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Cultivating and Fostering Creativity, Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking Through the Choreographic Dance Making Process: A Dance Curriculum for Urban Elementary Students

Kristen Sylvia Mercer

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO
Greeley, Colorado
The Graduate School

CULTIVATING AND FOSTERING CREATIVITY,
COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND
CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH THE
CHOREOGRAPHIC DANCE MAKING
PROCESS: A DANCE CURRICULUM
FOR URBAN ELEMENTARY
STUDENTS

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

Kristen Sylvia Mercer

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

December 2018

This Thesis by: Kristen Sylvia Mercer

Entitled: *Cultivating and Fostering Creativity, Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking through the Choreographic Dance Making Process: A Dance Curriculum for Urban Elementary Students*

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

Mercer, Kristen Sylvia. *Cultivating and Fostering Creativity, Communication, Collaboration and Critical Thinking Through the Choreographic Dance Making Process: A Dance Curriculum for Urban Elementary Students*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2018.

The purpose of this research was to determine how the four skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration are defined and how dance making and choreography might be taught to urban elementary students in a way that also teaches each of these four skills. The thesis attempted to answer the four research questions by reviewing existing literature and qualitatively mining and analyzing the data in order to discover techniques and ideas that could be used to design the desired curriculum. The researcher used a similar process to understand how dance making might best be taught to elementary school children, particularly urban elementary school children. The researcher was the sole participant in this study with an outcome in which she was able to design lessons for both younger and older children.

Further research is required in order to determine how to teach dance making to young students so that the movements created are based on the students' inner impulses. The lessons created also need to be taught to students, especially urban elementary school students, to assess their outcome and effectiveness for that student population.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goal of Thesis

The goals of this thesis were to find the connection between creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and teaching choreography, and also design a curriculum for urban elementary students that teaches these four skills through choreography.

Dance has the capacity to enhance and expand the 21st century learning skills of creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking. Dance educators can teach dance making in a way that cultivates and encourages these skills in students to allow for experiences that act as a conduit to teaching originality, self-motivation, resiliency, and flexibility. Children growing up in the 21st century need to prepare themselves not only to become productive, confident members of society, but to “manage the complexity and diversity of everyday living and their careers. They will need to be more flexible, fluid, more globally aware and more innovative” (Cone and Cone 17).

Creativity, as suggested by Alma Hawkins, “implies imaginative thought: sensing, feeling, imaging, and searching for truth” (6). The nature of creativity lies in the essence of its process; this implies diving inward to sort and explore the private world of stored thoughts, sensations, and memories from the core of our being (6).

Miriam Giguere conducted a study that examined children's cognition within the creative process in dance and to investigate how dance making impacts and affects cognitive development in children. The data collected came from fifth graders participating in an artist-in-residence program in a public school in Pennsylvania, and both the data analysis and inquiry were guided by a qualitative research approach in phenomenography, which involves analysis of learning in a task set by the researcher in a naturalistic situation (Giguere, "Dancing Thoughts" 5-11). The data for the study came from four sources: videotapes of the ten study sessions; interviews with study participant; children's daily journal entries; and brainstorming sheets created on days one and two of the study. In conjunction to identifying twenty seven discrete cognitive strategies that children employed in creating dance, the study conclusions pointed to the importance of group thinking to obtain maximum cognitive activity from dance making. In short, Giguere's study highlighted the notion:

that open-ended collaborative choreographic projects, alongside technical training, can create a comprehensive dance curriculum that supports not only the expected emotional and physical development that dance has to offer children, but it is an avenue to cognitive development as well. (Giguere, "Dancing Thoughts" 25)

Further implications from the same experiential study emerged to support dance and its place in the elementary education curriculum as a stand-alone subject, rather than existing as a teaching tool to develop other academic or artistic disciplines. As evidenced in this study, the development of creative cognition within students, provided advocacy for dance in elementary education due to the development of cognitive skills. This project was student led, and fully focused on dance making. The researcher's role was only that as facilitator, whose only interactions with the students throughout their

process was to inquire about how they were doing (Giguere, “Dancing Thoughts” 10-11).

Critical thinking, if used as a model to develop critical inquiry typically involves at least four of the following elements of mental processing: analysis, reflection, integration and evaluation (Green 10). Within the thought process of critical thinking, analysis may be defined as the disassembly or dissection of information in an attempt to accelerate new ideas on possible solutions to problems (Green 10). Reflection as the next step in the process may refer to careful considerations or conclusions that stem from the analysis (Green 11). There is an element of metacognition, as the thinker is reflecting on their own thinking. Integration is within the critical thinking mode. It requires the creative resolution of tension between the latest insight generated from the analysis and reflection, as well as taking the original or old pattern of thought into consideration (Green 12). Integration asks for a new pathway of thought through the synthesis of new knowledge and insight (Green 13). Evaluation may be defined as weighing the strength, credibility or value of a new solution, thought or idea (Green 14).

In the article, “Best Instructional Practices for Developing Student Choreographers,” Kathryn Humphreys and Sinéad Kimbrell described a research project conducted with elementary aged students in Chicago public schools. The students in this study were in grades two through six, and the study extended over the course of twenty-five teaching hours (Humphreys and Kimbrell 84). During the study, the students were guided through a rationale as they became choreographers. The following words, Prepare, Create, Perform, and Respond described the steps of this rationale. The students were prepared through the introduction of shared dance vocabulary that

allowed them to begin from a personal standpoint as they formed their dances, made decisions, and reflected on what they created. This study concluded by showing that the choreographic process is a strong tool for infusing critical thinking skills into the dance curriculum. By engaging in reflective work in a significant way, the dancers developed a deeper appreciation and awareness of how to convey ideas and decipher visual information presented through dance (Humphreys and Kimbrell 89-91).

Communication can encompass many content areas. The choreographer's work is catalyzed by an intrinsic urge to "create new forms that present the individual's unique response to life's experience" (Hawkins 5). The act of communicating and giving expression to life's continuous flow of sensory data is fed by the process of taking in; we are compelled to combine the fragments and elements of our daily encounters into a meaningful relationship (Hawkins 5-6). Symbolization is borne out of this process, but the symbolic transformation of experience is not always expressed through words—choreography is metaphoric and exhibits the heart of felt thought through the use of illusion and imagery (Hawkins 6). "Dance, a nonverbal medium of expression, is certainly dependent on a mode of consciousness that is different from the ordinary mode of thought associated with the left hemisphere" (Hawkins 8).

Language is the means of communication that stems from the verbal, left part of the brain. Our right hemisphere is thought to be more holistic and less sequential in processing data. Dance, as a physical, nonverbal mode of communication relies on a pattern of consciousness that is thought to have its roots in the right hemisphere of the brain. It stems from that which relies on inner vision, imaginative thought, spontaneity, imagery and clustering together of separate elements (Hawkins 8).

Communication then extends further, into how accurately one relates personal experiences to reality. As Minton and Faber stated in their book, *Dancing with the Thinking Brain: Embodying Neuroscience*: “Communication is not a straightforward, singular process. Each one of us contains a background of life circumstances we have lived. These experiences change our brains and restructure meaning” (Minton and Faber 176).

In another article titled “Thinking as They Create: Do Children have Similar Experiences in Dance and Language Arts?” Giguere investigated cognition as children learned to dance about poetry. Throughout her study, she defined cognition using Howard Gardner’s definition from *Frames of Mind*. She described cognition as “thinking and learning that involves perception and conceptualization, especially that which involves symbolic knowledge and use of notational systems” (Giguere, “Thinking as They Create” 41). During the poetry interviews with Giguere, the children admitted to using strategies that could be labeled “tools for thinking,” such as empathizing, observing, recognizing patterns and forming patterns (“Thinking as They Create” 44). One child stated that “I daydream like I’m rescuing people from a burning building or other things like that. That gets me started on stuff, too.” (Giguere, “Thinking as They Create” 44). This child’s experience was an example of empathizing.

In this same study, the researcher also found examples of other types of thinking such as observing, recognizing and forming patterns throughout the dance making strategies employed by students. The study concluded that by giving children the opportunities to engage in their own dance making, they are challenged to polish their

problem-solving skills. Dance is a metacognitive tool, and one that can develop communication skills on a deep level from verbal to artistic movement.

Collaboration is the final thinking skill that was the subject of this research project and the last one to be discussed in the introductory chapter. Collaboration stems from being a part of society since an individual is part of the collective. It is a process that moves beyond the scope of the personal viewpoint to include the collective undertaking. It is built from relationships of varying depth, from collegial to friendship (Minton and Faber 78-9).

In dance making, collaboration comes into play as students move from individual choreographic projects into group projects. Students who are paired together to create dances report feeling more comfortable and safe, when providing constructive feedback to one another. This enables students to have a chance to be honest and grow from their experiences in a way that performing for a dance teacher in front of a whole class does not afford them. The focus on their learning without being thrown into the spotlight create a welcome shift which can allow for more ease and development of technique, artistry and skill (Raman 80-81).

These four skills—creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration can be taught through choreography classes. Creativity is fostered in dance students when they are afforded the opportunity and freedom to explore, experiment and take ownership of their movement. In this sense, the act of movement exploration or improvisation becomes an impetus for opening up new ways of thinking.

In a study completed by Sandra Minton and Judi Hofmeister, a group of International Baccalaureate (IB) dance students, created meaning out of their dance

experiences, and made connections between the 21st Century Skills, of creativity, accountability, flexibility, communication, collaboration and critical thinking. One student in the study, found that: “. . . improvisation . . . taking . . . an image or idea and abstracting it and making it. . . different. . . That really opened up . . . creativity. . . . It’s just like a journey to see, to push yourself. . . . Step outside . . . what you’d normally do” (Minton and Hofmeister 72).

Purpose of Study

The aim of this research was to answer four research questions:

- Q1 How are the four skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration defined or described?
- Q2 How might choreography be taught so it teaches creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration?
- Q3 What is included in such a choreographic curriculum?
- Q4 How can such a choreographic curriculum be tailored to meet the needs and learning level of elementary age urban children?

The motivation for this research grew from an interest in designing a choreography curriculum for urban elementary school children. Dance making has been widely documented as benefiting children, including those who might be found in urban populations. The four 21st century skills that have been aforementioned are fundamental, essential life skills that build a whole, well-rounded, confident human being who is ready to interact with the world and thrive as a productive member of society.

It is critical to bring students a curriculum which develops skills that are essential for life. Developing life skills is particularly important for those who may come from disadvantaged urban areas. Dance can provide students with numerous

benefits that extend into excitement, emotional well-being and expectation (Cameron Frichtel 49).

As the quotations in both preceding sections of the Introduction indicated, involvement in dance making can lead to positive self-concepts and contribute to critical thinking, enriched learning and creativity. The purpose of this study was to unearth the four research questions and to design a curriculum for teaching choreography that cultivated and nurtured these skills in students of dance. The reflections noted previously emerged from students who participated in a project in which they were provided writing prompts by an artist-educator and dance researcher, and asked to design their own descriptive reflections of their dance experiences.

Significance of this Study

This research was significant to the continuum of knowledge about teaching choreography to urban elementary students. It was meant to describe the connection between dance making and 21st century skills. Essentially, dance choreography curricula can be the 21st century skills embodied and put into action when the curricula are designed with the goal of teaching creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication. Whether the student continues to pursue dance beyond the scope of the choreography course or not, they will open up and develop skills that are transferable and vital to all areas of their lives.

Minton and Faber noted that:

The deepest critical thinking occurs when interpreting, analyzing, critiquing, and relating dance to other experiences and learning. These thought processes are highlighted most in creating dance, reflective performing, responding to dance, and connecting dance with personal experiences, contextual meaning, cultural significance, historical events, or other life phenomena. (174)

This statement highlighted one of the primary motivations of this study, which was to discover how to teach choreography in a way that taps into the development of critical thinking in students. Further motivation for this study sprung from wanting to create a curriculum that develops the whole student, in a manner in which they discover strengths such as their own artistry while developing inter and intrapersonal skills.

As Monica J. Cameron Frichtel wrote:

Seldom are students' experiential assessments of learning critically considered in developing curricula and creating learning activities. This concern is compounded in dance education with its diversity and plurality in approaches to teaching. With multiple intentions, purposes, approaches, practices, and interest groups supporting dance programs, dance is both intra and interdisciplinary. Thus, it seems particularly relevant for dance researchers and practitioners to gain understanding of student experience, the values that are embedded into various curricula, and students' meanings of learning dance. (43)

It was critical to the researcher to gain understanding of student experiences in creative learning and while they make choreography in order to develop a curriculum that could enrich their entire artistic journey.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There was a large amount of literature about how creating can serve as a basis for this study because it is an important catalyst for personal growth. This literature also provided the interconnection between the four essential 21st century skills: creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration and dance making. This chapter will summarize reflections on the ways that dance making encourages intra and interpersonal skills, social and academic growth, as well as the connection between dance making and the four essential 21st century skills. In addition, the researcher will discuss the connections between dance making, the development of the above skills, and how they can be used as a basis for developing an informed dance curriculum.

Creating as a Catalyst for Personal Growth

The creative process demands risk-taking, discomfort, exposure and courage. Creating personal work is a transformative experience that encourages one to see new possibilities and be open to different experiences—some of which necessitate stepping into uncharted territory. The discomfort encountered along this journey requires courage and letting go of concern over the possibility of being judged by others. As students create choreography, many discover unexpectedly that personal growth is a necessary part of their creative process.

Researcher Katie Scherman conducted an eight-week study that explored a model for the creative process. This study, which facilitated a creative process workshop, included eight undergraduate college dance majors. The goal in Scherman's study was to investigate the role of the choreographer as facilitator/collaborator and the dancers or students as creator/co-owners with the purpose of originating a creative process model. Scherman's study strove to answer the following questions: What tools in the creative process open possibilities for the dancer and choreographer to transform content into movement?; In the role of the facilitator, what behaviors are encouraging for the dancers in the creative process?

Scherman's aim was to develop a set of provisions that provided a trusting, nurturing, and supportive atmosphere, where dancers could feel comfortable to take risks and sharpen their creative power within a community.

Throughout the study, Scherman collected data from the eight students in the form of interviews, videotaped classes and journals, and analyzed the data to discover emerging themes and subthemes based on the students' responses and the goals of her study. During the study, the students participated in weekly classes which dealt with the following topics: bring you to the space (an exploration of one's personal space), intuition, creativity, individuality, connections, use of voice, honesty, questioning methodology, body maps, integrating ideas and a culmination (Scherman 36).

It is worth mentioning that the workshop content dealing with space meant that the participants began with affirmations and a breathing group circle—participants lay on their backs in a circle, with their eyes closed, then moved into a core abdominal warm-up, push-ups, and running. Then they were led through a guided improvisation to

awaken the body through tactile touch. The researcher asked the participants to “wash off the body, take an honest shower and take off anything that they wanted to get off” (Scherman 111).

The next step was awakening memory in the body. In this exercise, the participants were encouraged to actively exhaust different parts of their body, and then stand in silence. This sequence was followed by inviting the participants to lead with any intention before moving into a direction phrase in which they moved from one part of the room to another, repeating the directions phrase together as a group. Finally, all of the participants stood in a line with eyes closed as the researcher placed a prop in their hands. Each participant had thirty seconds to touch and smell it, before beginning a group improvisation that involved moving based on the sensation the prop created.

Other exercises included associating body language with words, making connections through breathing and affirmations, using cue words to direct the nature of the movements created, making noises along with performing movements, using visual focus to direct movement, and connecting visual focus with emotionally-based movements. The participants were able to work individually, in pairs and also in larger groups at points during these exercises (Scherman 111-113). See Appendix B for a more detailed description of these exercises.

The following quotation was taken from a participant’s journal entry, after he took part in one of Scherman’s workshops. This entry spoke to the courage, risk-taking, and self-exposure that seemed to result from participating in the creative process. This student wrote:

I felt nervous and emotional performing this phrase. The feelings which composed the whole phrase are things which I kept to myself until now. This

exercise made me feel like I had nothing else to lose, so it made me open up more when I was rewriting and more confident when I performed it. . . . I realized I wasn't trying to make anyone feel anything. I just wanted to be my most honest self, which I can do in front of you guys, and I appreciate you caring and understanding. Everyone is so fantastically human. I wish that session could have lasted longer. (Scherman 49)

In an interview, another participant, Sarah, stated:

Today was challenging but I loved it! When we worked on the master group phrase, after about the third person I decided to chill out and do what I can. I'm not superwoman. I'll make mistakes, its ok! I found it was very interesting to do the phrase extremely fast but not caring about mistakes. (Scherman 42)

At the end of the workshops, Scherman reflected back on this student's perceived weaknesses and also described her tremendous growth. Scherman noted that Sarah began opening her chest in improvisation tasks and used her voice with greater volume. Thus, it appeared that she was learning to take risks and be open to exposing herself to a greater extent as a result of being involved in the creative process workshops.

Creating and Movement Authenticity

Andrew Blight defined authentic movement as “a mindful movement exploration between a mover and a witness which encourages the development of consciousness.” He went on to explain:

The mover moves, with eyes closed, from an intention of mindfulness, non-judgmentally guided by inner impulses, sensations, emotions, and/or thoughts in the presence of a witness. The witness observes, carrying the majority of work in the beginning as he or she strives to see the mover while becoming aware of any personal projections or judgments. The witness is responsible for maintaining an outer consciousness, creating safety, monitoring the time, and for maintaining his or her own psychological safety.

Mary Starks Whitehouse, dancer and dance/movement therapist was the first to create, practice, and outline a methodology for Authentic Movement by integrating her

experience as a modern dancer and improviser, with her personal involvement in Jungian analysis. Whitehouse believed movement was a vehicle for communication and self-expression, and an instrument for diving into the unconscious realms of personality and revealing them in the present moment.

Diana F. Green stated that the art of choreography is far more complex and boundless than a simple definition because it is an arrangement of movement to express an idea or concept (Green 2). Rather, choreography involves looking within ~~the soul~~ for truths that may be expressed only through movement since it involves discovering movement that provides a window into the soul (Green 2). Such choreography expresses who one is and can only be discovered by the self; it exists within as a secret and so is beyond being communicated by another. Inquiry-based approaches to the choreographic process that look within allow freedom to find one's own way (Green 2-3).

In her post workshop interview, one of the participants from the Scherman's workshop described her process of discovering authentic movement as a very honest, vulnerable and transformational task. She felt what was called the body mask task provided her with an opportunity to work on her self-judgment. She commented:

The body map was liberating. I usually wouldn't share things like that. I'm not very comfortable with my body shape, but having it drawn out. . . . "Well that's me!" And putting words in it; you could see inside me. It wasn't as terrifying as I thought it would be. I put a lot of deep stuff [in there]. I'm sure at the beginning of the term it would have looked different. I shared a lot of stuff I didn't think I would share. In the dance-department I never felt welcome until this year. (Scherman 62)

Another participant in Scherman's movement workshops, reflected a shift in the content of her journal entries halfway through the sessions. Compared to her first

entries, the last four included more in-depth reflections and observations. In the post-workshop interview, she reflected on her experience:

[My favorite part] is being vulnerable, the moments when I could do that Maybe not in the moment, but as I look back. The ‘I come from:’ You either let it out, or you don’t and it allowed me to give to the experience, and that’s what I got back. [My least favorite part] was whenever we were talking, because it’s hard for me. But looking back that really helped me. My [moment of transformation] was the ‘I come from:’ when I started crying. I talked to Christy at the end of the day, and we were talking about those emotions that come up. When you said to just speak it, no movement, I closed my eyes and saw some stuff and just lost it. (Scherman 81)

*Dance Making Stretches
One’s Creativity*

In a study conducted by Minton and Hofmeister, in the latter’s International Baccalaureate (IB) dance classes, the students were interviewed and discussed the meanings they connected with dance making. A qualitative analysis of the students’ comments revealed four themes: self-growth and understanding; interpersonal growth and understanding; knowledge related to dance; and connections between dance and other academic areas, and work (Minton and Hofmeister 67). A major conclusion in this study was that involvement in dance making developed the students 21st Century skills, especially their ability to think and work creatively.

Larry Lavender explained what it means to be a creative process mentor in his article, “Creative Process Mentoring: Teaching the ‘Making’ in Dance-Making.” Motivated by a desire to shift his pedagogical focus from the “dance” to the “making” side of the equation, he began attending rehearsals to see how the students’ dances were born and nurtured. Lavender hoped he could help students better understand the decisions and actions they made during dance making to potentially deepen their understanding of the creative process. He also thought increased understanding of the

creative process could enable students to discuss their work and make more sense of it (Lavender, “Creative Process Mentoring” 6).

As a result of his observational research, Lavender discovered four operations intrinsic to dance making. He used an acronym IDEA which stood for these operations: Improvisation, Development, Evaluation and Assimilation. Lavender thought understanding these operations would help students locate and orient themselves within the process of dance making (“Creative Process Mentoring” 6).

Lavender also claimed that a choreographer’s dance idea creates momentum, and it is that momentum which a creative process mentor aims to facilitate. To initiate creative process mentoring, he asked students to adopt one or more of the following sentence frames to formulate what motivated their choreography. He wrote: “I am making a dance by. . . .” [describe a process or method of working]; “I am making a dance in which. . . .” [describe specific images for the work]; and “I am making a dance that. . . .” [state desired outcome that the work will achieve] (Lavender, “Creative Process Mentoring” 9).

In her paper, “Dance Has Connected Me to My Voice,” Dorothy Coe maintained that student dancers get involved with the dance for specific, unique purposes and take from their experiences what has a personal meaning. One of her students explained:

. . . I now have learned to believe in myself and who I am . . . I have a greater spiritual awareness . . . I have learned to take a hold of my emotions through the dance. . . . I have learned to reflect more, thus giving me a lot more self-determination. . . the dance has connected me to my voice . . . the dance experience has touched me very deeply to my soul . . . the soul is your grass roots . . . and when you touch it with the right combination of people . . . well, it has given me a great power surge . . . the courage to speak. . . (Coe 43)

Another of Coe's students indicated they valued dance and that creativity will not emerge in choreographic form if there is lack of self-confidence and mastery of body movements. This student noted: "I used my confidence and personality to my advantage in dance today. . . . I brought my own 'life' into this dance, creating an energetic and rhythmic performance, saying what I had to say in the process" (Coe 44).

*Dance Making Demands
Critical Thinking*

Much research has revealed the link between dance making and critical thinking.

Take for example, this student's reflection:

Creating a dance in this class has carried over into English where it'll help me be more creative and think . . . outside of the norm and put that into writing. . . . When you . . . get stuck for choreography . . . I'll go back to improv. . . . And then for writing . . . if I get stuck . . . I'll start writing down random thoughts, and . . . take one of those thoughts and . . . get back in the flow of what I was trying to write. (Minton and Hofmeister 72)

Giguere also discussed how dance making can develop critical thinking:

Dance is aided in developing these skills [critical thinking] when the teacher reinforces constructivist principles by: (1) encouraging divergent movement responses; (2) engaging transformation of ideas into creating a dance; (3) inviting the sharing of ideas; and (4) guiding students' elaboration. ("Dancing Thoughts" 10)

Larry Lavender described making dances as a revisions process that consists of putting something together with the materials of the art form. For dance, this process takes place through movement. Dance making involves assessing the piece, taking it apart, and putting it together again, probably with some changes (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 16). From this angle, the choreographic process illuminated the fact that critical evaluation plays a decisive role throughout the process of creating a dance (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 16).

*Dance Making Develops
Communication Skills*

Theresa Purcell Cone's article, "Following Their Lead: Supporting Children's Ideas for Creating Dances" highlighted several ways that for children, creating dances from their own ideas can be more than owning a sense of accomplishment. Purcell Cone's study focused on identifying topics that students chose to reflect on in their dance making experiences. Thus, in doing the study, she looked for common themes or processes in the students' comments (Cone 82).

As the children created sun and water dances, they collaborated and talked about their ideas with one another; some took leadership, using phrases like, "I got an idea, we can go like this," supported by a demonstration (Cone 84). In another group, one child gave roles to the members of her group and suggested: "You be the people and you be the sun" (Cone 84). From the students' comments, Cone learned that they used movement and language at the same time as they pursued their personal experiences and feelings to initiate dance making (Cone 84).

At the end of the session, Cone asked the students to draw a picture describing their dance making. The drawings shed light on how the children perceived themselves because some drawings depicted a group, while others drew themselves as individuals. The drawings which depicted a group emphasized the communicative nature of dance making (Cone 84).

*Dance Making Inspires
Collaboration*

Lavender discussed the creator of a dance as a critic. In his book, he talked about how a revision process in any of the arts involves frequent assessment and adjustment of

a work-in-progress. If a group of students is creating a dance, the creative process of making the dance and its subsequent revision requires collaboration between group members.

However, it is essential to remember that the implication of data about an artist's intention, in addition to any external evidence about an artistic work lies completely in the ability of related data to enhance one's impression of the internal features of that piece. The problem with relying on an artist's intentions, according to Lavender, stemmed from the distinction between external facts and internal features of the work of art (*Dancers Talking Dance* 46).

In a dance, internal features can include the temporal and spiritual patterns of the dance, and the ways that gestures and movements are crafted in relation to each other (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 46). Choreographers may comment on their work but it is prudent to assume that a work's true meaning is only what the choreographer said it is. Yet while the choreographer's critical evaluation is an integral part of participating in choreography classes, one must engage in it through collaboration with others (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 45-46). Essentially, whenever choreography students gather to observe and discuss the performance of a dance created by one of their peers, they are, whether they know it or not, functioning as critics rather than audience members (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 56).

Lavender devised what he called the ORDER approach to choreographic evaluation. To use this approach, he divided the critical process into five stages: observation, reflection, discussion, evaluation, and recommendations for revisions. In this approach, a reflection period of several minutes immediately followed the

completion of a performance. This exploratory phase trains students to notice and describe choreographic patterns; distinguish differences, similarities, and relationships among artistic qualities, and perceive the part/whole relationships within the work (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 68).

During critical reflection, viewers spend two to five minutes writing brief notes describing and analyzing the dance under review. Lavender recommended that students should note their feelings along with describing and analyzing the visible features of the dance. Reflective writing is a type of focused free writing in which there is no pressure to present one's ideas in a certain way. It enables students to organize into words the details of their perceptions of the dance so that they can share them with others (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 69).

In the choreography class, then, reflective notes provide the foundation for interpretative and evaluative discussion by supplying the group with some shared background of understanding (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 81). Through sharing what they have observed about the dance under review, students prepare themselves to interpret and judge the work in the later stages of discussion within maximum clarity (Lavender, *Dancers Talking Dance* 81).

What is Creativity?

While there is much literature written about creative intelligence, monitoring the creative process, habits of creative people, and the psychology of discovery and invention, establishing a complete definition of what creativity is proved to be challenging. Whilst creativity is no doubt one of the essential 21st century skills, the

main common denominator amongst scholars was that creativity involves a deliberate expansion into new territory through the use of imagination. Lavender stated:

to move confidently and successfully from thinking up an idea for a dance to generating movement, to putting the finishing touches on the work, a choreographer must make hundreds, perhaps thousands of creative decisions, each of which may be seen as a judgment of artistic taste. (“Creative Process Mentoring” 6)

While Lavender did not define creativity in this article, he did describe the components of the dancing making process as four basic operational moments: improvisation, development, evaluation and assimilation (“Creative Process Mentoring” 8).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, an authority on the creative process, maintained that a creative person is not different from other people because creativity is determined not by the person, but by the novelty the individual includes in a domain (37). He defined creativity as any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one. And the definition of a creative person is: someone whose thoughts or actions change a domain or establish a new domain. It is important to remember, however, that a domain cannot be changed without the explicit or implicit consent of a field responsible for it (Csikszentmihalyi 37).

Bruce Nussbaum explored five competencies of creative intelligence: knowledge mining, framing, playing, making and pivoting. Knowledge mining involves noticing what came before, and possibly blending two seemingly unrelated bodies of knowledge to create something new (Nussbaum 27). It also embodies knowledge, develops awareness of knowledge and skills that you may not have recognized as creative and puts them to use in surprising and different ways (Nussbaum 27). Essentially, Nussbaum emphasized the importance of thinking about how to connect to what people

find meaningful, then applying this to whatever knowledge mining and hard work you have cultivated to be successful (Nussbaum 44).

Reframing is another competency of creative intelligence referenced by Nussbaum and which he discussed under the umbrella of framing. Reframing is about breaking routine. It is important because a person is often enmeshed in narratives that do not work in their mind and mesh with their thoughts (Nussbaum 48).

Playing is another creative intelligence competency that Nussbaum highlighted. Playing means not limiting oneself to one right answer but remaining open to contemplating outcomes that might not have been entertained previously. Playing invites tenacity, joy and triggers competition and cooperation; adults and children alike take risks when they are playing that they ordinarily would not take, perhaps because the idea of “serious work” has been altered (Nussbaum 59).

Making is another creative intelligence competency that contributes to the expansion of our world and universe. Making involves learning the tools that can help us bring that creativity to life in all aspects of our lives (Nussbaum 75). Nussbaum felt that when we turn an idea into something tangible, we enrich our own lives as well as the lives of those around us (75).

Pivoting was the final component of creativity mentioned by Nussbaum. He described pivoting as the scaling of creativity that is essential to creating new products; it describes the movement from inspiration to production. Pivoting essentially means the motion from concept to creation (Nussbaum 88).

What is Critical Thinking?

John Chaffee defined critical thinking as the process of carefully exploring one's thinking to clarify understanding and make more intelligent decisions (3). He claimed that thinking critically and thinking creatively are the goal of an educated thinker and that the process of thinking critically includes thinking for ourselves by “. . . carefully examining the way we make sense of the world” (Chaffee 3). Chaffee added that another aspect of critical thinking is to think back on what we are feeling, thinking or doing; it is the ability to reflect, and is a process that enables us to reflect on our own thinking and make it more effective (3).

The word critical comes from the Greek word for “critic” (kritikos), which means “to question, to make sense of, to be able to analyze” (Chaffee 53). By making sense of situations, questioning them and exploring our own thinking and the thinking of others that we evaluate and reach the best possible decision or conclusion about something. Critical thinkers, according to Chaffee, are open-minded, knowledgeable, mentally active, curious, independent thinkers, skilled discussants, insightful, self-aware, creative and passionate (Chaffee 55). Asking questions about purposes, interpretation, analysis and evaluation are effective ways to establish and improve critical thinking skills (Chaffee 77).

When one sharpens their critical thinking skills, they acquire the abilities needed to achieve their goals, make intelligent decisions and solve-problems (Chaffee 531). By illuminating our thoughts and feelings in order to develop more accurate beliefs, we must become aware of our biases, and explore situations from several different perspectives, building solid reasons to support our point of view (Chaffee 531).

What is Communication?

Communication is the glue that holds society together. Dance is a form of nonverbal communication that has been used as a way to socialize, attract others, flirt, tell stories and express meaning and social commentary in cultures around the world since prehistoric times. As a nonverbal form of communication, dance can have an important role within its processes and in our interactions with others.

Three nonverbal communication codes seemed pertinent to a discussion of dance and communication. These codes are: haptics, kinesics and proxemics. The haptics code refers to touching and physical contact. Kinesics is a code that includes facial movements and eye contact/gaze, while the proxemics code includes the use of space and time in social interactions (Peick 1-2).

These nonverbal communication codes, like touch can communicate positive and negative messages, such as enjoyment, hostility, stimulation, caring, affection or romantic interest (Peick 3). Different reactions can result from various forms of touch so that anxious individuals and those lacking self-esteem can show confidence or lack of it (Peick 3). Building self-image, self-awareness and self-direction is an important part of life; movement as a creative expression helps to shape personal aspects of an individual and these aspects of ourselves (Peick 3). Facial expression, eye contact or avoidance and physical closeness and distance all reflect an individual's interest and stance on social interaction. Therefore, the messages of dance contribute to communication, even if it is nonverbal. In fact, people use an abundance of nonverbal behaviors to communicate how they feel by smiling, keeping close distances, using physical touch and gaze to provide positive relational messages.

In the qualitative study conducted by Minton and Hofmeister, students discussed how IB Dance helped them feel confident about dancing and about themselves. Natalie said “Yeah, it [performing] has [helped] with making me more outgoing.” According to Courtney, IB Dance gave her “a lot of confidence. I used to be a very timid, shy person, and I'm getting better at being able to present myself on stage and in other places.” Nicole believed “You can't be shy being in this class. You have to be able to stand in front of your peers and perform a solo if needed.” Samantha stated “Being confident in dance . . . boosts my self-esteem” (Minton and Hofmeister 70).

Although the dancers above were referring to communicating nonverbally, because it was through the exercise of dance performance that they developed greater confidence in their verbal and social communication. When asked to show up and present their authentic truth, the dancers found, as Jessica stated, that when performing one's own choreography, “You're showing the world this is you and this is how I feel” (Minton and Hofmeister 71). The desire to communicate through motion, or to explore emotional expression through dance may be what motivates one to create a dance as a way to speak about something.

Throughout the Minton and Hofmeister study, students remarked about the growth they experienced in other academic areas outside of dance as a result of participating in the IB dance classes. Some of these comments related specifically to communication: Jessica said,

Creating a dance in this class has carried over into English where it'll help me be more creative and think . . . outside of the norm and put that into writing. . . . When you . . . get stuck for choreography . . . I'll go back to improv. . . . And then for writing . . . if I get stuck . . . I'll start writing down random thoughts, and . . . take one of those thoughts and . . . get back in the flow of what I was trying to write. (Minton and Hofmeister 72)

Marissa realized, “[the writing in IB Dance] helped me . . . in other classes . . . be more specific about what I write about” (Minton and Hofmeister 72).

Another frequent connection was between IB Dance and public speaking. Nicole said, “I can stand up in front of any group of people and give a speech. . . . Cause I used to not like to be in front of people.” Angela thought, “Knowing how to make your dance interesting, and expressing yourself through movement, helps with accepting yourself through speaking. . . . You can get them to pay attention” (Minton and Hofmeister 72).

What is Collaboration?

Dance by its very nature is a collaborative art form. The collaborative nature of dance applies to the choreographer’s responsibility to bring his or her creative vision to life followed by guiding all of the elements that go into the making of a dance. The collaboration may begin in the primordial stage when the choreographer is absorbing information from other artists or art forms. It can also extend to listening to the music, reading background information, or improvising and working with movement ideas that inspire a work.

Collaboration, at its core is creative. When working together on collaborative choreography, a student involved in Minton and Hofmeister’s study remarked: “Sometimes people are controlling and they don’t let you put your input in. . . . In the groups we’d talk about it and we’d discuss. . . . We’d kind of tip toe around it. . . . But other times you’d say no” (Minton and Hofmeister 71). Nicole added, “There’s differences in people. . . . You need to know how to respect every single one of your peers ’cause you’re more than likely gonna have to work with them on something” (Minton and Hofmeister 71).

During interviews, discussions of group dances led to talking about unifying the group. Angela said she “learned how to explain why she wants a movement performed in a certain way,” and Athena thought, “You have to keep in mind the capability of each dancer.” Emily found, “[She could] give an example of . . . something I went through that created that emotion in me to see . . . if they can relate to that, or if they have their own experience that creates that same emotion.” Nicole compared creating a dance to the business world because “You need to know how to be a leader and . . . talk to people without talking down to them. Talking to people without creating tension” (Minton and Hofmeister 71).

Other students gave less involved answers when talking about creating unity in their dance. Marissa learned “You have to show everybody how to do it the certain way so that they aren’t doing it their own way.” Lindsay said, “[She] did it with them [so her dancers] could see . . . it’s kinda weird, but it’s possible.” She also “put in counts so everyone could hear when to jump” (Minton and Hofmeister 71).

Beyond the dance studio, collaboration is an essential life skill that exists in most cultures and can be seen through the value given to friendships and relationships despite the fact that we live in a world that is ever increasingly digitally connected through technology (Minton and Faber 34). The brain’s response to social encounters, can be seen through the use of fMRI imagining, which tells the technician which mental mechanisms shape social behaviors.

In fact, from the moment of birth, the brain has an area known as the default network that functions during rest. This is the same network that operates when a person makes social connections (Minton and Faber 176). The need for social contact and the

brain's continued return to a "social cognitive mode," explain the need for social contact in humans.

As mentioned previously, dance is a social art form that can be or has been practiced in groups, across cultures. Not only is it practiced in groups, but it is usually taught in group classes rather than individually (Minton and Faber 176). Dancers share space, move together in rhythm, and often work together to perform in unison.

Collaboration is a natural means of creative invention that widens and invites new possibilities and paths for artistic expression and intent (Minton and Faber 171).

Dance Making and Creativity

Dance making certainly taps into and develops creativity in oneself at the same time. The participants in Minton and Hofmeister's IB Dance Curriculum study commented on the areas of their lives that had been affected by going through the program, including their own thinking. Of improvising, Jessica said, "Somehow my not focusing turns back into actually focusing. . . . And then in other parts of my life, if I start not focusing . . . I'll be able to make it [my focus] come back" (Minton and Hofmeister 70). Kaylee learned, "For my . . . piece . . . I've seen this image and then I'm trying to create it." Natalie realized, "Yeah, that's helped too—the improv. . . . It just made you think quick [sic] and . . . be prepared for everything" (Minton and Hofmeister 70). Hayley discovered that during choreography and improvisation, "I was forced to open myself and my mind to new possibilities" (Minton and Hofmeister 70).

A comparative qualitative study was conducted between high-school students who took dance in school and a control group not enrolled in high-school dance classes. Those control students studying dance outside of school at the same time that the study

was conducted were eliminated from the research. The test administered to measure creativity in this study—The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT), includes drawings to measure fluency (the number of ideas expressed), originality (the unusualness of responses), abstractness of titles for drawings, elaboration (the number of pertinent details in a drawing), and resistance to premature closure (not closing off a figure in the most direct way). In this study, higher scores for originality were found in those students with greater experience in a school dance program (Minton, “Assessment of High School” 31).

Dance Making and Critical Thinking

Larry Lavender identified two distinct yet interdependent practices required for becoming a proficient choreographer. The first was learning to make creative choices about movement, structure and meaning in the dance. The second involved being able to verbally describe, analyze, interpret and judge choreography (Lavender, “Creative Process Mentoring” 1).

Creating, learning and performing dances can enhance critical thinking, as a skill, but dance also demands and involves critical thinking in order to be successful. Weiyun Chen’s research into dance as an educational tool for children suggested it can develop critical thinking skills, particularly when those skills are introduced through a constructivist-oriented teaching model (Chen 366). In this study, critical thinking skills included thinking that helps students make wise decisions.

Later, Chen and Cone conducted a study to describe children’s use of critical thinking skills. The researchers wanted to discover how the children’s actions were inspired and evoked by an expert teacher’s task design, and presentation, as well as how

the instructional strategies could affect the creative dance lessons. They found that the use of sequential open-ended tasks and learning cues and providing instructional scaffolding, helped the children generate divergent and original movement responses. The same instructional strategies also helped refine the dances and improve the ability for self-expression (Chen and Cone 169).

Chen and Cone concluded that dance can cultivate the above skills when constructivist principles are reinforced. This means (1) encouraging divergent movement responses; (2) transforming ideas into a dance; (3) inviting the sharing of ideas; and (4) guiding students' elaboration. Further study with this same population revealed critical thinking is also enhanced by using sequential learning tasks and open-ended tasks along with questions, demonstrations and verbal clues (Chen and Cone 181-184).

Dance Making and Communication

Student participants in Minton and Hofmeister's IB Dance study felt that the program helped them understand other cultures, particularly when studying cultural dance forms. One student had the following to say about the cultural dances they studied:

They use it [dance] as communication between tribes.... You research how people express themselves . . . you have more respect for their culture and the way they see the world.... I've found I've learned to understand people and their behaviors so much more just from their dance. . . . You can feel the emotions of the people. . . . Whereas . . .textbooks . . . just give you the straight analytical point of view that makes no sense to you. (Minton and Hofmeister 73)

Dance has been used as a form of expression and communication since ancient times. Dance communication was not through the use of verbal language or vocal sounds but through physical movements.

Mankind has always danced. He expresses himself through movement and when he shows his emotions it is often gestures rather than words that tell what he feels. There are cave paintings from prehistory that suggest how those very first artists were trying to capture the excitement of movement as they hunted for food, and in primitive communities today tribes dance to invoke rain, to placate their gods or celebrate some festival. In Ancient Egypt and in classical Greece the dance was in very early times a way of worshipping the gods, and from these rituals there developed the basic elements of all our present theatre. (Thorpe and Crisp 6)

Dance has also been used as a powerful communication tool when it is integrated into academic curricula. A study focused on the students' lived experience included writing poetry and creating dances. This study was conducted with fifth graders from an elementary school in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and was about their lived experience of writing poetry and creating dances. The study design focused on cognition "in part because public education is driven by the mandate to improve cognition, especially its verbal manifestations." The researcher wanted to learn if children use similar thinking skills during creative work in dance as those they use when creating in language arts (Giguere, "Thinking as They Create" 41).

Data from the above study demonstrated some common thinking strategies occurred during both the creation of dances and the creation of poetry. The researcher concluded that when children create dances they are also refining their problem-solving skills. Thus, if aspects of dance making are critical to the development of the creative process and therefore critical thinking, then dance educators should advocate for the use of dance as a path that could lead to general cognitive development. Rather than

emphasizing dance as a mode for learning material from other subject areas such as language arts or math, dance could be seen as a metacognitive tool, one that can enhance general problem-solving and reasoning skills (Giguere, “Thinking as They Create” 46).

Dance Making and Collaboration

Monica Cameron Frichtel conducted a study which focused on collaboration between an artist-educator and a dance researcher. In this study, the researcher explored student experiences gained from participating in an elementary level school-based outreach dance program in which teams of students created dances. Student participants’ descriptions of their collaborative experiences showed they were developing skills to work creatively with others. Cameron Frichtel indicated the students adapted to varied roles and responsibilities; worked effectively in diverse teams; participated actively and presented themselves professionally and with proper etiquette; cooperated effectively; guided and led others, and became responsible to others (50).

Essentially, the students in the above study experienced themselves as collaborators working towards a common goal. One student described their experiences by noting: “The dance moves were choreographed by us. The teachers were the helpers. It took teamwork to do this.” A second student reinforced this idea This student said “All of the students put together the dance moves. . . . The teachers helped, but WE choreographed them as a team. DANCE!” (Cameron Frichtel 47).

Teaching Dance to Urban Children

Shelese Douglas, a dance specialist in Stockton Unified School District, Stockton, California described the challenges and successes experienced within a low-performing urban pre-K to eighth grade school. The dance program is one of America's sixty-eight Turnaround Arts Schools, embracing metacognition, visual-arts-based thinking and reflective teaching practice frameworks to advance critical thinking (Douglas 12). In her article, Douglas discussed a flexible and purpose-driven dance curriculum that offered culturally responsive approaches to building a more positive, collaborative atmosphere in the school community.

Statistically speaking, in comparison to an average of schools nation-wide, the demographics of urban schools in the United States include higher proportions of African-American and Latino populations, as well as a higher percentage of English language learners than schools in Canada (12). According to a census report, Canada's three largest metropolitan areas—Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver, accounted for 63.4% of the country's immigrant population and 62.5% of recent arrivals in 2011. In Toronto, about 2,537,400 immigrants accounted for 46.0% of Toronto's total population (Chui).

Douglas claimed that many urban schools are considered low-performing schools; in other words, student test scores and graduation rates fall behind those of their suburban peers (Douglas 13). Although data in Canada does not suggest the same about urban schools regarding test scores and graduation rates, English language learners may benefit similarly because dance education and arts education curricula present opportunities towards improving some of the challenges by providing multiple

openings for students to achieve academic success and achievement (Douglas 13). Since the researcher is Canadian, she was interested in summarizing immigration data in Canada as well as describing that same population of students in the United States and comparing the learning outcomes in each country.

The overall outcomes measured before and after Douglas' school became a Turnaround Arts school included a reduction in suspension rates as high as sixty percent, increased attendance rates across all grade levels, and increased student demand and interest in arts (as indicated by school-wide student survey) (Douglas 15).

Over the course of a decade of working in low-performing schools, Douglas found that framing the curriculum through the lens of specific dance standards and targeted skills provided the most flexibility and success for students in her classroom with limited language skills, challenges outside of school, and varying levels of learning and physical disabilities. This approach, rather than focus on specific codified dance modules proved to be more successful (Douglas 15).

Douglas also learned there were three primary purposes central to her teaching in an urban setting. These included: building a community and fostering positive relationships, developing skills and providing for increased learning engagement, providing content understanding, and assessing understanding or what the students learned. Unfortunately, Douglas did not discuss whether or not a movement and dance activity was used to address these three purposes (Douglas 15).

The approach used by Douglas enabled students with more advanced skill sets in kinesthetic and dance abilities to explore content in other arts areas and leadership roles, while also working on more advanced dance technique. Douglas also found

empowering students as choreographers kept them engaged, as well as allowed the teacher to meet students where they were physically and developmentally. Furthermore, the teacher responded to the students' experiences in ways "that were culturally unique or challenges they might have faced from possible prolonged or acute experiences of pain or trauma" (Douglas 16).

Douglas indicated that structuring collaborative learning experiences and integrating student self-directed learning and choice in the lessons sent the message that the students' ideas, interests, creativity and experiences were valued and appreciated, and placed them as learning authorities in the classroom. The increased responsibility and autonomy over their learning, she has found, led to more personal investment in all subjects (Douglas 17).

Douglas discovered she could create a sense of authority for her students by beginning classes with a guiding question such as "What can we learn and explore about other cultures or our history through dance?" "How do people use their bodies to communicate?" "What does healthy living look like and how can we show that through dance?" The author found that inquiry-based learning sharpened focus on a concrete topic (Douglas 17). This instructional design helped "isolate the rationale behind the content and learning activities, "thus facilitating learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive (Douglas 17).

According to the same article, it was important to employ eight habits of mind. These habits of mind included: developing craft, being engaged and persistent, envisioning, expressing, observing, reflecting, stretching and exploring and understanding the art world. These habits also helped identify how students were

learning. Douglas believed the habits described cognitive and attitudinal dispositions that were developed through engagement in quality art programs (18). It should be noted that the habits listed above are not experienced in a linear manner but are metacognitive tools that can make acquisition of critical learning accessible, especially in conjunction with the exploration of visual thinking strategies (Douglas 18). Since dance engages kinesthetic and visual sensory perception and shares a number of similar teaching approaches and outcomes as the study of visual arts. Involvement in creative dance should encourage the same types of critical thinking skills.

Douglas has, in fact, used movement and dance art images as a lesson seed or catalyst to introduce a dance unit and deepen the students' thinking. The practice of fostering the use of metacognitive tools and visual thinking strategies can facilitate enriched student-driven learning experiences.

Although dance instruction will not fully ameliorate complex challenges among urban classrooms, urban schools have a primary opportunity to generate authentic and sustainable school transformation with the energy and focused attention behind facilitating rich learning through dance. (Douglas 19)

Anne Green Gilbert provided substantial guidance for dance educators on how to teach creative dance in a way that not only promotes the learning of dance concepts, but which included cognitive, affective, physical and social outcomes. She wrote, "dancers should have the knowledge and time to create their own steps and choreography, developing personal voices that will surely enrich the world of dance" (Gilbert 4).

Gilbert felt cognitive outcomes emerge from using a conceptual dance approach. She suggested that dancers should solve problems and hone those skills when doing

creative work and learn about other subjects when dance is integrated in the curriculum (Gilbert 4-5).

In addition, Gilbert also noted that dance can have an affective outcome.: When dancers express their feelings in movement they become attuned to their inner selves (Gilbert 6). Dancers also learn to take risks and overcome challenges while creating, and through weight sharing activities they acquire the ability to share, partner and work cooperatively (Gilbert 6). Finally, when dancers work together there is a socially beneficial outcome through collaboration and bonding through physical contact and verbal reflection (Gilbert 6). Many of the benefits of dance described by Gilbert are similar to those recounted by Douglas in her article about teaching dance to urban children.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to find the connection between creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration and teaching choreography, and also to design a curriculum for urban elementary students that teaches these four skills through choreography. The methodology section outlines how the data collected answered the research questions:

- Q1 How are the four skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration defined or described?
- Q2 How might choreography be taught so it teaches creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration?
- Q3 What is included in such a choreographic curriculum?
- Q4 How can such a choreographic curriculum be tailored to meet the needs and learning level of elementary age urban children?

Research Type and Goals

This study was a qualitative analysis of sources that defined creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. The researcher also used qualitative analysis to learn about choreographic teaching techniques and how to develop the 21st Century skills through the process of dance making. The researcher was the sole participant in this study with the ultimate goal being to design a curriculum appropriate for urban elementary school students.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher collected and read sources that both described the 21st Century Skills and how to teach those skills. In addition, she read information about how to teach dance making to children and others. This latter source material also included information about connections between dance making and the benefits it created in students, especially the development of the students' thinking skills. Finally, the researcher also read about the value of creative work in the visual arts and dance for urban elementary school children. Please see the Works Cited list at the end of this thesis for specific sources used by the researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data was mined and analyzed qualitatively in order to discover techniques and ideas that could be used to teach the 21st Century Skills, creating, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. A similar process was used to understand how dance making might best be taught to elementary school children, particularly urban elementary school children.

Qualitative Analysis of Methods for Developing 21st Century Skills

The analysis of the 21st Century source materials revealed the following strategies for teaching these skills. These techniques included: using successful teaching strategies and tools employed in the past, creating receptive attitudes and perspectives among students, integrating thinking techniques in class delivery and materials, sequencing lesson content for optimum results, guiding students in the step-by-step development of the thinking skills, and describing other internal and external factors.

Some specific examples follow of how the described components of the teaching process were used to develop the 21st Century Skills in students.

For example, in order to motivate creativity a number of authors researched suggested risk-taking, imagination, reflection and discussion as ways to develop creativity. The authors who wrote about critical thinking indicated that such thinking can be encouraged in students by moving a class through a series of stages, including analysis, reflection, integration and evaluation. However, for students who are engaged in dance making, critical thinking develops, according to the sources, through the creative processes of preparing, creating, performing and responding.

Communication develops when students are called to create new forms that present the individual's unique response to life's experiences. Reciprocally, there is an innate desire to communicate with others about new forms and ideas. Having students work in groups is one way to encourage communication as is teaching students how to use of words and gestures effectively and in a nonjudgmental way.

Collaboration develops and evolves when individuals are called upon to integrate and combine their individual perspectives and ideas with the perspectives and ideas of others. The researcher has found in her experience teaching kindergarten and the elementary grades that often students hesitate to tap into their own originality and trust their original ideas. However, when a teacher or leader assumes the role of a gentle and sensitive guide and creates the right type of classroom atmosphere, creative and collaborative work is facilitated. As confirmed within the research, when an educator assumes the role mainly as a guiding facilitator, students are able to flourish as they develop these four skills.

Qualitative Analysis of Methods for Developing Dance Making Skills

The researcher also analyzed content on dance making and how to teach it. In these sources, the writers considered the successes and challenges presented with regard to the process of making a dance. Through her analysis, the researcher discovered several themes and processes which were used to facilitate dance making. These included building and fostering positive relationships between the dance educator and students, building skills of the choreographic craft and fostering that growth in a way that led to increased learning engagement, building an in-depth understanding of content used as an inspiration for a dance, and finally providing a way to offer assessment of the dances created that is measured and constructive.

Curriculum Design Procedures

Based on the sources in the preceding chapter, other sources and her personal teaching experiences, the researcher will use the following procedures to design a dance curriculum for urban elementary students. The first procedure was to ensure that the role of the dance educator remains as a facilitator, or creative process mentor who guides and inquires into how students are doing throughout their learning and creative process. This means that the student is exposed to what is often referred to as “productive struggle” amongst educators and involves developing strong habits of mind, like flexible thinking, perseverance and resiliency. The focus is on working through a problem rather than looking for the correct solution (Cohen). The educator’s role then as facilitator is to encourage personal growth and learning by developing a series of tasks or challenges that gradually leads the student through risk-taking, exposure, discomfort and courage. In other words, the educator enables the student to develop self-confidence and self-trust by

helping them connect to their inner voice, find the courage to become aware of what that voice has to say, and to express it through movement and choreography.

Not knowing how to create a dance at the outset should be expected. The key is working through the process, encouraging students to connect, create and think outside the box, and not letting them get discouraged if their initial strategies don't work. As was suggested by Larry Lavender, adopting a sentence frame to formulate what motivated their choreography, such as: "I am making a dance by...", or "I am making a dance in which...", or "I am making a dance that..." and working as a creative process mentor, is the goal of the facilitator ("Creative Process Mentoring"). Teaching strategies such as Lavender's sentence framework are adopted to aid students in discovering, locating and orienting themselves within the process of dancemaking.

The second procedure was to integrate warm-up or preliminary activities which center on connecting with the breath and core prior to beginning a guided exploration or improvisation to awaken the body. Tactile touch can also be used to awaken the body. These exercises will diffuse the student's initial apprehension about exposing their ideas, encourage risk-taking, and build confidence as well as lower inhibition.

The third procedure incorporated a mindful movement exploration, wherein students learn through a guided exercise how to discover their inner impulses and sensations and how connecting to them can allow for movement to become a vehicle for their self-expression and later, choreography. This process will be inquiry-based and open. It will help students connect to their own experiences and learn what has personal meaning for them. This will lead them into creating and movement authenticity.

The next procedure involved integrating group collaboration, which will necessitate growth within communication while students work together. Throughout the collaborative learning experiences, students will be guided and taught metacognition tools—ways to think critically about their own thinking. They were also asked to answer and create their own guidelines for positive and constructive feedback that they will provide one another. Thus, the facilitator will help students generate discussion about what makes for good communication and collaboration through questions tailored to generate reflection.

The fourth procedure allowed students to explore sixteen common choreographic devices as an option for developing a motif. These devices included repetition, retrograde, inversion, size, tempo, rhythm, quality, force, background, staging, embellishment, change of planes/levels, additive/incorporative, fragmentation, and combination. It is important to emphasize that students are not expected to use these devices to construct their dancemaking, but to know that like visual thinking strategies or art images, they may be used to stimulate critical thinking and inspiration to develop movement or make a dance.

The last procedure depended on the facilitator's role in an urban elementary school; if a choreographic dancemaking class is expected to incorporate academic subjects, then the next step allowed for student choice in terms of how and what non-dance content was connected to dance making. For example, the facilitator will encourage students to inquire into the elements of dance whilst exploring the choreographic dance making process, and potentially use inquiry to explore science concepts such as the development of land masses, earthquakes, or volcanoes. This is

where the curriculum development may remain open to adaptation depending on the facilitator's particular situation teaching urban elementary students. The curriculum is adaptable for either circumstance—purely for dance making or for dance making in service of teaching non-dance concepts.

Summary

The researcher outlined the qualitative analysis of methods for developing 21st Century Skills as well as the qualitative analysis of methods for developing dance making skills. The research on dance making was described in detail in the Literature Review. The following chapter will explain how the curriculum was created and describe it based on the researcher's initial questions of which strategies and ideas would foster creativity, critical thinking, collaboration and communication and motivate students to participate in the choreographic dancemaking process.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

As stated in the Introduction, the goals of this thesis were to find the connection between creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and teaching choreography, and also to design a curriculum for urban elementary students that teaches these four skills through the choreographic process. The curriculum in this chapter is organized based on the analysis described by the researcher in the Methodology chapter.

An Introduction to the Creative Movement Process

The choreography lessons to be described in this chapter are presented in a sequential order and scaffolded in such a way that also teaches students to create on their own, collaborate together, communicate with one another as well as guide them through the process of how to think critically.

The researcher's other goals included creating an emotionally and psychologically supportive environment conducive to exploration and improvisation experiences to assist students in developing the mind-body connection that creating in dance requires. Students will be taught how to focus on internal cues, impulses and sensations that then allow them to have fun connecting to movement in a way that is meaningful. These latter goals are especially important because many urban elementary students have not had experience putting together movement to compose a dance. While

the researcher maintains that movement comes naturally to young children, they still need to be guided through the creative process in order to develop the skills to create on their own. Suggested music resources will be provided in Appendix C.

Developing Creativity through Dance Making

The first part of this section of the thesis will deal with curricula that can be used to teach kindergarten and primary age students how to make dances with an emphasis on creating unique and authentic movements. Children ages five to seven years typically learn through imitation, observation, exploration and creation, love to move, enjoy practicing skills for short periods, enjoy repetition but also enjoy new challenges, and enjoy choreographing and performing with and for peers (Gilbert 12).

The lessons that follow use the same structure as the one described in Anne Green Gilbert's book, *Creative Dance for All Ages*. The five-part lesson plan described in this book begins with a warm-up activity, which consists of quick movements, BrainDance, and an introduction of a dance concept. This is followed by focusing on developing movement, followed by creating, and ends with a cool down or other closing activities (Gilbert 35-38).

Lessons for Kindergarten and Primary Students, Part One

The following two lessons have been created for kindergarten students but may be adapted and modified for students in primary school. Both the warm-up activities and BrainDance sequence should take no more than fifteen minutes.

BrainDance

The Brain Dance is composed of eight developmental movement patterns to help oxygenate the brain, reorganize the central nervous system and enhance core support and alignment (Gilbert 64). For young students, this exercise can be done by connecting it with rhymes and visual imagery. For the purpose of explanation, these exercises are described in a manner in which a teacher may understand and adapt them to any class or age group.

The breath pattern is the first step in the BrainDance. To perform this pattern, ask the class to take a deep breath through the nose, filling the belly, diaphragm, and lungs with air. Then exhale through the mouth, making a small “o” with the lips. This pattern can be repeated 4-5 times, sending breath to all the cells of the body. The benefit of this pattern is to increase the flow of oxygen to the brain and enliven the brain and body (Gilbert 68). Gilbert suggested using the following instructions and rhyme when integrating this pattern into a kindergarten class. “Let’s make a circle like a birthday cake. Come close together with your feet pointing into the center of the circle. Birthday cake, birthday cake on a dish, how many blows do my dancers wish?” (74).

The idea is for the kindergarten students to choose a number between 1 and 5 and pretend to blow out as many birthday candles as they move away from the center of the circle to create a bigger circle with each exhalation. This exercise may be repeated several times, as the students open their fingers on each inhalation and close their hands into fists on each exhalation (Gilbert 74).

The second part of the BrainDance involves a tactile pattern in which the students to use their hands to strongly squeeze each arm, leg, and other parts of the

body. Then they lightly tap all body parts followed by sharply tapping them and end by brushing them smoothly. The benefits of this exercise are to strengthen awareness of the body and develop an appropriate sense of touch and sensory integration (Gilbert 68-69).

The following rhyme can be used to help kindergarten students understand this activity:

The big hairy spider went up the water spout (climb hands up the legs from the toes to the top of the head). Down came the rain and washed the spider out (rub hands down the body from the head to the toes). Out came the sun and dried up all the rain. And the big hairy spider went up the spout again (climb hands up the legs from the toes to the top of the head). (Gilbert 74)

The third part of the BrainDance is a core-distal pattern. The students move from the center outward, so the action extends through and beyond the fingers, toes, head, and tail or the distal parts of the body. The outward action is followed by having the students engage the stomach muscles and move back inward towards the center of the body. The core muscles remain engaged as the students grow and shrink, or open and close their bodies. Thus, the students alternately form big X's and little O's with their bodies. A good rhyme to use with a kindergarten class along with this exercise this would be:

Do a little tap, tap, tap (tap the abdomen). Open (reach the arms and legs wide), shut them (hug the body/close to core). Open (reach the arms and legs wide), shut them (hug the body/close to core). Do a little clap, clap, clap (clap the hands and feet together). (Gilbert 75)

The head-tail pattern is the fourth step in the BrainDance. In this movement pattern, the students bend and stretch the spine from the top (bridge of the nose) to the bottom (coccyx) in different directions and following various pathways. The knees are kept slightly bent to release the pelvis. Students may twist, wiggle and shake the spine gently. Yoga poses such as downward dog or cat-cow are recommended as well as

circling the head and hips (Gilbert 68). The point in this movement pattern is to move the head closer to and then away from the pelvis.

The upper-lower movement pattern is next. To perform this pattern, the students keep the lower half of the body still or immobile while bending, stretching, twisting or swinging the upper body. The speed and level of these actions can be changed during the movements. Next, the upper half of the body is immobilized while the legs are moved (Gilbert 68). Gilbert suggested the students try marching, bending and straightening the knees, swinging the legs, jumping or other actions performed with the lower part of the body for second portion of the exercise (68). To kindergarteners, a teacher can ask students to lie on the floor and put their arms and legs straight in front of them and say:

Fingers to the ceiling, fingers to the ground, fingers to the ceiling, shake your hands all around. Toes to the ceiling, toes to the ground, run your feet all around. Knees and toes to the ceiling, knees and toes to the ground, knees and toes to the ceiling, move slowly all around. Legs go to the ceiling, legs go to the ground, legs to the ceiling, dance your legs all around. (Gilbert 75)

The sixth part of the BrainDance is the body side pattern. In this pattern the students, start by bending, twisting, stretching and shaking the left side of the body while keeping the right side stable. This exercise is then reversed and performed on the other side of the body. Ask students to alternate moving their right and left sides by walking using one side of the body or lunging in different directions. The purpose of this exercise is to articulate both sides of the body, improve balance and activate both brain hemispheres (Gilbert 68).

For kindergarteners, a teacher can suggest to “glue” one side of the body to the floor, while shaking the other side to the rhythm of this rhyme: “One for the money, two

for the show, three to get ready, four to go and whoa” and roll down on the back and sit back up (Gilbert 75).

The seventh part of the BrainDance is the cross-lateral pattern, which involves, finding as many ways of moving cross-laterally as possible like touching the right knee to the left elbow. These exercises integrate the brain hemispheres and strengthen vertical eye tracking, as well as develop complex, three-dimensional dancing and thinking (Gilbert 69). A good way to do this with kindergarteners is to ask them to cross their legs and say:

I asked my mother for fifty cents (cross and uncross the legs several times) to see the elephant jump the fence (cross and uncross the arms several times). It jumped so high, it touched the sky (cross and uncross your legs and arms several times). And it never came back until the 4th of July! (spin around on your bottom). (75)

The final part of the brain dance involves the vestibular pattern. In this pattern, the students turn first in one direction and then in the other. Gilbert suggested turning for five to fifteen seconds in one direction, breathe, rest for fifteen seconds and start turning again in the opposite direction. This exercise develops good spatial awareness, coordination and balance and strengthens the system that controls the five senses (69).

To introduce this to activity to kindergarteners, ask them to keep their legs straight in front of their bodies and say:

I touch my nose, I touch my toes, I spin around on my toes, I spin around on my seat! I touch my nose, I touch my toes, I say ‘hello’ with my feet (*wave the feet in the air, balancing on bottom*). I touch my nose, I touch my toes, I tip my head side to side! I touch my nose, I touch my toes, I tip my head side to side! I touch my nose, I touch my toes, I take myself for a ride (*spin on bottom*). I touch my nose, I touch my toes, I stretch my arms way up high! I touch my nose, I touch my toes, I stretch my feet to the sky . . . and wave good-bye (*wave the feet in the air, balancing on bottom*)! (75)

Warm-Up Explorations

All lessons will start with both the teacher and students seated in a circle for deep breathing and positive affirmations. The teacher will ask students to close their eyes and place one hand over their heart, with the other hand over their navel and take five deep breaths. Then, both teacher and students will repeat the following affirmations together: “Today is a new day,” “I am safe,” “I am strong,” “I am loved,” “I love to be me,” “I love to learn new things.”

It is very important to include the breathing exercises and affirmations in order to foster a positive, safe and nurturing environment in which children feel comfortable. Connecting to the breath also deepens the mind-body connection, relaxes students who may have challenging home situations or have other inhibitions that may impact the affective domain.

A short warm-up is needed, but two to three minutes of activity is all that is necessary. A nice idea for young children would be to ask pairs of students to stand “back to back.” The teacher then asks them to turn around and perform a sequence of actions in which they touch their elbows, toes, and finally their knees together. The teacher can play music as the students explore these movements. The order in which body parts connect can also be reversed in repetitions of this exercise. The idea is to allow the students time to warm up their muscles (Gilbert 64).

Dance concepts, such as level can be the next focus of the warm-up. Simply ask the students to make low, medium and high shapes together and then move at a high level while the music continues to play. These activities get the heartrate up, while

helping students break the ice and explore dance concepts together at the same time (Gilbert 64).

Gilbert suggested simply having the students walk in different ways based on the various movement concepts to acquaint students with each and provide an awareness of them. To do the walking activity, the teacher might call out different movement components while the students walk around the room. For example, they can be instructed to travel in various directions, at alternating levels or speeds while following different pathways or by using different energy qualities (Gilbert 65-66). This walking activity could be a good beginning activity for any age or skill level.

While the dance concepts described above may be introduced in any order, Gilbert advised teaching one concept per week. She stated:

young children have the least experience with the world and the strongest sense that an animal or character moves in a very particular way. Imagery for young children can be especially limiting and prevents them from fully exploring the many ways one can do a particular movement. Start with one concept, then add a variety of images. (Gilbert 50-51)

A second possible lesson for kindergarten and primary students is described below. This lesson begins with the same warm-up and Brain Dance sequences as those described above and then segues into more varied warm-ups.

Second Part of the Lesson

The second half of the lesson shifts to a different focus, although it is possible to revisit previous content later. Invite the students to stand and form a wide circle. Next, explain that each student will take turns introducing themselves by stating their first name, and by using the first letter as inspiration for a movement. Kindergarten students

will need to see you demonstrate this activity while remaining relaxed, authentic and spontaneous so that students do not freeze or get stuck in their heads.

It is helpful to phrase your demonstration in the following way: “My name is _____” To do this, the teacher creates a movement pathway or body shape that is like the first letter of his or her name. Follow this demonstration by asking the students to mirror the movement or shape. Avoid using the word copy, and instead use the word mirror, so the students mirror the action demonstrated as they begin to move. Then, have each student state their name and create a movement or body shape that stands for the first letter in each of their names.

When working with young children, Gilbert also had the following suggestions. Props such as streamers could be a good visual aid and provide tactile stimulation during explorations because the streamers can be held in one hand and moved freely or grasped with two hands and stretched and relaxed (Gilbert 255).

Teachers must note that children under the age of eight do not have the physical, emotional or cognitive development needed for long stretches of movement, so it is best to focus on more formalized technique after the age of eight. Allowing students time to recuperate between exercises enables greater focus as well as proper alignment. This is true for creative dance explorations and when teaching dance technique (Gilbert 78).

Warm-Up Explorations

The teacher asks the students to spread out in the space and invites the class to raise their arms above their heads. At the same time, the students imagine they are balancing a basket of flowers on their heads, as they lunge and sway while moving down to the ground. This activity can last about a minute or so.

Next, transition to a stretching exercise and structured exploration in which the students stand with their feet apart while reaching their arms overhead while bending to the side at the same time. Use imagery such as “We are flowers that are waking up and stretching. I see flowers moving their leaves from side to side as they wake up. I see flowers stretching and moving in the gentle breeze.”

Exploring Nonlocomotor and Locomotor Movements

Once the students are warmed up, they can explore nonlocomotor movements. Nonlocomotor movements could involve pushing to explore how a flower might sprout up through the ground. This movement starts with a bent body shape and extends into an upward stretch as the body is moved upward. The teacher can guide this exploration by asking students to push body parts in different directions, while varying the size and speed of their actions as they move upward. It could be helpful to have the students try the following images as they perform this exploration:

Let’s push a piano, I see dancers using their arms to push the piano away from their chests. Let’s explore what it feels like to push a swing. Very nice, I see dancers pointing their hands to the ceiling and gently pushing from a low level. What would it feel like to push a grocery cart? . . . Now we can try pushing a balloon so it doesn’t fall to the ground. Ok, now let’s try pushing against an imaginary friend who is standing next to us. (Gilbert 105)

Before playing music, the teacher could try a similar guided movement exploration using a swaying action. Swaying uses less force and has a soft, slow quality in comparison to pushing. Some images that may be helpful include grass or trees swaying in the wind or in a gentle breeze (Gilbert 105).

Crawling is one locomotor movement that can be explored because it could spark ideas for further movement development. For example, the students could crawl

on their hands and knees to strengthen and develop the shoulders, arms and trunk as well can crawl in a straight or circular pathway while moving through space. Each of these activities should be carefully guided by the teacher.

Building on Previous Explorations

For the next activity in this lesson, the students might enjoy being accompanied by a piece from Eric Chapelle's Music for Creative Dance collection, rather than using a classical piece, especially since they are working out how to connect their movement to music.

Invite the class to return to the original theme of waking up in the garden and encourage the students to travel using various locomotor movements such as walking, jumping or skipping as they continue, to change levels and directions. The teacher can use "I see" statements to encourage students to stay on task. It is also important for the students to be in the moment and follow their inner impulses rather than repeat movements from an earlier activity. At this stage, it is important to have the freedom to experiment, feel comfortable and focused, and enjoy the creative process of exploration.

Ending the Class

The class may close by returning to a circle and inviting the students to share their thoughts about the class. Kindergarten children love to draw pictures to describe their experiences, as they are emergent readers and writers, and can use their drawings to reflect on the previous movement activities. However, it is best to give students time in class to reflect while the experiences are fresh in their minds.

The teacher is encouraged to tell the students that they are creative artists to help them create their drawings. The teacher can use various prompts to help the students

create their drawings. For example, the teacher could say, “When you were on the floor, feeling your body move and imagining yourself as a seed sprouting up from the soil, you were using your creativity to do so. Those ideas and movements were yours, not mine. You found your own way of showing me what that looked like.” The teacher can close the class with the same set of affirmations that were used at the beginning of the class.

*Lessons for Kindergarten and
Primary Students,
Part Three*

Warm-Up Explorations

The next lesson builds upon the key objectives of the first class which were to establish an awareness of the mind-body connection and develop basic dance making skills through explorations. It is also important to meld these skills together to show students how they can create dances by themselves. This lesson again begins with the breathing circle and positive affirmations, followed by the BrainDance and warm-up sequences described previously.

The teacher may then ask the students to spread out and practice moving through an obstacle course. This would require preparation before the actual lesson and allow students opportunities to move around, on, under, over, and through objects such as hoops, cones, benches and circular poly spots placed on the floor. A few minutes of this activity will warm up the muscles and get the heartrate going.

Exploring the Concept

This lesson is focused on the concept of energy but differs from previous lessons because the students are provided with more sources of inspiration. Prior to introducing

the main visual source of inspiration, the teacher can invite the students to run their hands across a piece of satin, a polished rock or beach stone. Then, ask the students to describe the feeling they have from this experience. They would likely say that the object feels smooth, but if not, the teacher can help them use the correct vocabulary. This description will be important later in the lesson so the students understand that muscles can move smoothly. Then, give students something sharp to touch, such as a pinecone or cactus. Ask how it feels, and agree with the students when they say it feels sharp.

Before moving on to the inspiration part of the lesson, you can try a short movement activity where you ask the students to use their movements to explore the smooth and sharp feelings. The teacher can use various words to help with this exploration. For example, the words float, glide and melt capture a smooth body feeling, while punch, kick and flick relate to sharp.

The main source of inspiration for this movement exploration could come from setting up a simple science center such as a baking soda and vinegar volcano in a sandbox bin. The teacher can use a water bottle partially filled with water and build a mountain around it using sand or clay. Then, add about five tablespoons of baking soda to the bottle, and when ready, pour at least a cup of vinegar into the bottle. The chemical reaction will cause an eruption or small explosion similar to the way hot lava erupts from volcanoes. Exploring volcanic action through movement with a concrete visual source of inspiration like this can be useful. Using this inspiration, young movers can be led through an exercise that explores both explosive, sharp movement and smooth,

sustained movement because they can jump to represent the exploding volcano and melt like lava onto the floor.

Developing Skills

The teacher might develop this lesson further by asking four or five students to come to the center of the room and be the lava that explodes from a volcano. It could be suggested that the other students avoid the hot lava and retreat to a safe island. Rather than tell the students how to move, the teacher could ask the students to freely explore how they could get to the island.

To encourage movement variety during this activity, the teacher can say “I see smooth movements, I see sharp movements, I see high and low-level movements, some dancers are gliding, some are melting, some are leaping.” Some students might try to swim, others may want to fly, some may try to leap across logs in the water while others may have different ideas about how to move. The teacher could also use props such as colored poly spots as an option to help the students move around and get to the island.

The children who remain in the center of the space might like to use scarves as they jump explosively through the air. The scarves might be the fire and lava spewing from the volcano. The main idea is that the teacher can aid the students in creating movement by paying attention to their chosen actions. This means the students create their movement sequences but only with the teacher’s guidance.

Creating

The next step is to ask the students to begin to put single movements together to form short movement sequences. This can be done by joining the movements based on energy together. Help the students create movement sequences by describing a

movement sequence and have the students perform it. Then, ask the students which of the movements they just created would be first in their own sequence, and second and third. The teacher could also ask the students if they have ideas to tell a story about a volcano spewing hot lava, and this story could be used to help the students connect their movement sequences.

Ending the Class

The class may close by returning to a circle and inviting the students to share their thoughts about the class. However, before they share their reflections, the students can pair up with a partner and move across the space, using a movement they created in class. The teacher can again invite the students to draw a picture to describe their experiences. In this session, the students can begin to discuss the movements they created. To do this, the teacher can use simple questions such as: What did you do well and what do you think you could improve upon?

Lessons for Intermediate Students

Children aged eight to twelve typically learn through exploration, execution, creation, observation and reflection and move from self-centered to peer-centered activities (Gilbert 12). Additionally, children between the ages of eight to twelve have a wide range of individual differences and physical maturity, are enthusiastic learners when they are motivated, and enjoy a wide variety of learning experiences (Gilbert 12).

In conjunction with having a wide variety of interests, children this age need individual praise, feedback and positive reinforcement, have more defined interests and enjoy experimenting with different movement forms. They also have increased motor coordination and endurance, can be good listeners, observers, and contributors, and

enjoy learning and practicing new skills and steps (Gilbert 12). In addition, children ages eight to twelve are motivated when they are granted more responsibility. Students in this age group are more grown up, but also experience hormonal growth spurts and can appear clumsy, tired, emotionally sensitive or inhibited, and insecure (Gilbert 12).

Warm-Up Explorations

The teacher could again begin the lesson with deep breathing and proceed to mind-body connecting exercises in which students are lying on the floor with their eyes closed to help them tune into their bodies and create an inner awareness. The teacher can go through a BrainDance activity, but it's not necessary to use rhymes with older children. In fact, the students should be familiar with the patterns, so the teacher could set up BrainDance stations, with visual aids which describe the patterns with a picture. These posters can be placed around the room so the students can perform the BrainDance movements on their own.

Other skills could also be integrated with the BrainDance warm-up. For example, the teacher could ask the students to experiment with their balance while they practice the breath pattern by, inhaling in a way that produces a balanced body, and exhaling that moves them off balance. For the core-distal pattern, students could curl while being on balance and let the distal movement pull them off balance. The idea is to move through all patterns by playing with the balance concept or other movement concepts (Gilbert 73-74).

Partner work could follow in which one partner mirrors the movements of the other one and lead into more rapid movements such as hops and skips. These latter

movements would elevate the heartrate and completely warm up the muscles in the body.

The teacher may also consider placing a variety of props around the room so the students can experiment with them as they warm up. Such props might include scarves, hoops or exercise balls. (Gilbert 72). The teacher could play music during the warm-up as the students make their rounds and experiment.

Introducing the Concept

For the sake of example, the researcher has chosen the concept of balance, but other concepts may be explored. This part of the lesson can start with a discussion about balance. Note how it feels to be on-balance and off balance. Try to gently guide the students so they gain their own understanding of how the muscles hold the body up when it is balanced, and that we feel wobbly and might fall when we are off balance (Gilbert 301).

Then, try activities that explore the concept. Music could be played while the students gallop around the room. When the music stops, students must freeze and balance on one leg. To help the students balance when they stop, ask them to contract their abdominal muscles. Moving in different directions and using other locomotor movements such as skipping or hopping can be added to this exploration once the students can balance after galloping forwards (Gilbert 301-302).

Another idea is to ask the students to move around poly spots placed on the floor using any locomotor movement, and again stop in a balanced shape when the music stops. A level of difficulty could be added to this exploration by balancing at different levels, in shapes of various sizes, or while facing different directions (Gilbert 302).

Prior to moving on to partner or trio work, the teacher could direct the students to remain in their personal space and try balancing on five parts of their bodies, then two, and then one. They could also try balancing on twenty parts of the body by using the fingers and toes (Gilbert 302).

Exploring the Concept

In the next part of this lesson, the students find a partner for mirroring work in which one student leads the other one in a slow-motion balancing dance. Thus, when the leader balances on one leg the follower will try to mirror the same balanced body shape. The pair can switch leaders and continue this exercise by losing and regaining their balance. They can also change the leg on which they balance throughout the exploration (Gilbert 304-305).

For trio work, students must find two classmates and create different balancing shapes. By starting apart, the trio can come together to create their first shape, then tip, become off balance and move to try to rebound into a second shape as they connect again. The process of moving away from each other and re-connecting can be practiced repeatedly (Gilbert 303). This particular exercise, as well as the previous mirroring activity may generate interesting combinations or movement sequences that could inspire choreography later on in the lesson.

Developing Skills

There are a number of ways that the teacher may guide students through the process of developing skills related to balance. Begin with hopping as this locomotor movement requires balance. It also requires practice and strengthens the legs, especially when it is performed on the nondominant leg. In the beginning, encourage use of a

barre, chair, or the wall to aid balance. Students may first practice hopping in personal space and then move through space, later adding changes in quality, size, direction and different shapes for the free leg (Gilbert 304-305).

A turning exercise could be explored next. This could be done by asking the students to turn slowly on by ball of the supporting foot by lifting the heel. Once this turn is mastered, the students could attempt a variety of shapes at different levels with their free leg. (Gilbert 305-306).

There are two other more complex activities the teacher might consider to help students develop their ability to balance. One of these involves the use of props in which the student travels while balancing an object on one arm. The object to be balanced should be without sharp or pointed edges for the sake of safety. The second balancing exercise involves a movement combination such as run, run, run, leap; run, leap, run, leap; run, run, leap. The object here would be to end the combination in a balanced body shape (Gilbert 307-308).

Creating

Movement inspirations for older students might be more complex and include focusing on the lines, colors, shapes and designs found in an interesting object or painting. During guided explorations, the teacher could assist students towards authentic meaning-making in movement by suggesting they notice different aspects of the inspiration (Minton, *Choreography* 3-6).

As previously mentioned, some of the partner and trio exercises may have generated an inspiration for choreography. The teacher can provide a variety of paintings with different shapes, colors and lines along with the following guiding

questions: “Can you recall feeling tension in your body while you worked through the mirroring exercises?” “Can you connect a tension in your body with a color on the object or in the painting you see?” “How would you create a body shape that copies one you saw on the object or painting?” “Could you move along a pathway that is like a line seen on the object or in the painting “What images or memories do you see in your mind based on the object or painting you observed?” Through a process such as this one, students can tune into their inner physical sensations and learn to identify, interpret and articulate them through movement. Most important, this step-by-step process helps students focus and make individual movement choices. Allow students time to develop movements from their inspiration.

The next step following the above guided mind-body awareness activity would be to ask students to journal about the sensations they noticed, or the imagery that came to mind. Based on the awareness experience and the journaling exercise, the students could begin to explore and discover added movements.

Good prompts here might be, “How can I transform the tensions I felt in my body into movements?” “In how many ways can I use different parts of my body to create shapes like those on the object or painting?” “In what directions can I move to create pathways like those seen in the inspiration?” “What movement tempo or quality might best be used to capture in movement the images I saw in my mind?” These prompts allow students to experience their bodies as a reflection of what they have observed. The teacher could close the class by asking the students to return with their journals for the next class.

Following the exploration experiences, older students can weave the movements they discovered together to create their dances. The teacher might introduce other additional aspects of movement such as flow, force, and weight for students to consider and use to add variety to their movements. In fact, the teacher may introduce a choreographic device called retrograde, which means changing the order of movements in a sequence so that those at the end are performed first. The students can play with this as they develop their dances.

However, it is important to allow students to trust and connect to the impulses from within so they continue to be prompted to create based on what is personal and individual. If students are not yet ready to perform their dances in front of one another, the teacher could ask everyone in the class to perform their dances at the same time.

Ending the Class

A short and simple sequence of sun salutations would be an appropriate ending to a class for older students. The students can reflect individually or in partners on what they enjoyed and what they found challenging. Deep breathing and affirmations can also be used to end classes for this student group.

Developing Collaborative Skills through Dance Making

The dance making process can also be used to teach students how to collaborate or work together with each other. Kindergarten, first and second grade students may be able to collaborate in pairs depending on their level of maturity and ability to focus, while older students from grade three onward can usually work in small groups.

Lessons for Kindergarten and Primary Students

The exercises used to teach collaboration again begin with warm-up explorations. A similar progression is used throughout this section of the curriculum. The teacher can again begin these classes with deep breathing and affirmations, followed by a warm-up activity such as one described in the preceding lessons. It is important to vary the imagery and language used to help students to develop their connection to movement. For example, the teacher can lead the warm-up using varied terms like, “stretching tall like trees, shrinking low like a tortoise into the shell, or floating like a leaf in the wind.”

This lesson will build on the preceding two, but with a special focus on teaching collaborative skills. However, it is advisable that kindergarten students are carefully guided in this process throughout the course of the year. One approach that may work better with kindergartners is to divide the class in half rather than creating small groups.

Introducing the Concept

In the following section the researcher has described how to introduce concepts that encourage collaboration and which are appropriate for kindergarten and primary age students.

Variations for Kindergarten and Primary Students

The teacher can remind the students about the concepts and skills they cultivated in the previous classes. These concepts included the nonlocomotor movements such as pushing, locomotors like crawling, and movement quality or energy.

In this lesson, the researcher introduces a new concept, body parts. This concept will be used in combination with the previously acquired skills to create a movement

sequence. One way to introduce the idea of a movement sequence is to ask the students different questions. For instance, what does a musician use to make music? Usually, the students would answer that different instruments are used to make music. Other questions might be: What does a painter use to create a painting? or What does a writer use to write a story? Hopefully, the answers to these questions will be notes, shapes and colors or words.

Next the teacher can ask them what does a dancer use to create a dance? At this point, students will likely catch on and state that dancers use their bodies and its movements. Then, the teacher can continue to explain that sometimes dancers enjoy using their whole bodies and sometimes they use just one or two body parts (Gilbert 256-257).

Speed or timing is the new concept introduced in this section. One way to help the students understand timing is to ask the students how they tell time, followed by describing how time is measured in seconds, minutes and hours. Next, explain that time is an important part of dance, because every dance movement takes time, and dancers move at different speeds, like hands on clocks (Gilbert 193). The students can then move fast like the second hand on a clock, at a medium speed like the minute hand and slow like the hour hand.

Exploring the Concept

This exercise can begin by isolating parts of the body by moving only one part at a time such as a hand, foot or any other part of the body. First the students dance in their personal space while moving one body part and then, when given a signal, in general space with the whole body to distinguish between the two types of movement. The

teacher can help students who are unsure by suggesting moving the body parts in different directions, at varied levels, speeds, and along different pathways, etc. (Gilbert 258).

The students can move on to making connections between movements performed with different parts of the body. This will help the students learn how to connect movements together to form sequences. The teacher can suggest the following:

Connect your wrist to your ankle and freeze in a shape. Connect your head to your toes and make a shape. Connect your shoulder to your knee . . . your toes to your nose . . . your elbows to your stomach . . . your heel to your other heel. (Gilbert 259)

The final exercise in this section involves adding music to the explorations. This means the students can move one body part quickly when the music is fast and another body part slowly along with slow music (Gilbert 262). To do this activity, the students must listen carefully to the music. If time permits, the students can listen to the same music again, but move at speeds that are opposite to the music (Gilbert 193-194).

Developing Skills

Teachers can use some of the above movement ideas to connect young students with collaboration. Students can be carefully guided through the collaborative process using an activity called chance dance that was developed by the famous modern dance choreographer, Merce Cunningham.

To do this the teacher can give numbers to three aforementioned dance concepts pushing, crawling, and body isolations. For example, 1 could stand for isolating body parts, 2 for crawling, and 3 for push. These prompts can be put on cards or on a large die that students can roll. The students can work in pairs to pick three cards or to roll the die. Thus, the student pair will perform the movements in a sequence based on the order

of the cards selected or the order of the face of the die that ends on top when it is rolled a number of times.

Young students are still very ego-centric, but in school they can learn social skills such as negotiation, taking turns and showing respect and consideration. Thus, it is appropriate to guide students by reminding them that they are a team working together to create a movement sequence. This will help them understand what successful collaboration looks like.

The researcher has seen instances in which one student has more confidence and likes to lead and determine what happens throughout the exercise. It is important to ensure this does not happen by reminding students that they can invent their own parts within a dance once the movements they created are connected together. This means members of a group sometimes perform the same movements and different movements at other times.

When the older students pair up or work in groups, the teacher can guide them with instructions such as, “Working together with your two friends, can you each make your own dances and then later, you can all show your dances at the same time, but one person can move through the space at three different speeds.” The teacher will need to circulate, observe and listen to students as they work together to make sure one student is not dominating the process. If one member of the group is not listening to the others, the teacher can offer support by suggesting a compromise if a conflict arises. It is also worthwhile to suggest that students can still maintain their own ideas while they are members of a dance making group.

Creating

The students (both kindergarten and primary) can use material they generated with their chance dances to collaborate and create a dance. Parts of this dance can include parts in which the students dance individually and other parts where they move as one in unison simultaneously.

Ending the Class

Building collaborative skills takes time and will not happen overnight or in one or two lessons, especially with kindergarteners. This skill requires effort, practice and it can be especially challenging for young students. Thus, it is essential to continue to remind students that they are working together as a team. Students in the upper grades usually develop these skills just by having been a student in school for a longer time period.

After students have had time to collaborate and create a dance, the class can regroup and perform their dances. Ask the students who are observing the dance to give feedback by suggesting they describe what they thought was happening in the dance. Then, allow the students who performed explain what was actually happening throughout their dance. End the lesson with affirmations.

Lessons for Intermediate Students

Lessons for older students can be modified and build on previous lessons but with different dance concepts and more challenges where appropriate. Older students can be grouped together in threes or fours depending on how many are in the class. In lessons for kindergarten and primary age students, the focus tends to be on individual

movement generation, but for older students the process shifts to much more movement which is created collaboratively.

Warm-Up Explorations

The teacher can start with a quick BrainDance sequence and move into a shadowing activity as a warm-up. Partner up students and guide them through a shadowing activity. In this activity, one person can be the leader and the other is the follower. This means that one dancer stands in front and the other one stands behind them and does the same movements. The leader will move through general space as the shadow follows them. The teacher can play music and suggest nonlocomotor movements that the leader can perform such as bend, swing, stretch, and slash. The teacher can also call out a body part and have the lead dancer move it in their own way (Gilbert 65-66).

Introducing the Concept

In another collaborative exercise, the teacher can emphasize terms that describe relationships. These terms could include: over, under, on, off, together or apart. Two dancers in a pair could explore these relationships with each other. The students could also explore relationships between parts of the same body. For example, when a plié is performed, the

Legs reach *apart* and *together*. Knees bend directly *over* the feet. The tailbone reaches *toward* the floor. The sit bones (ischial tuberosities) are directly *above* the heels. The tips of the scapulae reach *toward* the sit bones and heels. The head floats *on* the spine. The arms reach *away* from the center in many directions. (Gilbert 79-80)

Exploring the Concept

The students can explore relationships further by forming large group statues. When the dancers freeze in the statue shapes, they are demonstrating various

relationships to each other. In these shapes, some dancers will be over or under others, while some may encircle or reach through body parts. Allow students to move away from a particular grouping and then freeze when they form different statues (Gilbert 298).

Developing Skills

Students can also practice locomotor and nonlocomotor movements by moving toward and away, passing between and dancing around a partner. They can practice these same relationships by moving on, around or under a large object as well.

One way to begin creating movement is to have older students share ideas they recorded earlier in their journal while exploring with their group. The teacher can ask the students to identify themes, if any, they noticed in movements described by others in the group. They can also have a group discussion that focuses on connecting their individual movement experiences and integrating them into a collective dance.

Creating

Another teaching strategy is to invite group members to show one another movements created previously and have the group to design a movement motif that reflects a combination and glimpses of the original material. This motif can then be manipulated to create variations of the original by using movement components such as direction, timing or energy/quality. Students will need at least two classes to work through the choreographic process of improvisation, develop a movement motif and the apply choreographic devices to generate new material.

Ending the Class

A yoga sequence, such as the sun salutation can again be used to end the older students' class. Such exercises help to stretch out the body. It is also important to allow these students time to journal about their creative experiences, including challenges they encountered while working together to develop their movement material. To initiate journaling, the teacher can ask questions such as: How connected did each student feel to their peers? Was the experience transformative for them? What new insights or discoveries did they have about their peers? Did they notice feelings similar to those experienced by their classmates? Again, end each class with affirmations.

Developing Communication Skills through Dance Making

The purpose of the next two lessons is to develop communication skills through the choreographic dance making process. The lessons will also build upon the skills taught in the preceding lessons.

Lessons for Kindergarten and Primary Students

Warm-Up Explorations

As mentioned previously, the teacher begins the warm-up with a BrainDance sequence. To do this, invite the students to stand in their personal space so that they have empty space around them but can still focus on the teacher. In this exercise, the students mirror the teacher's movements which should be energetic and accompanied with lively music. It is also important to create variations on BrainDance that are different than those used previously.

Introducing the Concept

The movement concept size is emphasized in this lesson. Introduce size by talking about the distance between two objects and how this distance can change when the objects are moved. Then, direct students to stretch their arms and legs as far away from their abdomens as possible and ask them to describe the size of this movement. Hopefully, the students will answer with the word big. Next, have the students bring their arms and legs close to their abdomen to demonstrate a small movement. Conclude this exercise by having the students move their arms and legs to a point which is halfway between big and small so they can experience a medium size movement. Variety can be added to this exploration by changing the level of the actions or by having students create different size body shapes at different levels (Gilbert 139-140).

Invite the students to move from their personal space out into general space by exploring different-sized locomotor actions. They can walk while using large or small steps or place their legs close together or far apart while walking (Gilbert 140). Then, add big and little arm movements while continuing to walk with big and little steps. Ask the students to describe the relative size of their movements based on how the movements feel in the body (Gilbert 140).

Exploring the Concept

Have the students begin in a little group shape and count to eight as they grow their shape so that it is as big as possible. Then, the students count backwards to one, shrinking to form the smallest shape possible. The same exploration can be done in four counts, then two counts and with continuous movement. Since the students explored sharp and smooth energy in previous lessons, they can repeat the above activity using

these energy qualities as well as moving on different levels and in different directions (Gilbert 141).

Developing Skills

In this activity, students dance around the room using large movements. When the students hear the music change, their movements shrink and become smaller and they dance in one half of the room. Then on the next musical signal, the room will shrink again to one quarter, and finally the space shrinks again and the students form one little circle. In this exercise, the students must adjust their movement size in order to keep their self-space bubble intact. They must think about what they are doing and how they feel each time the room shrinks. At the end of the exercise, the students return to using the full room space once more so they experience free, open space again. This exploration is followed with a class discussion about the relationship between movement size, space and the environment (Gilbert 141).

Creating

Kindergarten and primary students can be paired followed by having one make a big shape with empty spaces between body parts. The other student then moves through these spaces with small movements. The first student then grows into a big shape and the other student moves through the spaces using larger actions. In this exploration, the students take turns being the big shape and little shape and using larger and smaller movements. The students continue moving until they freeze in a shape.

In order to promote verbal communication and collaborative skills throughout this creative exercise, ask the students to verbally express to one another what they are doing throughout the exercise. For example, “I am making a big shape with empty

spaces between my body and my legs and arms.” “I am moving through the holes using small movements. I’m growing. I’m shrinking.” The teacher can model this exercise to lead up to the activity, and because the children are young, the teacher should scaffold the progression of activities and circulate among the students to guide the process.

Ending the Class

The teacher can lead the students through a deep breathing exercise and then place the them in pairs so they can talk about what they really liked about the movements they each created.

Lessons for Intermediate Students

The next lesson is an integrated dance social studies lesson for older students, based on a diversity and multicultural theme. Most urban elementary schools have a fairly diverse student demographic, but even if there is not a great deal of ethnic diversity within a classroom, it can still be an inspiration for creating dances.

Diversity can take many shapes and forms, such as differences in personalities, physical challenges, socioeconomic levels or, gender. The point is that there are multiple spheres of identity related to diversity. As a person navigates through life, it is good to learn as children to accept and celebrate differences and identify as global citizens who are culturally sensitive and respectful.

Introducing the Concept

The warm-up for this lesson is again a variation on the BrainDance. Following this, the students are asked to think about their ethnic roots. The teacher can help the students do this by using pictures and videos of dances from the students’ countries. The students can identify characteristics of the dances in the following way.

First, they can focus on body parts, in order to figure out which body part is emphasized in a country's dances. The students can ask what does that particular body part do in the dance? Second, the students can decide which movement concept is emphasized in the dance. For example, is it speed or energy quality which is most important? Once the students make these connections, they can move the body part they identified using the timing or energy quality described (Gilbert 335-336).

Exploring the Concept and Developing Skills

The students can become acquainted with characteristics of the dances from different countries through an exercise known as multicultural mirroring. In this exploration, the students are placed in duets, trios, or quartets and take turns being the leader of the pair or group. The students then take turns performing the movements reflecting diversity that they created as the other group members mirror their actions.

Creating

For the next part of this activity, the teacher will need to prepare a short selection of music from the different countries represented by the students in the class. The students will need time to explore the rhythms and styles of the music as they improvise. To initiate creating the students need to focus on the quality, timing and rhythmic patterns in the music and also changes in these characteristics. Encourage the students to go within and focus on the inner impulses to create their movements. They can also incorporate the movements and dance concepts created earlier that were connected to particular body parts.

Throughout the next two lessons, students collaborate and communicate in small groups to work through the dance material they have created. The goal is to integrate

movement materials created by each student to form a single dance. To do this it is important to negotiate how the individual movements will be combined instead of settling on one overarching theme for the dance.

One idea would be to create solos that highlight each student's unique identity and combine the solos together into a single work. A group could also communicate about unique aspects that make each group member unique and create a dance that combines movements based on these characteristics. Again, various choreographic devices could be used to tease out new material, generate a common motif and manipulate movement materials for variety. Give the students time to reflect on this experience by writing in their journals and always close the lessons with positive affirmations.

Developing Critical Thinking Skills through Dance Making

The following lessons will focus on developing critical thinking through dance making process. To become a critical thinker, students must learn to think actively, explore situations with questions, be mentally independent, view situations from different perspectives, support different points of view with reasons, and discuss ideas in an organized way. In other words, students must learn how to analyze and evaluate.

Lessons for Kindergarten and Primary Students

In a kindergarten class, encouraging critical thinking will mean ensuring the students are personally involved in the dance making process. This last lesson will integrate visual arts and dance.

Introducing and Exploring the Concept

The teacher will show the class a number of different shades and colors in a painting and discuss how each color makes the students feel. The students could also create their own colors with paint. However, it might be best to have the students begin by focusing on the primary colors first—red, blue and yellow—because this would provide a simpler connection between the feelings and colors.

The next step is to help students pair the colors and their feeling response with movement-based words. For example, if a student said that yellow made them feel happy, the teacher would ask, “when you feel happy, what do you feel like doing with your body?” This may elicit various responses, for example, a student might say that they feel like jumping, or they might actually show the teacher by jumping or bouncing up and down. If a student connected feeling calm with the color blue, the teacher may help them make the connection to movement by asking them what it feels like when they swim in a pool or ocean. They may speak about floating, or gliding, but the teacher will need to help them connect the feeling to vocabulary that will guide their movement. Additionally, the color red might create an association for some with Valentine’s day, hearts and love, or on the opposite end of the spectrum, anger. The teacher can carry on by asking students how they feel like moving their bodies when they are filled with love for someone special to them—a parent or another person they are close to. A student may speak about hugging someone, and because they have learned how to create arm movements like pushing, they can connect that concept to a physical embrace.

Developing Skills and Creating

Once students identify different feelings that they connect to these colors, the teacher's next step is to guide them through the process of exploring the movements they identified. For example, bouncing, and gliding, could be combined with an embracing gesture performed with the arms to form a movement sequence or phrase. It is important for the teacher to elicit responses and guide rather than tell the students what to do, or how to link different movements together. Allow students time to problem solve and explore the process. As students are exploring movement, simply say what you see, such as: "I see high and low level movements. . . . I see light and strong movements I see floating, gliding and bouncing movements." The purpose of the activity is to allow students time to explore, connect with their bodies, and problem solve, and think critically.

Lessons for Intermediate Students

The following lesson is structured for intermediate age students, although it follows a similar progression to those described in the preceding sections.

Introducing the Concept

Following the warm-up, ask students to look at pictures, paintings, photos, quilts, and cloth, and discuss the different patterns they see in each. The teacher can ask questions such as Is there a motif? How does the pattern repeat? Is there no pattern at all? Are there contrasting shapes and lines?

Students can work together in small groups to answer these questions. They can write their ideas on poster paper or draw the patterns and lines they see and how they contrast or connect. The students can work together and reflect on the following

questions: What is a line? How are these lines different? What separates them? What makes them the same? Similar questions can be tailored to help the students explore patterns and shapes.

Exploring the Concept and Creating

The concept of patterns can be explored by observing the colors, lines and shapes found in the selected pattern. It is also important to recognize how the lines and shapes connect or whether the pattern is repetitive or random. The students can create movements based on what they have observed. Later, these movements can be combined to form movement sequences and later a dance. The lesson can conclude by using critical thinking to analyze the relationship between the original patterns and the movements in the dances. The students can also discuss the various ways the different groups have connected their movements together. They can also look for a motif in the dances observed to develop and apply it to creating new movement patterns. This is a challenging exercise but it can be very exciting for students as they learn to think critically as well as apply the creativity, communication and collaboration skills they honed in previous classes.

Learning to create dances involves analyzing movement and learning what worked and what did not. It also involves discussing, evaluating and critiquing dances created by one's classmates and reflecting on what has been learned. Thus, the older students, in particular, can learn from one another. The next step is to take those insights and apply them to making a new dance that reflects those insights.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As previously stated, the purpose of this research was to answer four research questions:

- Q1 How are the four skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration defined or described?
- Q2 How might choreography be taught so it teaches creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration?
- Q3 What is included in such a choreographic curriculum?
- Q4 How can such a choreographic curriculum be tailored to meet the needs and learning level of elementary age urban children?

This final chapter of the thesis revisits the research questions and reviews the methodology used in the research. The sections of this chapter summarize the outcome of this study and provide recommendations for further research.

Research Methodology and Interpretation of Findings

The researcher attempted to answer the four research questions mentioned earlier by reviewing existing literature and qualitatively mining and analyzing the data compiled in order to discover techniques and ideas that could be used to teach the 21st Century Skills described above. The researcher used a similar process to understand how dance making might best be taught to elementary school children, particularly urban elementary school children. The researcher was the sole participant in this study

with the ultimate goal being to design an appropriate curriculum. The researcher also used qualitative analysis to create sample lessons for younger and older students.

The following procedures were used to design the curriculum. The first step was to ensure that the role of the dance educator remained one of facilitator. This meant the teacher should act as a creative process mentor who guides students by inquiring into how they are doing while learning about the dance making process. It was also suggested that the teacher ask probing questions to help students think about stages of their creative process. Thus, the focus should be on working through a problem rather than looking for the correct solution because creative work usually leads to divergent thinking and a variety of solutions.

The second procedure used to design this curriculum was to integrate warm-up or preliminary activities into the lessons. These activities centered on awakening the body and connecting with the breath and body's core prior to beginning guided explorations.

The third procedure was to incorporate mindful movement explorations, in the lessons wherein students learned to discover their inner impulses and sensations through guided exercises. These exercises were included so the students' movements could become a vehicle for their self-expression and later, part of their choreography.

The next procedure involved integrating collaboration in the lessons, which also necessitated growth in the students' ability to communicate. In this curriculum, the ability to collaborate and communicate are learned in a partnership as groups of students work together to create movements and dances.

The fifth procedure included in the curriculum allowed younger students to experience structured explorations while older students explored and improvised using some common choreographic devices to develop a movement motif. The devices discussed in this thesis were: repetition, retrograde, size, tempo, rhythm, quality, force, staging, change of planes/levels, and combination.

The last choreographic method to be included in the curriculum was determined by the researcher's interest in teaching dance making to urban children. This device was dance integration or making connections between creating movement and concepts from non-dance subjects. An example of how to use dance integration was provided in a section of the thesis dealing with intermediate level elementary students.

The outcome of this thesis project indicated that there are certain approaches and themes that recur within a qualitative analysis of the teaching methods for developing 21st Century skills, as well as in methods for developing dance making skills. Recurring themes included nurturing positive relationships between students and the dance educator, gradually building dancemaking skills, promoting growth in a manner that leads to increased learning engagement, developing an in-depth understanding of content used as an inspiration for a dance, and finally providing a way to offer assessment of the dances created that is constructive and meaningful.

Limitations of Study

The researcher, who was also the creator of the curriculum, was the sole participant in this study. This suggested that the curriculum content is appropriate and meets the goals solely of the researcher. It also meant that the curriculum described in this study was highly theoretical since the researcher did not use it to teach her own

students. This aspect of the study indicated that the methods and tools used for data collection and analysis may or may not have successfully integrated procedures that teach 21st Century skills through the choreographic dance making process.

To test the validity and success of this project would require urban elementary student participants. As the researcher was unable to test these procedures in the school in which she taught throughout her research, the project was completed based solely on researching sources that described creative work in dance and how best to structure creative dance lessons.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the fact that no urban elementary school students have experienced this curriculum, it seems appropriate to suggest that additional research is needed in order to determine how successful the curriculum is in helping such students develop 21st century skills.

In addition, the researcher did not consider how effective the data collection procedures and results were in informing the creation of such a curriculum. Many researchers have examined the choreographic dance making process as it relates to elementary through high-school students. They have also examined the creative process, but not many have determined how to harness the cultivation of creativity in younger students in a way that is not teacher-led. Therefore, further research is required in order to determine how to teach dance making to young students so that the movements created are based on the students' inner impulses and not on the teacher's wishes.

One definite outcome of this study was that teachers who read this thesis can experiment with the curriculum described to teach dance making to elementary school

students. They can also test whether or not the curriculum teaches the development of creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking to students, especially to urban elementary students.

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APPENDIX A
LETTERS OF APPROVAL



Institutional Review Board

DATE: November 1, 2017

TO: Kristen Mercer, BA(Hons), B.Ed

FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [1140923-1] Cultivating and Fostering the 4C's through the Choreographic Dance Making Process: A Dance Curriculum for Urban Elementary Students

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVAL/VERIFICATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: November 1, 2017

EXPIRATION DATE: November 1, 2018

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB approves this project and verifies its status as EXEMPT according to federal IRB regulations.

I wanted to note for your IRB records that A2 should have said exempt instead of expedited.

Also, thanks for erring on the side of caution since UNC and federal IRB guidelines do not have a clear statement on auto-ethnography.

Best,

Maria

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records for a duration of 4 years.

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.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB's records.

APPENDIX B

SCHERMAN'S CREATIVE PROCESS WORKSHOP WEEKLY THEMES

Table 1

Scherman's Creative Process Workshop Weekly Themes

Week 1	Bring You to the Space
Week 2	Intuition, Creativity and Individuality
Week 3	Connection
Week4	Using the Voice
Week 5	Honesty
Week 6	Pina Bausch Question Methodology
Week7	Body Map, Integrating Ideas
Week 8	Culmination

APPENDIX C

SUGGESTED MUSIC

Music for Creative Dance, Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4, by Eric Chappelle is suggested for use with children's creative dance classes. This instrumental music is appropriate for younger and older students. Each CD contains pieces that have musical contrasts beneficial for the exploration of the contrasting dance concepts.

In addition, appropriate music created by others is listed below. Several of these songs have words that describe specific actions. The teacher can talk over the words or fill in pauses with cues. The movement concepts listed above each table show which songs are beneficial for exploring and reinforcing that concept. The songs are listed on the left, and the albums are listed on the right.

Table 2

Speed Concept

Slow and Fast	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Song about Slow	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Scales	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Wiggy Wiggy Wiggles	<i>Sally the Swinging Snake</i> -Hap Palmer
Quickly and Quietly	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Seven Jumps	<i>Rhythmically Moving 2</i> -Phyllis Weikart

Table 3

Size Concept

Soft and Loud	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Slow and Fast	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Make a Pretty Sound	<i>Homemade Band</i> -Hap Palmer
Haunted House	<i>Movin' </i> -Hap Palmer
Scales	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Seven Jump	<i>Rhythmically Moving 2</i> -Phyllis Weikart
Brian Boru's March	<i>Rhythmically Moving 1</i> -Phyllis Weikart

Table 4

Level Concept

Let's Dance	<i>Learning Basic Skills Through Music 2-</i> Hap Palmer
Left and Right	<i>Getting to Know Myself</i> -Hap Palmer
Sammy	<i>Getting to Know Myself</i> -Hap Palmer
Surprise Song	<i>Walter the Waltzing Worm</i> -Hap Palmer
Slide Whistle Suite	<i>Walter the Waltzing Worm</i> -Hap Palmer
Five Beats to Each Measure	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer

Table 5

Energy Concept

Flick a Fly	<i>Walter the Waltzing Worm</i> -Hap Palmer
Surprise Song	<i>Walter the Waltzing Worm</i> -Hap Palmer
Swing, Shake...	<i>Walter the Waltzing Worm</i> -Hap Palmer
Surprise Song	<i>Walter the Waltzing Worm</i> -Hap Palmer
Side Whistle Suite	<i>Walter the Waltzing Worm</i> -Hap Palmer
Slow and Fast	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Rockin' Hula	<i>Feelin' Free</i> -Hap Palmer

Table 6

Body Shapes Concept

Everything Has a Shape	<i>Sally the Swinging Snake</i> -Hap Palmer
Touch	<i>Getting to Know Myself</i> -Hap Palmer
Tummy Tango	<i>Kids in Motion</i> -Hao Palmer
Triangle, Circle and Square	<i>Learning Basic Skills Through Music,</i> Vol.2-Hap Palmer
How Many Ways	<i>Creative Movement and Rhythmic</i> <i>Exploration</i> -Hap Palmer
Pause	<i>Movin' </i> -Hap Palmer
Rockin' Hula	<i>Feelin' Free</i> -Hap Palmer

Table 7

Balance Concept

Beanbag	<i>Easy Does It</i> -Hap Palmer
Beanbag Boogie I and II	<i>Kids in Motion</i> -Hap Palmer
Everything Has a Shape	<i>Sally the Swinging Snake</i> -Hap Palmer
Seven Jumps	<i>Rhythmically Moving 2</i> -Phyllis Weikart
Stop and Go	<i>Play Your Instruments</i> -Ella Jenkins

Table 8

Relationship Concept

Partners	<i>Learning Basic Skills Through Music, Vol. 2</i> -Hap Palmer
Making Friends	<i>Ideas, Thoughts and Feelings</i> -Hap Palmer
Circle Your Way	<i>Easy Does It</i> -Hap Palmer
Touch the World	<i>Feel of Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Echo	<i>Rhythmically Moving 1</i> -Phyllis Weikart
Under the Stick	<i>Learning Basic Skills Through Music</i> -Hap Palmer
Tree Fell Down	<i>Easy Does It</i> -Hap Palmer
Dancing With A Stick	<i>Sally the Swinging Snake</i> -Hap Palmer