felt weird telling them what to do because I was unsure if they were
comfortable with it or not. I get uncomfortable when I have to stand up and be in charge of something I’m not totally sure of.

Student #3 discussed the quick decision-making skills required of the director:

Directing my group was somewhat difficult for me personally. Although my group was very cooperative and interpreted my instructions to the best of their ability, my mind wasn’t quick enough in coming up with new movements. It was hard creating new scenarios for my group and giving them new ways to move.

Student #4 reflected on her confidence during this activity, “I need to be more confident in leading, or directing others. I personally don’t like telling people what to do, it makes me feel like I’m forcing them to do something.”

Skills Necessary to Be an Effective Director

Students described skills needed to be an effective leader throughout this activity. Students suggested the following strategies for becoming a successful director: trust, quick thinking, communication, and fun. Student #5 suggested that “We had to trust each other as a group both as the dancer and as the director, and trust ourselves. Not overthink the directions and trust our bodies to carry out the movements.” Student #3 reported, “In order to be successful in this activity you need to be able to think quickly and creatively, which will allow you to create a dance with a good flow.” Student #6 reported, “It makes things interesting if you have a fun movement in there that most people have never used before.” Student #7 suggested, “You need good communication and [an] open mind and willing participants to complete this assignment. You’re going to get strange or obscure commands that you just need to interpret and move through as best you can.”

How to Be a Successful Collaborator

Students also discussed what was required to cultivate a successful collaboration during this activity. Students suggested: communication, investment, listening, and being
open to new ideas were concepts necessary to a positive collaboration. Student #6 reported, “In order to work together as a group, we would have to all be creative, interact with each other in our movement, and be patient with one another.” Student #4 proposed that, “We had to communicate a lot in order to create the movement and ask questions.” Student #8 reflected on collaboration within her group: “We all needed to be invested in the movement and open to each others’ suggestions.” Student #9 talked about the skills she applied while being in the mover role: “You need to be able listen well and experiment [with] new things with your body that may be out of your comfort zone.”

Student #2 also discussed the collaboration that occurred:

We had to be comfortable with each other enough to touch each other and move with each other in weird ways. During the activity there were many times when I had to connect with my group in an uncomfortable way, but it wasn’t as weird because they had to do it as well. To move forward as a group we had to just let loose and be weird with each other. . . we also had to stay serious but not too serious so that it still felt like we were “playing.”

How the Skills from this Assignment Apply to Everyday Life

Students were asked what they learned from this activity and how they could apply it to their everyday life. Student #1 summarized her practical takeaway:

From this activity I learned to step more outside of my comfort zone and to have more fun with things. Also how we need to try things and not hold back so much on our ideas because people can take them in different ways and make them better or give others ideas. In my daily life, in fact, I feel like I could apply this because I can 1) Be more of a leader, 2) I can say and do more of what I want, and 3) I shouldn’t be scared to release my personal ideas.

Student #6 concurred that emphasizing new experiences applies to her life: “I think that I could easily apply this in my everyday life by remembering to sometimes try new things even if they feel awkward or weird.” Student #4 had a similar reflection: “I can apply this to my everyday life by going out and trying new things, and take the lead in situations
where a leader is needed, so then I can become an overall better person.” Student #7 commented on how this might affect her outlook in life: “I would apply this to my life in the way that you should respect the different perceptions and viewpoints of others. And working together in a team can create some pretty beautiful art.”

After day one of this project, students had several takeaways that they reported on in their post-test reflections including: their feelings on being a director, how to be an effective director, strategies for successful collaboration, and ideas about how this work applies to their everyday life. Some students reported not being comfortable in a director position due to a lack in confidence. Students gleaned that being an effective director required skills such as trust, quick thinking, communication, and fun. Students also reported that effective collaboration required communication, investment, listening, and being open to new ideas. And finally, students pointed to the fact that being confident about their ideas will allow them to emerge as leaders in their everyday life. Many of the aforementioned skills are connected to the goals of the curriculum. Students zeroed in on skills that are pertinent to negotiation, as well as 21st century skills, such as, creativity, listening, collaboration, and decision-making.

**Middle of the Study**

The students were given multiple chances to reflect in their journals at different times during the study. Students had the choice of following the questions proposed by the researcher or writing about any ideas or concepts that came up for them throughout the classes. The students reflected in journals after classes two, four, six, and eight. The researcher was looking to gain insight into the students’ journey, including possible growth or challenges they had throughout the experience. The following will explore
themes that came up throughout many journals including: (1) working outside your comfort zone; (2) speaking up during class discussions; (3) using negotiation as a collaborative technique; and (4) contact improvisation.

**Working Outside Your Comfort Zone**

The idea of working outside of one’s comfort zone came up for many students while discussing their experiences throughout the lessons. Students commented on embracing “awkward” or “weird” movement and the benefits of trying new things. Student #3 commented that because the lessons were fun they allowed her to be more comfortable to try new things:

> Usually I am not a big fan of improv, but I have been enjoying the past few days very much not only because the activities are different and fun but because they allow me to challenge myself and step out of my “normal” routine/comfort zone.

Student #6 saw her level of comfort with movement change:

> I think I am doing a lot better with my improv this week because I have been more accepting towards moments that might be awkward. I let come whatever comes, and use the new topics to find new movement I have never seen before.

Student #1 commented on how she was feeling midway through the experience:

> I personally did surprise myself because I seemed to come out of my box more and do different movements. With all the movement and improv, I have seen a dramatic change that went from little and in a bubble to more contact with people and just more outgoing in general.

**Speaking up During Class Discussions**

While the students seemed to be having success trying out new and different movement, they appeared to be struggling with speaking up during discussions. After the first couple of lessons, the researcher noticed that students were not participating very often or at all in classroom discussions. The following journal question was proposed to
students, to gain more insight into why this was happening, “Do you participate in classroom discussions? Why or why not?” Several students referred to a lack of confidence in being right or wrong as a factor of this issue. Student #9 commented:

I don’t always participate in class discussions, because I feel like I might not say the right thing, or that I don't have anything really important to add. I am also pretty shy sometimes so that also factors into my contribution in class discussions.

Student #10 claimed she likes to know ahead of time that she has the correct answer:

“I’m also one to only answer or comment when I already know the answer is right instead of taking a leap and taking a guess.” Student #11 expressed a similar discomfort about speaking: “I don’t participate because I just rather hear what other people have to say.” Student #12 suggested she does not speak up for other reasons:

In class discussions, I sometimes participate when I have an interesting point to share, but often times I like to hear from my fellow peers because they seem to have good observations and they give really eye-opening points and comments.

Speaking up and advocating for yourself are imperative skills when it comes to negotiation. While students appeared to have trouble with this during class discussions, they actually reported great success during an activity where negotiation was required.

*Using Negotiation as a Collaborative Technique*

During lessons seven and eight students were given an opportunity to negotiate. As described in detail above, this activity involved creative deal-making; students had to create a structured improvisation by negotiating with a partner and directing a group. While in the role of negotiator, two or three students were tasked with advocating for different lists of movement concepts, while incorporating the other negotiators’ lists into the dance as well. While in the role of dancer, students had to problem solve and interpret the directions that the negotiators requested. Many students expressed that the negotiation
factor was a helpful tool for creative collaboration. Student #12 reflected on the benefits of working through a problem with a partner: “The negotiation activity was really interesting because I learned that two completely different ideas could work so well together just like the phrase ‘opposites attract.”’ Student #7 commented on her process of negotiation: “It’s all about sharing the power of creating a structure as well as allowing everyone to let their ideas come to life.” Student #3 reflected on her experience with her negotiation partner: “Personally my experience as a negotiator was pleasant, the other person was relatively easy to negotiate with and we found a ‘common ground’ for our dance rather quickly.” She described the activity in more detail:

During the negotiation activity it was at times hard to please both of the negotiators. For example, in one exercise I remember one of them wanted the dancers on the floor in a pose in which we were all intertwined, and the other negotiator wanted us to get up from our poses sharply. This was something that as dancers we had to figure out how to deal with or solve together in order to please both of the negotiators’ wants and ideas.

Student #10 explained how her strong personality factored into the negotiation activity:

Even though I’m the type of person who likes it my way, I actually enjoyed this activity. I liked seeing the results of how the two different styles and ideas collided into creating movement. I thought the negotiating with my partner was successful through the process and I found that when I didn't have any ideas it was nice to have someone else give their ideas and form the movement and when I saw something I liked I added to it with my own style or idea. I learned later on from negotiating that I’m not as much of a controlling person as I thought. I learned how to listen to other people's ideas and instead of saying “no” right away to it, I went and saw how it worked in the piece and if it didn’t work then I could add to it and change it up a bit so that it would work.

Student #5 reflected on the challenges of the negotiation assignment:

With this activity, it was refreshing to work with someone else and their ideas. As the dancer, it was hard when my leaders did not work together or just switched back and forth giving directions because it felt unorganized and awkward. However, when the directors worked together to come to mutual agreements on choreography and movement qualities, the piece was much more coherent and appealing.
Students agreed that working together, even with contrasting ideas, was an effective choreographic tool. Many students recalled that the dances produced through this activity were highly successful. Student #13 reflected positively on the dance sharing: “They all looked so well-rounded and professional like they spent days, not just five minutes, on the choreography.” Student #14 remarked on the dance that she and her group worked on through this activity:

That was one of the most amazing things to just give them concepts to work with, and then beautiful things happened. We played with a lot of different timing, and spacing. In just five minutes we already had a complete phrase of choreography, and I think having to separate goals as the leaders helped it to have contrast.

Contact Improvisation

There was a great deal of contact improvisation included in the curriculum. Students worked on concepts such as positive and negative space, counter balance, and weight sharing. Students explored the space around a partner’s body, played with making counter balances with partners equally pushing and pulling into each others’ bodies, and investigated spontaneous lifts and weight shares where they took the weight of their partner’s body.

Many students discussed the skills they needed to be successful at contact improvisation. The following themes emerged throughout the reflections on partner work: being a good leader and follower, creativity, and decision-making. Student #6 talked about which skills were necessary for her while engaging in contact, including “patients [patience], creativity, and being able to let someone else lead you, but also [to] be able to lead another person.” Student #5 remarked about the benefits of contact: “Working with others also gives me a base or foundation to work off of when my mind goes blank. Within the contact improvisation, it took a lot of trust and relaxation in my
own body to be successful.” Student #14 reflected that for her to engage in contact “takes being aware, creativity, and thinking outside the box.” Student #10 summarized her experience with the contact classes:

I think the skills necessary for partner work is [are] to be able to have an open mind to improvisation and have a mind-set not to hesitate and just do what comes to mind next and also to have that ability to think ahead and prepare for what is coming next in your improv.

After experiencing the majority of the lessons, the students discussed many ways in which they were impacted such as: working outside one’s comfort zone, negotiation as an effective collaborative technique, and the benefits of contact improvisation. Students claimed that these classes supported them to think outside the box, and be open to unusual ideas. They found that negotiating with a partner brought contrast and diversity to dance making and gave them confidence in their leadership skills. They contended that contact improvisation took a lot of creativity, patience, quick decision-making, and trust in order to find success with their partner. Some suggested it was challenging to speak up during class discussions because of a lack of confidence and uncertainty. The last day of the curriculum the researcher tested students’ progress with these skills with the director post-test activity.

**End of Study**

A week after the last lesson, the researcher collected the final data from the instrumentation including the post-test reflection, post rubric, post survey, and exit questionnaire. The following examines (1) how students felt during the director post-test; (2) scores from the rubric and survey; and (3) learning outcomes that emerged from the exit questionnaire.
Post-test

On the last day of class, the post-test director assignment was implemented and the post-test reflection was distributed. Students had approximately one week to turn in the reflection. The following examines how students felt about directing day one versus day nine of the curriculum.

Students had the chance to direct a group of dancers to build an improvisation phrase and perform their dance for the group as a part of the post-test director assignment. The assignment was executed exactly the same way that it was on day one of the project, with one student leading the group. Question 2 of the post-test reflection asked “Were you comfortable as a director? Explain.” On day one, 58% of the students reported that they were comfortable while 41% reported being uncomfortable being a director. The last day, a total of 92% of students reported that they were comfortable being a director, while only 8% of students reported discomfort. Student #1 reflected on directing during the director post-test: “The last day I really felt like a leader. I didn’t hesitate on what the next movement should be and I was able to tell them clearly what I wanted and they followed. To me I just felt really in charge and just like a real leader.” Student #15 commented about the strategy she took to be assertive, “you have to be confident, like you know what you have planned out already even if it’s completely out of inspiration or at random.” Student #16 claimed she felt great as a director and said, “You have to just let your ideas flow and not judge yourself.”

Students suggested that they felt more successful and confident in the role of director on the last day of class. Conviction and confidence helped guide them to find this
success. These measurements imply that the students showed growth in their ability as leaders and the director evaluation rubric scores also indicated this trend.

**Rubric and Survey Outcomes**

The students’ regular high school dance teacher surveyed them during the director pre-test (day one of the curriculum) and post-test (the last day of the curriculum) and filled out a rubric for each student. The rubric can be found under Appendix B. The rubric was based on three concepts: Confidence, Decision Making, and Collaboration. Students were rated on the following scale: “Proficient” (15 points), “Emerging” (10 points), and “Beginning” (5 points). The teacher observed the students while they were in the role of director. After witnessing each student, she wrote down a score for each concept. The following chart demonstrates the average change in scores from the pre-test (day one of the curriculum) and post-test (the last day of the curriculum).

![Bar chart showing the average change in scores from pre-test to post-test in Confidence, Decision Making, and Collaboration.](chart.png)

**Figure 1: Director Evaluation Rubric Scores**
The before and after rubric indicated growth from the students in all three skillsets. While there was improvement in each category, students showed the biggest change with confidence, with a 72% increase. Decision-making improved 39% and collaboration scores increased 30%.

Similar growth was apparent in the before and after surveys that the students filled out regarding many of the negotiation skillsets. The survey can be found under Appendix B. The students rated themselves on a scale from 1–5 with 1 being “Not at all typical of me,” and 5 being “Very much typical of me.” Students rated themselves on statements addressing the following categories: (1) confidence, (2) problem solving, (3) creativity, (4) listening, (5) collaborating, (6) communicating, (7) leadership, (8) decision making, (9) working with others, and (10) dance improvisation. Figure 2 demonstrates the average change in scores before and after the project. The numbers that precede each category above correspond to the numbers along the x axis of Figure 2.

![Figure 2: Pre- and Post-Survey Scores](image-url)
The category that showed the most improvement from students was category ten (“I am great at dance improvisation”). Students showed an average of 44% improvement in this category. Other categories that showed high levels of improvement were category six (“I am a clear verbal communicator”) with 33% improvement; category one (“I consider myself a confident person”) with a 29% increase; and category five (“I am an excellent collaborator”) with a 25% increase. While the other categories showed less change, every category demonstrated improvement. The category with the least change was category four (“I am a great listener”) with a 5.5% increase.

**Exit Questionnaire**

The final phase of instrumentation was the exit questionnaire. Students had the opportunity to answer ten questions relating to their experience with this project. This document can be found under Appendix B. Many questions on this document were open ended, e.g., “Describe any skills you learned through this workshop,” or “Please add any additional comments or questions including things that were meaningful, challenging, exciting, unexpected, etc.” The researcher wanted to provide a platform for students to discuss any topic related to the project. Many themes emerged as a result of the questionnaire including: trusting yourself, being open minded, confidence, and communication.

Student #14 reflected on her takeaway with this workshop:

This workshop helped me to become more comfortable with being a leader, directing, communicating, and collaborating with others. I found this workshop to really help me grow as a dancer by getting me out of my comfort zone. Overall, I gained more confidence in myself, and allowed me to discover many ways to use improv to better my dancing.
Student #16 commented on collaboration:

I am getting better working with a group of people. Last year first semester I was so scared to put out my ideas for choreography projects because I wasn’t confident in myself. I thought that my dance moves weren’t good. But now I am more confident in myself and work well with others. I collaborate with my group well and the dancing looks really good.

Student #6 reflected on how she will apply these classes to her everyday life:

“One thing I could apply to my everyday life is being a leader and also and not holding back on ideas, thoughts, or words. I feel as people we do that a lot as we are afraid we may be judged or say the wrong thing.” She also added the following about negotiation:

“I really like negotiating because it adds contrast, leads you open to ideas, and it may also spark ideas. Being open to ideas is an important skill because we don't need to shun ideas and put them down but use them or make them better.” Student #3 also remarked about applying this work to her life:

During the workshop I was out of my comfort zone for the majority of the activities. After the workshop I feel like I am more likely to step out of my comfort zone more often and try new things, which could bring new and challenging possibilities to my life outside of dance.

Student #3 goes on to consider communication and other skills she sharpened through these lessons:

Throughout the workshop I definitely polished and improved on my communication skills. In activities in which I had to be a leader I had to know how to communicate effectively to my dancers so that they knew how I wanted a specific idea or movement carried out. I also improved on my communication skills with other leaders, for example knowing how to put my ideas out there and being able to compromise when we wanted different things.

Student #14, remarked about what she took away from this project, “I also think it is very important not to judge yourself because you’ll spend way too much time dwelling
on it. Be open to new experiences, and places that the activities will take you.” She added:

Also, being able to problem solve, and continue not just dancing but continue whatever you may be experiencing even if something doesn’t go completely how it was planned. Time management is also another big thing, not wasting time, just getting the task completed.

Student #2 also discussed her takeaway from the project:

I learned how to make a connection with other people without feeling awkward. I also learned how to be a better leader and make quick decisions. The activities we did moved at a very fast pace and required me to just go with it and not to think about it.

Students appeared to show growth in many different areas, not only with dance improvisation, but also with leadership, creativity, decision-making, problem solving, and collaboration. Many students reported that having an open mind and not judging allowed them to find success throughout this project.

**Summary of Discussion**

The purpose of this project was to create a dance improvisation lesson plan that strengthened students’ negotiation skills while connecting to the state and national dance standards and 21st century skills. The curriculum focused on developing the following proficiencies: confidence, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, leadership, listening, and decision-making. Based on the data, students indicated they felt growth in all of the previously mentioned skills. They demonstrated throughout their journals, surveys, reflections, and questionnaires that they progressed in a variety of the aforementioned proficiencies as a result of the curriculum. The students contended that having fun and not judging allowed them to think outside the box and gain confidence in exploring their artistry and leadership skills through dance improvisation. The curriculum appeared to
have a positive impact on the students as developing artists, community members, and leaders. Student #5 concluded her exit questionnaire with the following thought about the potentially broad implications of the project curriculum:

One of the things I really enjoyed and want to carry on with me from these workshops is to trust myself both mentally and physically. That it’s ok to separate your body from your mind and emotions and just trust yourself to do what comes naturally rather than over thinking or staging every movement. This is an issue I face in my everyday life, as I get ready to graduate and begin my career and adulthood. Dance has not only been a stress reliever for me throughout this hard time and my life, but these improv workshops have also helped me to trust myself.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore whether a dance improvisation curriculum could help young women strengthen their negotiating skills. The following conclusion chapter will highlight: (1) a synopsis of the project including the methods used to gather data; (2) a summary of the discoveries; (3) limitations of the study; (4) recommendations for further research; and (5) final thoughts.

Synopsis

The researcher developed this study to empower negotiation skills in young women on the brink of their adult lives. This curriculum fostered these skills through the practice of dance improvisation. Dance improvisation and negotiation require a similar skillset including leadership, decision-making, collaboration, and creativity.

Incorporating the state and national dance standards and 21st century skills within a curriculum also figured into the endeavor. This project was conducted at a public high school with a longstanding dance program. The participants were twenty-six dancers who were enrolled in the advanced dance class.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze data in this study. The following instrumentation resulted in data that were analyzed qualitatively: pre- and post-test, post-test reflection, student journal, and exit questionnaire. The following instruments were used to collect data that were analyzed quantitatively: pre- and post-
survey and pre- and post-director evaluation rubric. The pre- and post-test, post-test reflections, and pre- and post-rubrics and surveys were used to understand a before and after picture of how students felt about negotiation skills as well as how comfortable they were directing a group. The journals and exit questionnaires were used to examine students’ journeys throughout the project and possible learning outcomes as a result of the curriculum. These instruments encouraged discussion about collaborative and leadership skills, discoveries about the improvisation activities, the students’ improvisation practice, and any challenges that surfaced throughout the lessons.

**Summary of Discoveries**

The analysis of the data collected in this project suggested that the students showed growth in the following areas as an outcome of the curriculum: confidence, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, leadership, listening, and decision-making. These are skills that have a high degree of correlation with success in negotiation.

Students discussed their takeaways and learning outcomes through the journals and exit questionnaires. The following themes surfaced within the data: trusting yourself, being open minded, confidence, and communication. Students reported that improvisation helped them step out of their comfort zones, and now they are more likely to take risks in their everyday life and be willing to try new things. Judgment also came up throughout the journals and the exit questionnaires. The students contended that having fun and not judging while engaging in improvisation allowed them to take creative risks and gain confidence in their artistry and leadership skills. Student #15 reflected on how this workshop affected her: “I can apply the confidence I’ve gained to
everyday life and knowing that I’m good enough. It’s all in the mind set.” Student #14 explained what she learned:

This workshop helped me to become more comfortable with being a leader, directing, communicating, and collaborating with others. I found this workshop to really help me grow as a dancer by getting me out of my comfort zone. Overall, I gained more confidence in myself, and allowed me to discover many ways to use improv to better my dancing.

Students also discussed that they sharpened their communication skills and learned to effectively talk with their classmates during collaborative exercises. Student #3 commented on what she learned about communicating: “Throughout the workshop I definitely polished and improved on my communication skills. In activities in which I had to be a leader I had to know how to communicate effectively to my dancers so that they knew how I wanted a specific idea or movement carried out.” When it came to negotiation, students reported that they gained confidence with it, but a surprising outcome also emerged. Students contended that negotiation offered a unique perspective on collaborative dance making. When they were tasked with creative deal-making, students had to negotiate with a partner to develop a dance. The intention for this assignment was to help them learn to articulate their vision and advocate for themselves. Many students reported that it was an inspirational way to work and led to exciting contrasting movement and innovative dance making. Student #12 discussed the benefits of negotiation as it relates to dance making, “The negotiation activity was really interesting because I learned that two completely different ideas could work so well together just like the phrase “opposites attract.”

Students compared how they felt as directors during the pre- and post-director tests. The post-test reflection data indicated that 92% of students felt comfortable as a
director on the last day of the project, compared to the first day when 58% of students reported being comfortable. Many students reported that on the last day they felt more confident and did not judge themselves, and this allowed them to act as effective leaders.

The director evaluation rubric measured three categories and demonstrated student growth in all three: confidence, decision-making, and collaboration. The students’ regular dance class teacher observed and noted progress in her students as they stepped into the leadership role on the last day of the project. Based on the regular dance teacher’s rubric scores, students had the greatest improvement with confidence, which had a 72% increase.

Students also indicated that they developed certain skillsets through the pre- and post-surveys. Comparing the average change in survey scores before and after the project, the following categories had the most improvement: dance improvisation (44% increase), communication (33% increase), confidence (29% increase), and collaboration (25% increase).

Limitations of the Study

There was potential for bias throughout this study. The following factors could have possibly affected the outcome of this study: the researcher working as the teacher, a small group of participants, and the instrumentation. The researcher’s dual role may have influenced the students’ responses and the outcome of the study. In order to test the outcome of this research, the study should be repeated at a variety of high schools with other teachers leading the curriculum in order to create a neutral environment. Another factor that may have influenced the outcome of this project was the sample size and demographic. This curriculum was only tested on one class of twenty-six students with
prior knowledge in dance. Ideally this curriculum should be taught to an assortment of classes with a variety of dance backgrounds, including those that have no prior dance experience, to those that have varying degrees of dance training. Finally, the lack of validity and reliability of instruments may have limited this study. The researcher designed all of the instrumentation used to collect data. Perhaps expanding the instrumentation to include video documentation, interviews, and an assessment from someone without prior knowledge of the students would bring more clarity to the data.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Additional research is needed to verify the learning outcomes developed from practicing dance improvisation. Linking particular skill development exclusively to improvisation may be a challenge. A long-term study is needed where students have ample time to discover and experiment with dance improvisation, and verify that the practice can result in the development of certain skills.

Another topic that needs more research is examining whether students are able to apply the improvisation skillsets to life outside of the dance classroom. This complex issue would require a long-term study and a control group. Two randomized groups should be compared, the first being trained in dance improvisation techniques and the second with no exposure to the genre.

**Final Thoughts**

This study concluded that students had a positive takeaway from participating in the dance improvisation lessons. After participating in a dance improvisation curriculum, students felt more confident in their leadership, collaboration, and communication skills. Participants gained experience with negotiation as a device to articulate their ideas and as
a tool to collaborate with others. Whether students will apply these skillsets to their
everyday life is debatable, but many proclaimed that the risk-taking involved with dance
improvisation has developed their confidence as dancers, leaders, and community
members.
WORKS CITED


Biasutti, Michele. “Improvisation In Dance Education: Teacher Views.”

*Journal of Dance Education*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2013, pp. 120–140.


APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DOCUMENTS
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 November 28, 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.

Marlene -
Thank you for your patience with the UNC IRB process. Your amendments and modifications are approved. Please be sure to use these amended materials in your participant recruitment and data collection.

Best wishes with your research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Megan Stellino, UNC IRB Co-Chair

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNC) IRB’s records.
CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
STUDENT

Project Title: Creation, Negotiation, Equality: Empowering Young Women through Dance Improvisation

Researcher: Marlene Strang

Researcher Email: stra0939@bears.unco.edu

Hello students in Advanced Dance. I will be conducting a research study in your class that evaluates the effects of dance improvisation on negotiation skills. I will be conducting this workshop during your regularly scheduled advanced dance class; the workshop will involve several classes focused in dance improvisation. If you are willing to participate in the study, I will be collecting information from you in the following ways: a pre/post test with reflection, journaling, a pre/post self-assessment survey, and a post-questionnaire. All research instruments will be done during regular class time with the exception of the journaling. You will be able to journal at your own pace throughout the process and submit all journals the last day of the workshop. I will also be taking field notes based on observations during class time.

In any published research, your name will be changed to protect your identity. I may videotape the activities to back up the notes taken and no video will be made of students for whom I do not have a signed consent form. Be assured that I intend to keep the contents of these tapes private, unless you give permission below for their use as an educational tool.

I foresee minimal risks to you beyond those that are normally encountered with the physical aspects involved with a dance class. The other possible risk may arise from an emotional standpoint. This dance class will involve creating and sharing, which can make people feel vulnerable and open to criticism. This class will be led in a way that promotes an encouraging environment where we will support one another. Positive reinforcement will also be used to motivate you to gain confidence and take risks without judgment.

The completed consent forms will be stored in Crabbe Hall, room 308, the office of Christy O’Connell-Black, Dance Education MA co-coordinator and all data and consent forms will be destroyed after three years.
Participation is voluntary. If you and your parents say you want to participate, but then change
your mind, you can stop any time you want to. Your decision will be respected and will not result
in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an
opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this
research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any
concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Sherry
May, IRB Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern
Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910

_________________________________________________________
Student’s Signature     Date (month/day/year)

________________________________________________
Researcher’s Signature     Date (month/day/year)

________________________________________________
Printed Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent     Date (month/day/year)

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and
was approved by the IRB on (date).
CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
PARENT/GUARDIAN

Project Title: Creation, Negotiation, Equality: Empowering Young Women through Dance Improvisation

Researcher: Marlene Strang
Researcher Email: stra0939@bears.unco.edu

I am sending this letter home with your child to let you know I am conducting a research study in the Advanced Dance class. The study will evaluate the effects of dance improvisation on negotiation skills of young women. If you grant permission and if your child indicates to us a willingness to participate, I will be conducting this research during your child’s regularly scheduled advanced dance class. The research will involve participating in several dance improvisation classes, a pre/post test with reflection, journaling, a pre/post self-assessment survey, and a post questionnaire. All research instruments will be administered during regular class time with the exception of the journaling. Students will be able journal at their own pace throughout the process and submit all journals the last day of the workshop. I will also be taking field notes based on observations during class time.

In any published research, participants’ names will be changed to protect their identity. I may videotape the activities to back up the notes taken and no video will be made of students for whom I do not have a signed consent form. Be assured that I intend to keep the contents of these tapes private, unless you give permission below for their use as an educational tool.

I foresee minimal risks to subjects beyond those that are normally encountered with the physical aspects involved with a dance class. The other possible risk may arise from an emotional standpoint. This dance class will involve creating and sharing, which can make students feel vulnerable and open to criticism. This class will be led in a way that promotes an encouraging environment where participants will support one another. Positive reinforcement will also be used to motivate students to gain confidence and take risks without judgment.

The completed consent forms will be stored in Crabbe Hall, room 308, the office of Christy O’Connell-Black, Dance Education MA co-coordinator and all data and consent forms will be destroyed after three years.
Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to allow your child to participate in this study and if (s)he begins participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which your child is otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like your child to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Sherry May, IRB Administrator, Office of Sponsored Programs, 25 Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

__________________________________________________________________________
Child’s Full Name (please print)   Child’s Birth Date (month/day/year)
__________________________________________________________________________
Parent/Guardian’s Signature       Date (month/day/year)
__________________________________________________________________________
Researcher’s Signature            Date (month/day/year)
__________________________________________________________________________
Printed Name of Researcher Obtaining Consent       Date (month/day/year)

If you give permission for the researcher to use the videotape of the class for educational purposes of please initial here:

_________ Initials

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study and was approved by the IRB on (date).
APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENTATION
Self-Analysis Pre and Post Survey for Advanced High School Dancers

Please rate yourself concerning the following statements. Apply these statements to everyday life including school, work, and personal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I consider myself a confident person.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am a great problem solver.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am very creative.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am a great listener.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am an excellent collaborator.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I am a clear verbal communicator.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I am a great leader.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I can make quick decisions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I work well with others.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am great at dance improvisation.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Post-Test Reflection High School Advanced Dance Students

1. Describe what it was like to direct your group?
2. Were you comfortable as a director? Explain.
3. Were you able to successfully accomplish the task?
4. In what ways do you think you could improve as a director?
5. What was most challenging about the activity you just completed?
6. What skills do you need to be successful for this assignment?
7. Describe your experience as a group member? In what ways did you work together to accomplish the assignment we just completed?
8. Describe what had to happen in order to move forward as a group?
9. What did you learn from this activity?
10. Can you apply what you learned to everyday life? If yes, how?
Exit Questionnaire for High School Advanced Dance Students

1. Did your dance improvisation skills change throughout this process? If yes, describe.

2. Describe any skills you learned through this workshop?

3. Describe any success or growth or challenges that came up throughout the workshop? Please discuss dancing as well as collaboration and communication.

4. Can you apply anything you learned in this workshop to your everyday life? If yes, explain.

5. Describe an example of when you acted as a leader. Discuss any emotions you had about leading and which methods were effective or ineffective for leading the group?


7. Describe what it is like to work collaboratively. What is effective/ineffective?

8. Why do you need collaboration skills?

9. Describe how you feel about negotiating. What skills does it take and do you have any of those skills? You may reference the activity where you had to collaborate with a partner and advocate for your list of objectives to create an improv structure.

10. Please add any additional comments or questions including things that were meaningful, challenging, exciting, unexpected, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director Evaluation Rubric</th>
<th>Proficient 15</th>
<th>Emerging 10</th>
<th>Beginning 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is speaking clearly, making eye contact, and has conviction in his or her statements.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is making clear choices and sticking with them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student is supportive and inclusive of all group members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>