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A Mixed Method Comparison: Instruction in Undergraduate Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Contemporary Dance Classes

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A Mixed Method Comparison: Instruction in Undergraduate Beginning,

Intermediate, and Advanced Contemporary Dance Classes

By

Aditi Bheda

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

In

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Minnesota State University, Mankato

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the nature of instructional differences between beginning, intermediate and advanced contemporary dance classes. The study involved interviewing two dance instructors and observing their classes, as well as conducting focus group discussions to gain insight from students. Despite difficulties in comparing across three levels given that no single instructor was observed teaching all three levels, the mixed method comparison yielded some common themes at each dance level. Given that students at higher levels were more aware of and comfortable with their bodies, instructors moved through the class at a quicker pace. Students at each level were challenged in different ways whether it was in movement execution, feeling the movement or developing artistry in expression. While students at all levels were offered opportunities for improvisation, the nature of the constraints were very different, demanding increasing creativity and imagination at the higher levels. Both instructors were able to open space for self and student reflection in the classes they taught. While this contributed to students being aware of their responsibilities as dancers and as dance students. It was also evident that with increased proficiency, students at the intermediate level were more verbally articulate compared to beginning students. The advanced students were better equipped to implement feedback or new ideas quickly when compared to intermediate students.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background

If one were asked to describe what a typical dance class looked like, no one

answer would suffice. Dance classes could differ in terms of the customs, habits,

practices or rituals practiced. These in turn might dictate how the physical dance class

looks and influence interactions between the class participants. The backgrounds of

participants, their varying experiences, within and outside of dance and their purposes for

taking a dance class inform how things transpire within the space. And then, there is the

instructor who deals with all the above factors and a few more. To quote from Mertz and

Louis (2002), "The teacher stands at the crossroad of the dancer's world: One rein on the

creative, one rein on the technical, one rein on the aesthetics, one rein on the living

process, one rein on the future, one on the past, all of them straining at the same time" (p.

111).

Andrzejewski (2009) underlined the importance of a holistic educator, one who

reflects on the aims of dance education in order to develop a clear vision that guides their

practice. This vision no doubt depends on the motivations and background of the

artist/dancer/educator, but it needs to evolve based on the contextual elements that come

up within a dance class – be they the backgrounds of students, how different students

interact with each other, or the current cultural or political environments that affect the

needs and mental states students (and instructors) find themselves in. If humans are

constantly evolving due to everyday experiences, and these experiences inform the body

in turn, Warburton (2019) asserted that dance pedagogy needs to consider factors surrounding the learner.

I grew up in India and having no formal dance training, I began working with a contemporary choreographer relatively late. While I had always played sports growing up, moving through dance centered me. I was intellectually engaging with my body, I had rich conversations with my colleagues and I lived in a city with a vibrant cultural landscape that exposed me to varying performances. The dance work I was engaged with helped me develop an interiority that grounded me which in turn helped me gain a deeper understanding the world that surrounded me and my place in it.

Fifteen years later, in pursuing my advanced degree in the discipline of experiential education, I could not help but think back to my experience in dance and dance training as the definition of experiential education.

The Association for Experiential Education (2023) defines experiential education as an approach to learning that promotes "challenge and experience followed by reflection, leading to learning and growth" (para. 1). Based on my experience, dance instructors are excellent exemplars of the principles of experiential learning. They constantly challenge their students physically and mentally, providing opportunities to engage with their peers and the environment, with culture and ideas.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) was a psychologist who researched the conditions of "optimal experience" and, in the process, found that "flow states" occurred when the challenge of a task coincided with one's ability. Apart from sports and fitness, dance relies on the use of the body and rhythmic or harmonious movements to generate a state of enjoyment or flow. Flow is described by the author as "the state in which people are so

involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter" (p. 4). Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi (1975) believed that it was the challenge of the unknown in certain activities (like dance specifically) that led to discovery, exploration, and problem solving.

While states of flow might occur by chance, in his book *Flow, The Psychology of Optimal Experience,* Csikszentmihalyi offered conditions that help structure activities such that the condition of flow or optimal experience occurred. These activities "have rules that require the learning of skills, they set up goals, they provide feedback, they make control possible" (p. 72). Given that learners stay engaged in attaining a goal only when their "body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile" (p. 3), dance activities need to challenge learners appropriately. Matching the challenge or goal to the learner's skill level can therefore lead to states of flow where according to the *Principles of Practice of Experiential Education* by the Association for Experiential Education (2023), the learner is engaged "intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully and/or physically" (para. 5).

Within dance classes, instructors present these challenges in the form of concrete activities or experiences that structure a class. Kirschner et al. (2006) emphasized the importance of structure in instruction, especially for beginning learners when compared to learners with existing knowledge who are capable of guiding themselves. Beginning, intermediate and advanced dancers have different needs in terms of instruction, but what exactly are these differences? How do needs vary based on the technical aspects of dance versus those that are creative? How do dance instructors address those varying needs? While it is acknowledged that dance educators need to consider varying factors while

preparing for a class, what does a dance instructor actually do within a dance class? What do they say and how do they move in order to instruct?

Kolb emphasized that a learner needs to transform an experience by interpreting and acting on the information received from the experience. Drawing from the works of Kurt Lewin, John Dewey and Jean Piaget, David Kolb (1984/2015) offers the Experiential Learning Cycle where Concrete Experience and Abstract Conceptualization help a learner grasp an experience, while Reflective Observation and Active Experimentation help transform the experience. Once a learner has a concrete experience in the form of a challenge, they can reflect upon the experience which could then lead to a phase of abstract conceptualization where they build upon ideas learnt through the experience. These ideas can then be applied and tested via active experimentation.

While Seaman et al. (2017) emphasized the need to study the historical trajectory of experiential education and the works that influenced social psychologist David Kolb in formulating the experiential learning cycle, Kolb's model is used as a standard among many from the field of experiential education. A learner goes through an experience, reflects on the experience to formulate new ideas that are then tested through application. In *Experience and Education*, educational philosopher John Dewey (1938/1997) mentioned the importance of continuity. Every new idea that is tested leads to further questions and the learner builds on previous knowledge and grows "physically, intellectually and morally" (p. 15) from these "educative experiences" (p. 25).

For teachers to provide educative experiences so that students are constantly engaged in learning, teachers need to know their students well. Educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1970/2014) emphasized the need for teachers to understand their student's

lives, cultures and needs in order to effectively communicate with them. Freire viewed knowledge as transferring in both directions (i.e., the teacher learns from the students/the students learns from the teacher, as well as, the teacher teaches the students/the students teach the teacher). He advocated that instructors should not shy away from bringing their personal histories into the classroom. Both teachers as well as students come with their own sets of knowledge and cultural systems and so, for any form of meaning making to ensure, Freire underlined the need for dialogue.

Students might be more open and engaged in their participation, given that instructors engage in dialogue through dancing their stories and lived experiences. In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks mentioned that the aim of pedagogy is for instructors, regardless of their discipline, to also be self-actualized individuals (hooks, 1994). It is only when the instructor can critically reflect and be comfortable within, that they can effectively guide others to states of reflection and critical thinking.

Bonbright (1999) offered a list of responsibilities a dance instructor needs to keep in mind, the first of which is the need to "effectively blend pedagogical content knowledge with subject matter knowledge" (p. 38). She asserted that dance instructors need training in pedagogy as well as the art form since they perform a dual role – not only that of educator, but they also need to possess knowledge of the creative and technical aspects of dance production.

If dance instructors consider the creative aspects, as proposed by Bonbright (1999), how do they offer students opportunities to develop creativity? Within dance classes, while it is important to provide space for free exploration, structures are extremely important as well. Torrents Martín et al. (2015) compared dance improvisers

who were given movement constraints, to those who could freely improvise. The study found that constraints influenced the creative behavior of dancers and produced greater variety in dance patterns and suggested that performers tend to interact with environmental constraints. The study implied how instructors can elicit greater creativity in movement by offering new and unfamiliar constraints with each session. These constraints (or structures) might look very different for a beginning, intermediate, and an advanced dance class and it would be interesting to analyze what these differences are.

Pedagogical skills could include, among other things, how dance instructors develop scaffolded lessons, structures or constraints that are suited to the level of dance students who are given opportunities to practice and reflect. Appropriate feedback that is suited to learner styles can be provided in real time. Further, assessment strategies can be put in place to check for skills in different aspects of dance, one of which is the technical aspect of bodily awareness and the ability to reflect on their practice and articulate the same.

Related to instructions dealing with technical aspects of dance that Bonbright (1999) advocated, these could include instructions that address empirical physical skills – techniques employed to "analyze body awareness, space, shape, rhythm, dynamics, and relationships" (Bolwell, 1998, p. 83). In her observations of dancer, choreographer, and physical therapist Ingram Bartenieff's teaching, Hackney (2002) noticed the "dedication of action over verbalization" (p. 5). Observations of Bartenieff's teaching style are insightful in terms of the many modes used to facilitate movement experiences. The need to motivate movement was crucial and Bartenieff accomplished this via many different methods based on what worked for each individual student – either through vocalization,

poetic imagery, proprioceptive input, explicit instruction or partial information that needed to be completed by the learner. Hackney (2002) stated that the ultimate goal of achieving technical skills using the Bartenieff method was to enrich life (as illustrated in Figure 1). This was possible given "the interplay of Inner Connectivity with Outer Expressivity" (p. 36).

Figure 1

Forging Connections

1. **Inner Connectivity** (including efficient Body Function)
2. **Outer Expressivity**

Note. (Hackney, 2002, p. 36.)

Only when a dancer finds a way to connect to the body is 'Outer Expressivity' possible. This expressivity that is founded on the connection to the body, influences aesthetic choices. Dance instructors come with their own artistic and aesthetic values which no doubt influence their teaching styles. Bond (2010) mentioned how dance educators must juggle between "artistic production and academic scholarship" (p. 132). How can educators get their students to think about questions related to artistry, and how do their histories influence aesthetic choices made while dancing? A dance class is filled with individuals who have their own histories and experiences. Each individual encounters other individuals who have different perspectives and ways of seeing the world. Interactions between the differing perspectives and histories influence the

meaning making processes each student undergoes and thus affects aesthetic choices. As stated by Chen and Rovengo (2000), "the social interactions in a given cultural setting, to some extent, shape an individual's knowledge construction" (p. 357). To facilitate knowledge construction and offer students a window into different perspectives, instructors aim to give students opportunities to interact with each other. These opportunities allow students space to articulate their views and help exercise ways of seeing that eventually influence aesthetic choices.

Since instructors provide dancers with the movement material (an aesthetic choice) to work on, Dragon (2015) asserted that instructors need to be transparent and disclose pedagogic information to students. Shapiro (1998) underlined the need for educators to communicate their perspectives and pedagogical decisions with students. Not only is it an effective form of communication, but students also realize the structure and logic behind a particular dance session as well as understand the aesthetic sensibilities of the instructor. Shue and Beck (2001) emphasized that it is inevitable that the pedagogical philosophies of instructors are communicated via the performance of teaching. This can impact students' views and actions in the world, and hence it is important that these philosophies motivate students to value learning. The importance of knowing the history and pedagogical influences of an instructor's ways of teaching will impact future dancers and instructors to create learning cultures that are not only student centered, but also teacher centered.

Problem Statement

Instructor identities influence their teaching styles which inform what dance instructors do and extensive scholarly work related to these teaching styles exist (e.g., authoritarian rote learning, dialogue and collaboration based, culturally relevant, critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and many more). Furthermore, dance instructors themselves are involved in ongoing creative and scholarly research, critique and professional development. In comparison to these, there seems to be a need to observe and compare how an instructor of contemporary dance modifies how they address a beginning, intermediate and advanced class offered at the undergraduate level.

Specific to contemporary dance which does not have a fixed movement vocabulary like ballet, what does dance instruction look like? Kwan (2017) mentioned that based on the context (concert dance, commercial/competitive dance, or "world dance" which included dances from the non-western world), contemporary dance could look very different. Given the difficulty in defining contemporary dance, how does the contemporary dance instructor handle students who have different levels of experience and exposure? McCarthy Brown's (2017) *Dance Pedagogy in a Diverse World* offers ideas on activities that can not only increase student exposure to dance but also widen the scope of engaging with students.

Scholarship by Green Gilbert (2013), Risner (2010), Shapiro (1999) and Stinson (2010) while grounded in dance and teaching practices, reflect on the bigger questions in dance pedagogy. On the one hand, they address the actual dance class, offering insight into curriculum and research, on the other, raising questions related to ethics, race and gender, and developing a vision for dance education. Related to strategies on addressing

the body, Hackney's (2002) observations of Ingram Bartenieff's teaching style offered movement exercises. Erkert's (2003) *Harnessing the Wind* offered pedagogical tips that are no doubt based on practical knowledge and teaching students at varying levels.

While there are books that spell out lesson plans for different levels, as Erkert (2003) cautioned, despite all the planning, instructors need to be able to improvise and go with the flow, meeting students where they are at. So much of what happens within the dance class is spontaneous, pedagogical decisions are made in real time based on observing students and instructors need to adapt to the level they teach at.

Having myself taken part in the experience of being within dance classes, the kind of instructions I received at different stages in my dance journey meant so much more than what books on dance could offer. Additionally, I realize how instructions that once did not make sense, now do, given that my body underwent a transformation.

Sims and Erwin (2012) studied four dance instructors, their motivations to teach and their teaching methods and styles. However, their research did not necessarily address or compare changes in instruction aimed at different groups of learners based on their levels of experience (beginning/intermediate/advanced) within a dance style. What modifications do dance instructors make to their pedagogical approach when teaching a beginning (Level I), intermediate (Level II) or an advanced (Level III) contemporary dance class at the undergraduate level?

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to identify differences in pedagogical instruction provided to beginning, intermediate, and advanced contemporary dance students in a four-year BA/BFA dance program in a mid-sized, midwestern university in the United States.

The main research question is, What differences exist, if any, in instructional design and techniques and instructor feedback related to student participation in beginning, intermediate, and advanced dance classes? Through observations within beginning, intermediate and advanced contemporary dance courses, focus group discussions with students of these three courses, and interviews with the instructors of these courses, this research will investigate how instructors tailor their teaching approaches based on the ability of the dancers within the context of contemporary dance classes at the undergraduate level.

Significance of the Research

At the university level where, undergraduate dance courses are offered at the beginning, intermediate or advanced levels, I believe this study will help dance educators better articulate the difference between these three levels. What are the standards set to determine the level at which a dancer is placed? Do the structures of beginning classes vary from those of advanced courses? If so, why and how? If not, what are the similarities? Moreover, instructional differences offered to a beginning and advanced dancer might be obvious, but it is tougher to articulate instructional differences offered to beginning and intermediate students, and intermediate and advanced dance students.

Most scholars agree that instruction needs to be tailored according to individual learner needs, as well as the group of learners who make up a class (Alaways, 2020; Hackney, 2002). In addition to making a comparison between different levels of contemporary dance classes, a dance instructor juggles between different learner levels within the same class. A lot of what the instructor does also depends on their background.

The instructor's dance training, teaching experiences and interpersonal skills enhance how they communicate with students.

Most scholars also agree that dance instructors function as educators as well as artists. This no doubt influences the training dance educators receive and I wonder what good pedagogic and artistic training entails? There are studies that compare novice and advanced instructors but who decides at what point a dance instructor is qualified to teach, and if so at which level?

How do instructors reflect on their performance while offering instruction in a dance class when memory can be treacherous? Related to student reflection in dance classes, Leijen et al. (2009) reported that teachers noticed differences between what students executed and their articulation of the movement experience upon reflection. This could very well apply to teacher reflection and given the demands of administrative and pedagogic duties within academia, how often do instructors have the time for self-reflection?

There is no dearth of theoretical scholarship on how instruction is provided, and researchers have observed dance instructors in practice. There is, however, potential for further study that addresses exactly what instructors say or do within an undergraduate contemporary dance class and a comparison of the instruction provided in classes of the same style but with participants at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Delimitations

To understand differences in instruction offered to beginning, intermediate and advanced dancers, I observed two instructors who taught contemporary dance at a mid-sized university. I restricted myself to observing a total of eight sessions taught by each

instructor. Apart from classroom observations, I conducted two interviews with each instructor and a total of three focus group sessions (one at each level).

In relation to the data collected during classroom observations, while field notes did include quotes from students, I prioritized observations of the instructor, attempting to record their words, and the sequence of activities the offered students. While I recorded the number of phrases (sequence of movements) or combinations (a combination of phrases) students worked on, I chose not to notate information related to the nature of the movement material offered to students. While I did collect some quantitative data related to cues (verbal or movement signals) offered by the instructor, I did not record the number of questions students posed to the instructor, the total time students moved in class, nor the time students had to observe peers. Rather, I qualitatively marked out instances when students had these opportunities in the form of field notes.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

In order to identify reasons behind reports that African American students did not achieve high levels of proficiency, Ladson-Billings (2009) studied eight exemplary teachers working with African American students in an undisclosed community in Northern California in the 1990's. Based on her observations of these eight teachers, she found that proof of learning was not merely based on scores achieved on tests. Rather, the teachers developed curriculum around student needs in order to develop cultural, social and political awareness. It is crucial to consider not only *what* to teach but also *how* to teach (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Warburton, 2008). These important concepts are transferable to dance education in general and to dance instructors in particular.

In this literature review, I will aim to address who teaches dance, the kind of training dance teachers need to undergo and what makes a dance instructor. A dance teacher's background includes their dance training, performance experience, pedagogical training and research. All these experiences are interconnected and can shape the teacher's personal and professional identities as well as the kind of work they choose to engage with. How and what exactly do dance teachers address within their dance classes? This is influenced by their background and identity. Teachers develop values that influence what they teach in terms of content, and they develop teaching styles that dictate how this content is transmitted to students.

The Essence of the Dance Instructor

Stinson (2005) eloquently stated the purpose of dance is to derive a meaningful experience even if the journey towards this meaning is through vexation or exasperation

which are inevitable in the experience of life. She advocated for articulating with clarity the purpose of why people dance and how dance education is beneficial for individuals to "live a meaningful life" (p. 11).

In the preface to her book, Erkert (2003) mentioned that it was through dance and teaching experience combined that dance teachers develop their expertise and that a lot of the choices dance teachers make come to them based on observing their students. However, the author stressed the need to combine this intuitive knowledge and experience to ground it in research-derived and substantiated theory.

Experience-Based vs. Research-Based Practice

Risner (2010) illustrated that in the United States, there has been a decline in research and scholarship related to dance education. Most dance programs in the United States at the master's level prioritize artistic production rather than dance education. In valorizing dance production that focusses on performance, technique or choreography, learning processes that can be applied to varying contexts such as dance therapy, private studio teaching or teaching in academia tend to suffer, thus minimizing the role of dance education. Moreover, the author pointed out that instructors often feel pressured to make a choice between production and process that "exacerbates the divisive 'artist versus educator' dichotomy" (p. 108).

Increased research and published literature by dance instructors helps to move what is learned about best practices in dance education from colloquial, private knowledge to profession-wide and publicly accessible knowledge. Bolwell (1998) advocated for the teacher as action researcher who engages regularly in an exchange of ideas with other dance educators as well as practitioners from other fields. This will help

forge a deeper connection to dance practice and is imperative for dance scholarship to flourish.

Reflection and Self-Critique

As stated by McCarthy-Brown (2017), "[T]he curriculum learned by dance educators during their college or university experience becomes what is valued as standard in the field of dance" (p. 474). While deemed important, Risner and Schupp (2020) cautioned against relying solely on methods-based or technical courses that address dance pedagogy standards. Teachers might tend to fall into habits of how they were taught related to achieving standards, but given that different contexts demand different teaching strategies, consistently reflecting on one's own teaching practice is necessary. This reflection reveals pedagogical values that influence decisions made within the dance class and inform future praxis.

Alaways' (2020) interviewed six contemporary technique teachers at the higher education level to identify if performance experience, or pedagogical training had greater impact on teaching practices. Of the six teachers from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, one teacher had extensive performance experience with no pedagogical training; one had pedagogical training and teaching experience without significant performance experience; while the other teachers had varying degrees of teaching and performance experiences. The study found that neither performance experience nor pedagogical training of teachers had greater influence, rather, it was crucial that teachers were exposed to a wide range of dance experiences that they integrated within their teaching practices. Flexibility to change one's teaching practice in

relation to the needs of the students, and continual reflection and questioning of the self in terms of pedagogical tools used in class were found to be more influential.

Given the globalized world we live in, dance teachers often deal with students from different backgrounds (be they cultural, ethnic etc.), but their dance teacher education does not necessarily equip them to respect diversity and avoid hierarchizing dance practices (Risner & Schupp, 2020). The authors acknowledged the need for preparation in terms of management strategies or best practices but noticed a lack in "address[ing] the dance educator's core pedagogical values, at a time when recognizing and examining these are critical for developing a reflective personal pedagogy" (p. 2).

Identity

Andrzejewski (2009) advocated for dance teacher preparation that focuses on an understanding of how varying contexts contribute to the evolution of teaching and learning tasks. This understanding is inextricably linked to identity – a personal identity, dancer identity and dance teacher identity. The personal and dancer identities are connected to actions in relation to dance such as "how one makes dances, analyzes movement, performs in technique class, engages in the study of dance history, and so forth" (p. 20). However, the dance teacher identity refers to pedagogical values and decisions related to dance education, dance practice and dance teaching that are influenced by the personal, as well as the dancer identity.

Personal Identity

In relation to personal identity, Shapiro (1998) stressed that the body does not merely move visually or technically but contains much more information gathered from places visited, emotions experienced and memories of experiences. Teachers need to be

conscious of these stories narrated by bodies, and how society influences and conditions bodies. This enables teachers to open space for self and student reflection – an opportunity to examine struggles encountered related to lived experiences. Dance education is relevant only if it aims to connect students and teachers to their lived realities. Here, the author cautioned as to how, as a researcher, her past experiences and culture influenced her reflection processes and that teachers need to be conscious about diversity of cultures and how this diversity influences student reflection processes.

Dancer Identity

Dance teachers make choices of movement material presented in classes and students should be aware of the movement influences of their dance teachers. Shapiro (1998) underscored the need for an educator to communicate the rationale behind pedagogical decisions with their students. Both students and teachers need to reflect on the dance experience within a class in order to uncover the hidden curriculum, that which is left unsaid but might nonetheless be experienced.

What students are taught as movement material is also a choice of vocabulary or technique that teachers have privileged, and students need to be informed of this choice. Barr and Oliver (2016) stressed that even within technique instruction, a dance student cannot be viewed as plainly a body that performs physical movements. Given that the development of a technique results from style, movement vocabulary and cultural values, the mind and spirit influence body movement and vice versa.

Dance Teacher Identity

Stinson (2010), reflected on her journey as a dancer and a dance teacher to see how she evolved as a person and as a teacher over time, in relation to society and the

changing times. Related to the first years of her teaching experience, Stinson candidly

recognized how she was solely responsible for what was taught and how she privileged

certain dance techniques she was familiar with rather than dialogue with students about

what needed to be taught. While she advocated for rigorous content that suitably

challenged learners and motivated students to have fun while dancing, she urged dance

teachers to consider "the kinds of lives and the kind of a world we are helping to create"

(p. 142). She prioritized the need for preparing students with life skills through dance

over dance content.

Influences on What is Taught And How

Teacher Artistry and Pedagogy

Bonbright (1999) underlined the need for dance instruction that was artistic –

where teachers expose students to content and process as well as the methodologies of

creating, performing and responding to dance. The author also emphasized the

educational aspect of dance instruction wherein all the above aspects were sequentially

structured within the curriculum in accordance with local, state or national standards. The

teacher also needs to develop appropriate assessment strategies while ensuring

that students are engaged in higher-order thinking skills through a learning process that is

interdisciplinary.

Values Define Content

After the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the University of Wisconsin-

Madison's dance program, Hagood (2008) conversed with the dance faculty that included

Dr. Mary Alice Brennan, Claudia Melrose, Anna R. Nassif and Dr. Jen Wen Yu

regarding values underpinning dance education. Brennan and Wen Yu acknowledged that

if a curriculum is presented to students, its contents are structured based on a set of values. Wen Yu questioned how students can be made more aware that different cultures have varying notions when regarding the body, and how one can cultivate a "thinking dancer" (p.222) who lives in a "fluid cultural environment" (p. 222). Nassif suggested that maybe it was more important for students to develop a strong identity through the dance work than the dance content itself. Thomas K. Hagood stressed that students needed to be provided with a language that helped them "sense movement" (p. 223), the most essential value according to Melrose.

Culture Determines Values

Finkleston (2022) on the other hand argued for the importance in reexamining and questioning why the structures used within dance education are what they are, and how they came to be. These structures then need to be reevaluated to check if they are relevant to the times we live in. We live in a world that is constantly changing and hence the material and the structures that make up dance education (the standards and curriculum set by the state) have to be reimagined not merely in terms of the content, but also in terms of clarifying the philosophical values that inform content, while making space for different perspectives that influence content.

Related to dance pedagogies, the author argued that the western perspective seems to value movement exploration in order to construct knowledge, over the traditional drill (imitation and repetition) of movement. However, there are parts of the world where this drill is the primary means of instruction.

Klens (1994) observed the classes and method of instruction offered at the Kabuki Training Program at Japan's National Theatre. Based on teacher and student

observations, Klens found that even though different masters (*sensei)* had different styles of teaching their students (*seito*), most *seito* learnt a dance through repeated imitations without knowing the meaning of the movements. During the beginning phase, in order for students to learn and memorize the movement material, technique was ignored. Some *sensei* repeated movements for students to imitate, while others briefly modelled the movement leaving the *seito* to figure out the movements. At this beginning stage, the emotional and psychological meaning of the dance was discussed and the how to *be* aspect was the focus - the manner of walking, sitting or standing, rather than the dancing. It was only when students knew a dance and what it meant, that their instructor worked on technique. This refining and cleaning the movement, the how to *do* a movement came at a later stage in the learning process.

Technique

Diehl and Lampert (2011), along with Barr and Oliver (2016) admitted that historically, it was the Eurocentric ballet aesthetic that was privileged. The authors stated how institutionalized dance scholarship that was mostly historical and theoretical influenced curricula in Germany. This curriculum privileged the ballet aesthetic which later spread into other parts of the western dance world. Hence the Eurocentric ballet aesthetic was superimposed onto other dance forms.

Jones (2022) illustrated that with the commodification and codification of the jazz dance form, Africanist elements characterized by "get down, asymmetry, propulsive rhythms, and supple and articulated spine" (p. 101) that were at the core of the dance form were replaced by the ballet aesthetic. Technical proficiency involved being able to execute the Eurocentric ballet aesthetic characterized by "elevation, symmetry, lyric

expression, and a linear erect spine" (p. 101) which were applied to jazz. This perpetuated the notion that forms that did not conform to the ballet aesthetic, lacked technique. Dodds (2019), in the introduction, reflected on her ease in picking up jazz and tap since these forms were sanitized to fit the Eurocentric ballet aesthetic, the western dance form she had had training in. Technique, however, cannot be divorced from a dance practitioner, no matter what the dance form (Diehl & Lampert, 2011; Jones, 2022). The authors emphasized that technique is fluid, responding to an amalgamation of teaching conventions and cognitions resulting from practice.

Varying practitioners had different answers when posed questions related to their understanding of technique. One such definition is that technique used for "improving physical performance is part of dance training, but there is more to it than that: it is about optimizing diverse skills. Perception, performance skills, timing, personal awareness, sensing, use of energy—methods used to improve those skills are as individual as they are manifold" (Diehl & Lampert, 2011, p. 15). The authors suggested that it is through practice that any technique is born, influenced by the practitioners' lives, values, cultures and times and that scholarship needs to shift from the addressing the historical Eurocentric notion of technique to scholarship resulting from current practices. Bolwell (1998) suggested that the western concept of what is considered dance needs to be widened, however, one also needs to "avoid the dangers of tokenism and 'political correctness'" (p. 83).

Promotion of Creativity

Given that the pursuit of technical perfection has a debilitating effect on creativity and expression, Karin and Nordin-Bates (2020) designed an intervention where "implicit

learning and sensori-kinetic imagery" (p. 1) were used. This resulted in "heightened creativity, enjoyment and, in some cases, a strengthened sense of autonomy and self-regulation" (p. 1). The authors mentioned how student personalities affected not just the movement qualities but also effectiveness in moving, both of which influence creativity. Another key factor the authors observed was that increasing student autonomy within the ballet class led to expression of their idiosyncratic selves.

Galili (2015) suggested that *Gaga* movement developed by Israeli choreographer Ohad Naharin is a technique albeit one that is different from the traditional sense of the word where a movement is executed a certain way. Gaga dance is a movement language in that language can evolve, rather than a certain movement being denoted by a specific word. This allows for flexibility in exploring different qualities and ways of moving that are, at once somatic research (via awareness and deconstruction), provide dancers with a toolbox that can be used in various choreographic works, and promote artistry and versatility in the dancer's ability to interpret and improvise.

Curriculum Design

The design of dance instructors' curricula may reveal their personal dance evolutions and visions, therefore influencing what is taught and how. Hackney (2002) recounted her experiences of working with Irmgrad Bartenieff who as a physiotherapist studied Laban's Movement Analysis (discussed in *Articulation of Knowledge* subheading below) and was responsible for developing and contributing the "internal body connectivity" aspect to Laban's framework. Hackney, from the late 1960's and through 1980 noticed that Bartenieff's approach to curriculum design was often quite fluid. She might discard concepts taught in a year and add an entirely new set of concepts to focus

on the next year. It also happened that there was no fixed objective, rather, a course objective was formulated considering Bartenieff's personal journey in movement study, along with the needs that were observed and extrapolated off the living bodies she worked with.

In relation to designing curriculum, Erkert (2003) stressed how the dance teacher's vision determined the goals that need to be fulfilled. The author explained how whatever the context (institution) a teacher finds themselves in, even if the larger goals (vision) might be dictated by the institution, the instructor defines the course goals (objectives) in keeping with the larger institutional vision. In order to teach, the author made a distinction between beginning and advanced learners – things could be left unsaid in an advanced class where students might pick a movement phrase purely through viewing it. However, with beginning students, a dance teacher needs to be able to break things down and expose the parts that make up a phrase. Here Erkert referred to different somatic practices that inform instructors on the language used to articulate the "building blocks of movement" (p. 26).

Somatic Practices

Soili Hämäläinen (2007) in *Ways of Knowing in Dance and Art* alluded to this inner connectivity when she spoke of bodily knowledge as being dependent "on perception, sensations and feelings" (p.74). In order to understand the movements that the body spontaneously produces, it is essential that instructors give dancers opportunities to listen, observe and focus on the body. This space and time for mindfulness lets the

movement come from within the body rather than externally causing the body to initiate movement.

Somatic movement education's contribution to the world of dance according to George and Foster (2020), has been to provide access to authentic movements. Rather than an aesthetic that was imposed onto a dancer, authentic movements specific to their bodies were discovered and embodied through natural movement principles.

Reflection

Leijen et al. (2009) studied the challenges encountered in the pedagogical use of reflection within tertiary dance education in the Netherlands. Through semi-structured interviews, 14 teachers from four dance academies reported difficulties or discrepancies identified in student reflection within the dance class. The findings of the study stressed the importance of student reflection but noted that teachers reported discrepancies in what students execute and how they articulate their feeling of the movement. Some of the suggestions proposed for dance instructors to overcome these difficulties were "a) to have video recordings of student dancers, b) [to ensure] that students are aware of the expectations, and standards in order to encourage self-assessment methods, and finally, c) [to stress] the importance of peer feedback" (p. 324).

Classroom Culture

The classroom culture matters, and the dance teacher needs to clarify their positions related to the politics and ethics of dance teaching and what psychological impact the classroom culture might have on students (Lakes, 2005). Lakes provided numerous examples of the pedagogic practices of great choreographers who viewed their dancers merely as tools to make works rather than as humans or artists. This kind of

authoritarian pedagogy is often transferred onto dancers who might mimic how their

teachers/choreographers taught to subsequently find its way into educational settings

either in studios, K-12, or the university setting.

Critical Pedagogy/Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

In his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970/2014)

articulated his efforts to eradicate illiteracy among oppressed workers in Brazil and the

need to raise critical consciousness throughout the country's culture. Critical pedagogy,

born out of Freire's work, examines power structures and the hierarchies that exist within

educational systems that can systemically marginalize, oppress, and undermine the

learning of students, and in turn, permeate out into society (McLaren, 2000). Critical

Dance Pedagogy has a similar aim in that it questions the power structures and

hierarchies within the dance world that tend to emphasize Eurocentric histories and

aesthetics. McCarthy-Brown (2017) asserted, "Dance is a cultural experience. It is a

racial experience. It is a gendered experience. It is a kinesthetic body experience. All of

this is to say that one's experience in dance is reflective of his or her demographic and

dance environment" (p. 14). As McCarthy-Brown summarized, "critical dance pedagogy

questions who is supported in learning dance" (p. 10). This question relates to the dance

curriculum. The author suggested that teachers conduct surveys to get to know students

(what they do on weekends, their career goals, etc.) and incorporate their student's

culture (the authors, performers, TV shows, songs or artists students like) into the course

design.

McCarthy-Brown (2017) asserted that culturally relevant teaching arose as a

means to resolve low performance patterns observed in students of color when compared

to students of the dominant culture. Having observed four classrooms to compare

instruction that was culturally relevant versus that which was not, Ladson-Billings

(2009), who coined the term *culturally relevant teaching* found the following:

1. When students are treated as competent, they are likely to demonstrate

   competence.

2. When teachers provide instructional "scaffolding," students can move from

   what they know to what they need to know.

3. The focus of the classroom must be instructional.

4. Real education is about extending students' thinking and abilities.

5. Effective teaching involves in-depth knowledge of both the students and the

   subject matter. (pp. 134 – 136)

Promoting Artistry and Agency in Students

Sims and Erwin (2012) attempted to identify pedagogical influences, practices

and styles through observations of, and interviews with four teachers who taught dance at

a higher education dance department. Among other things such as teacher's desire and

motivation to teach, and teaching and assessment strategies, the study revealed that the

major instructional methods were through movement demos and verbal instructions. The

instructors seemed to challenge students as a means to keep students constantly engaged

physically (to prevent injury) and mentally (to analyze movement).

Through Challenge

Chavasse (2015), a dance educator at the University of Michigan strongly

believed that a constructivist dance classroom allows students as well as instructor to

challenge and contribute to the learning process. Based on her teaching experience, she

maintained that varied content should be offered to students in terms of how it makes dancers feel – some content might challenge dancers out of their comfort zones leading to frustration while other movement material might feel pleasurable to execute. The author noticed how the meaning making process of a dance experience provides a view of oneself that is committed to the memory of the movement. Memory can however be faulty and while working on the technical aspects of dance through imagery, sensations and information, students need to also work with something tangible.

Through Collaboration

The social aspect of dance requires collaboration, and it has been found that social learning within a dance class - exchanging ideas, negotiating with peers to create and discover diverse viewpoints led to cognitive benefits like divergent thinking and problem solving (Barr, 2015; Giguere, 2021).

Barr and Oliver (2016) stressed how good pedagogy "gives attention to teaching approaches surrounding principles of honoring individual voices, collaborative learning, decentering the teacher–student relationship, inclusivity, and critical reflection" (p. 98).

Articulation of Dance Knowledge

Rudolf van Laban, credited to be one of the makers of modern dance in Europe published *Schrifttanz* (written dance) in 1928. This work was innovative for the clarity it offered in how the body was notated, indicating clear movement flow of the right and left side body, along with information related to the duration of each movement. More influential however, was Laban's creation of a vocabulary to articulate aspects related to space. His student Mary Wigman focused on movement qualities like tension and release,

while Laban developed the spatial aspects - *kinesphere* or *reachspace* that evolved to

choreutics - his theory of space levels (Partsch-Bergsohn & Bergsohn, 2003).

Laban's student Irmgard Bartenieff, who was a physiotherapist and dance

instructor, was responsible for bringing Laban's work on movement rhythms to the

United States and to the field of dance therapy in the 1940's. By creating 12 principles of

fundamentals to integrate throughout dance movements (see bolded terms in Figure 2),

Figure 2

12 Principles of Fundamentals

1. **Connectivity**—The whole body is connected.
2. **Breath Support**—Breath brings life and movement.
3. **Grounding**—The earth provides support, a ground for Being and moving.
4. **Developmental Progression**—Basic body connections are patterned through a stage-specific developmental sequence.
5. **Intent**—Intent organizes the neuromuscular system.
6. **Complexity**—Movement is multifaceted, orchestrating Body/Effort/Shape/Space.
7. **Inner-Outer**—Movement is meaningful. Outer reflects Inner. Inner reflects Outer.
8. **Function-Expression**—Function and expression integrate to create meaning in movement.
9. **Stability-Mobility**—Stabilizing and mobilizing elements interact continuously to produce effective movement.
10. **Exertion-Recuperation**—Exertion-Recuperation is a natural cycle which replenishes movement vitality.
11. **Phrasing**—Movement happens in phrases. The preparation and initiation determine the entire course of the phrase.
12. **Personal Uniqueness**—Patterning is an adventure. There is no one pathway for all persons to achieve full movement functioning.

Note. (Hackney, 2002, p. 49)

Bartenieff further developed the Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) that is widely

applied in the field of movement studies, dance and drama. The LMA/Bartenieff

Fundamentals approach has provided practitioners over several decades with a common vocabulary to describe movement phrases (Guest & Anderson, 2011).

Integrating influences in movement such as Bartenieff's LMA or somatic practices such as *Body-Mind Centering* developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, Hackney (2002) added descriptive interpretations of the 12 principles through her participation in, and observations of Bartenieff's work. These descriptions have provided an excellent guide for dance teachers to work on articulating different aspects related to movement to their students (see non-bolded words in Figure 2 on the previous page).

The influence of Rudolf Laban's Movement Analysis and its later alterations by Wigman, Bartenieff, Hackney and others over the past several decades are undeniably significant. However, research indicates that given Laban's role as director of the Berlin State Opera Ballet after the Nazis took political control, he played an important role in espousing Nazi ideals (Dickson, 2016; Manning, 2017; Palmquist & Frosch, 2014). In fact, both Laban and Wigman who received funding from the Nazi state, excluded non-Aryan people from their companies. Preston-Dunlop (2023) described Laban as later "falling afoul of Nazism" after which his works were destroyed by the German ministry. He sought refuge in Britain where he developed and eventually published his work on movement analysis in 1950. Davis et al. (2021) suggested that as students are exposed to ways of seeing and interpreting movement using LMA, instructors have a responsibility to uncover the history of Laban through discussions.

While books and other literature label dance activities as easy or advanced based on level of difficulty, it is only through executing activities in class that a teacher realizes how students might react to an activity and adjusts the way they articulate their dance

knowledge to their students. For example, some of Bartenieff's principles, enhanced by Hackney (2002), and discussed in the previous section, may be more appropriate for beginning dance students while other principles may be more effective with intermediate or advanced dance students. Hackney's work provides dance teachers with clearly articulated movement explorations that work on Bartenieff's fundamentals and can easily be adjusted for various dance skill levels.

Dancer Skill Levels

Erkert (2003) stressed that phrasing, sequencing and pacing of a class is crucial in how students of different levels might react to instructions and what teachers might expect of them. For example, related to movement efficiency, she illustrated how novice dancers "need to trigger many motor units to get the job done, [whereas] an advanced dancer triggers one [motor unit to execute the same movement]" (p. 57). Related to rhythm, Erkert suggested that novice dancers might struggle with the speed of the body moving in different directions or levels (space), whereas the advanced dancer needs to experience rhythm not only in relation to space but also measuring the use of energy to gain a certain quality of movement to arrive at a shape on the right beat.

Henley (2015) aimed to study differences in novice and expert dancers' views of movement phrases. The study found expert dancers more likely to notice manipulations of space and time compared to novice dancers. This is attributed to the fact that expert dancers have more movement experience which increases their familiarity with concepts such as space and time thereby leading them to notice these elements in observations.

Summary

The aim of dance education is not for dance students to merely learn dance content. Rather, by engaging their bodies, dancers gain agency to express and articulate the meaning-making processes that connect their inner lives to that which is social, cultural or political. In order to achieve this goal, through the act of teaching, dance teachers engage in a similar meaning-making process. They need to reflect on their own dance journey, background and identity to provide student centered content that promotes artistry and agency in their students, and in themselves as teachers.

It is vital that dance teachers create curriculum that is relevant – taking into consideration, on the one hand, the latest in the field by engaging in research and through interdisciplinary collaborations; on the other, getting to know students' desires and cultures by engaging in dialogue. To ensure dialogue, instructors can create a supportive classroom environment, where students can cognitively engage with their peers to acknowledge different viewpoints and observe ways of moving. What students are capable of discerning and articulating, and the kinds of conversations that take place within a dance class might differ depending on whether it is a beginning, intermediate or advanced dance class. Keeping this in mind, dance instructors appraise the level of their students to create sequential curriculum that matches student skills, but at the same time challenges students to build upon and improve existing skills.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of what differences exist, if any, between pedagogic practices of dance instructors teaching a beginning (Level I), intermediate (Level II) and advanced (Level III) contemporary dance class. To address this research purpose, a mixed method approach was employed that primarily used an emergent qualitative method for interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations. Quantitative methods were used for a portion of the classroom observations. In order to discover what differences, if any, existed in pedagogic practices between dance instructors teaching beginning, intermediate, and advanced contemporary dance classes, the mixed methodology was the best choice, and justifications for each are explained in the following sections.

Emergent Qualitative Method

Using an emergent, open qualitative method refers to receptivity to novel perspectives, concepts, or findings that may be revealed that could alter a study's data collection, analysis, or conclusions in ways not previously expected (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2009). Specifically related to the classroom observations I planned, as suggested by Creswell, "the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed" (p. 47). As the study progressed, the flexible nature of an emergent design guided the direction of the study based on data collected. This increased authenticity and trustworthiness, given that the design adapted to fit the data. Although I anticipated the discovery of differences in the pedagogic practices of dance instructors, the specifics were unknown. I tried to

remain responsive to new information and make necessary adjustments, allowing the design to remain open and to emerge during the research process.

Data was collected using a variety of qualitative methods including recorded semi-structured interviews with dance instructors, observations of the contemporary dance classes, collection of artifactual documents from instructors and recorded focus group discussions with students. Qualitative research commonly takes place in natural settings, as emphasized by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Given that meaning can be derived as much from the participant's contexts (the dance class) as the participants themselves, observations took place in contemporary dance classrooms. Interviews and focus group sessions also took place within the natural university setting (one of the instructor interviews took place over zoom). A purposive approach was used to identify the appropriate dance classes to be observed and the instructors and students who were invited to participate.

Open-ended interview questions were used to understand the dance instructors' backgrounds, values and visions related to dance, and dance pedagogy. During observations of the contemporary dance classes, field notes focused on participant instructors' delivery of pedagogic content as well as their interactions with the dance space and their students. When possible, field notes included direct quotations of instructions or feedback provided by the instructor. (A tally sheet was used to document specific observed behaviors. This is described under Quantitative Method below.) For data triangulation, instructors were asked if they were willing to share other material such as course syllabi, lesson plans or assessment rubrics. In order to examine if pedagogic instruction was communicated effectively, focus group discussions with student

participants included open-ended questions that focused on perceptions of instructions provided in the contemporary dance class.

I, as researcher was cognizant of my researcher bias as a dancer when collecting and interpreting the data for this study. In describing the instruction design and delivery, I tried to identify patterns based on instructors' pedagogic aims without intrusion from my biases. When patterns emerged in relation to instruction offered at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of contemporary dance class, a constant comparative approach was used to identify similarities and/or differences in instruction.

Recordings of interviews and focus groups discussions were transcribed to increase accuracy of the findings. Transcriptions and observation field notes will be kept in a secure location for three years after the conclusion of the study as part of establishing an audit trail for increasing trustworthiness and authenticity of the data.

Quantitative Method

During classroom observations, in addition to the qualitative methods of data collection discussed earlier, quantitative data in the form of tally sheets (see Appendix C) were collected and analyzed quantitatively. This data provided information about the instructors' and students' behavior and interactions in the dance space, which was useful in determining the instructional strategies. As the class moved at a fast pace and involved a large number of participants, only relying on field notes as a form of data collection proved cumbersome and challenging. Tally sheets were an effective and efficient way to track whether certain actions had been taken while providing time to also record field notes. Additionally, Creswell (2013) asserted that quantitative and qualitative data

strengthen each other and therefore the overall findings when used together in a mixed method approach.

Participants

Dance Instructors

Two dance instructors at a university in the Midwestern United States were consulted to explain the study and ask if they were willing to participate in the research and allow their students to also be invited to participate. Both instructors agreed and signed consent forms before participation (see Appendix A). One of the instructors was a tenured faculty at their university with several years of experience. The other instructor was a graduate student pursuing an MFA in Dance. Each of the two participating instructors facilitated two different levels of contemporary dance classes offered during the Spring 2023 semester.

Student Dancers

Students enrolled in Levels I, II, III contemporary dance classes with the two instructor participants during the Spring 2023 semester were invited to participate in the research. I visited each class from Level I, II and III during the first week of the semester (Spring 2023) to obtain consent from students who chose to participate in the study. When the instructor left the dance studio, I verbally explained the nature of the research, handed out consent forms, and answered any questions student participants had. Students were provided with my contact information for additional questions. For students who did not wish to participate in the research, I emphasized that data relevant to them would not be collected over the course of the observations. All consent forms gave participants

the option to discontinue participation at any point during the study. As well, all participants were free to decline questions they did not wish to answer (see Appendix B).

About 30 students consented to being observed during the dance classes and up to a total of 6 students participated in the focus group sessions. Level I class had students from other disciplines taking the dance course to fulfill university mandated general education requirements for degree completion. Level II had a majority of the students completing a BS in dance while Level III had BS and BFA dance majors.

Data Collection

The study received approval from the appropriate university Institutional Review Board before any data was collected.

Instructor Interviews

Two semi-structured interviews with each of the two dance instructors, whose classes I observed, were conducted between January and April 2023. The main purpose of the interviews was to understand the dance instructors' journeys in dance as well as their perspectives on dance pedagogy and dance instruction.

The first instructor interview took place before I observed their dance classes and the second, after class observations were completed. All interview sessions were arranged in person at a private location on the university campus and virtually. Each interview did not exceed 90 minutes and the sessions were voice recorded for analysis purposes only. Recordings will be deleted after the research is completed.

Focus Group Sessions

Focus group sessions with student participants from the observed contemporary dance classes were held in order to analyze student perspectives on how they received

and responded to instructions received within their dance class. I observed a total of three focus group sessions, each had two students from each of the contemporary dance classes (Level I, II and III). All observations were held in a private location on the university campus. Focus group sessions were conducted between January 2023 and April 2023 and each session lasted no more than 60 minutes. Discussion questions were based on student experiences as a dancer within the context of the contemporary dance class, as well as student perceptions related to instructions offered in dance class. The focus group sessions were audio recorded for analysis purposes only. Recordings will be deleted after the research is completed.

Classroom Observations

The purpose of the classroom observations was to examine what the dance instructor said or did within the dance class and how this influenced student activity within the contemporary dance class. The duration of each dance session was around an hour and 20 minutes. Students and instructors were aware that I was observing their dance classes 10 minutes before the commencement of the session, until 10 minutes after the end of the session. Observations included the general class structure and the instructions provided by the dance instructor.

Observed behaviors were documented via notations and tally marks on a prepared form (see Appendix C). In relation to the instructor, I attempted to chart out:

- their position within the room as they instructed students;
- and, the cues (verbal or movement signals offered to students as a means to instruct). These cues related to purely verbal explanations, auditory sounds,

imagery cues, anatomical cues or rhythmic cues, as well movement that was demonstrated in isolation or in combination with other cues.

Whenever possible, I made notations if I observed that students had opportunities to:

- observe (other students, or the instructor);

- interact (with the class, with each other in small groups, or with the instructor);

- pose questions (to other students, or the instructor);

- receive feedback (from peers, from instructor;

- and, reflect (in isolation, in pairs/groups, or led by the instructor).

Artifactual Data

Some artifactual items pertaining to the dance classes were provided by the instructors. These included the syllabus that clarified class objectives, instructor expectations and information related to classroom culture. Level I and II students had access to video links to choreographic works, and grading rubrics. No lesson plans were offered. Artifactual items did not undergo specific data analysis procedures, but served as triangulation steps that helped substantiate and support study findings.

Data Analysis

Interview and Focus Group Session Data

Transcripts from the interview and focus groups sessions were coded to identify patterns and axial coding was used to find connections between categories to form a cohesive understanding of the data set. Additionally, an analytical memo was maintained

to document and, in the words of Saldana (2016, p. 45) "reflect and expound on" collected data.

Observation Data

Data collected from classroom observations included both tally sheet data and handwritten field notes. The tally sheet data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including the number of various cues that occurred for each class session, the median number of cues, the range in number of cues, and the standard deviation of the cues from the mean. These statistics demonstrated the amount of central tendency (mean) and variance (range, standard deviation) in the number of cues that took place within each class, to aid in understanding and interpreting the observational data. The field notes were used to corroborate and add meaning to the observation data and vice versa. Comparisons were made between the data collected from a Level I class to that of Level II class which were both taught by the same instructor. Similarly, data was compared between the Level II and Level III contemporary dance classes that were taught by the same instructor. Each instructor taught a Level II class, and the observational data from those were compared side-by-side in terms of the types of instructional cues the instructors provided to their students.

Merging of the Data

After analyzing the quantitative and qualitative data collected from tally sheets, observational field notes, interviews and focus group discussions separately, I consolidated the collected data to form a comprehensive view of each of the three levels of dance classes. Additionally, artifactual documents provided by instructors were used for further insight and data triangulation. To further answer the research question of what

differences exist between pedagogic practices of dance instructors at different levels,

comparisons between Level I and II with Instructor A, and Level II and III with Instructor

B were offered followed by descriptions of the backgrounds of the two instructors.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

In order to understand what, if any, differences exist in instruction offered to beginning, intermediate and advanced contemporary dance students, a combination of classroom observations, student focus groups, and instructor interviews were conducted. To recap from Chapter III, I observed two dance instructors. I observed Instructor A leading four Contemporary I (beginning) classes and four Contemporary II (intermediate) classes, while I watched Instructor B teach four Contemporary II classes and four Contemporary III (advanced) classes (see Table 1). I conducted focus group sessions with students from each of the three levels and I interviewed both instructors.

Table 1

Class Observations

Instructor A	Contemporary I	Contemporary II	
Instructor B		Contemporary II	Contemporary III

Several themes surfaced during the coding process, which pertained to various aspects such as the instructor's movement demonstrations and feedback to students, student input and work ethic within the class, and artistry. In this chapter, quotes that contained instructions given by the instructor during class were extracted from field notes. The majority of information pertaining to student perceptions, in quotes or paraphrased, originated from the focus group discussion, while quotes or paraphrased statements from instructor interviews are identified through markers such as "in conversation with the instructor" or "when asked about x, the instructor explained..."

The observational data collected during class sessions is partial in places which caused precise comparative analysis to be challenging. The data does, however, add to the totality of the findings and provides insights into the instructors' actions occurring in real time.

Concerning quantitative data, the study includes frequency and variance in the number of cues (verbal or visual signals to move a particular way in dance) given by each instructor to students. These cues were pre-designated as verbal, auditory, movement, imagery, anatomical or rhythmic cues. Verbal cues relied on spoken language while auditory cues were non-verbal sounds used to communicate information or instructions. A movement cue was a visual signal or prompt on the part of the instructor to guide or demonstrate physical movement. Image cues were visual signals or prompts that evoked a mental image or visualization in the mind of the observer. Anatomical cues comprised verbal instructions related to the skeletal or muscular structure addressing postural alignment or to improve movement quality. Rhythmic cues related to the instructor offering verbal or auditory information that consisted of timing or beats to guide a movement.

As the study progressed, it became challenging to be specific with what constituted a verbal and a movement cue. While discussions were not considered to be verbal cues, it happened that discussions helped students execute a phrase (sequence of movements). Moreover, the instructor would offer a movement cue during a discussion. At times, a movement cue would last just a couple of seconds, while it could be as long as a minute based on whether it was corrective or a demonstration of a phrase or movement quality. Additionally, movement and verbal cues that were corrective were

offered as clarification, as feedback to the entire class or to an individual dancer. One instructor would perform a phrase or combination with students, which was not intended to instruct but still served as an important cue for some students. Given this ambiguity, the verbal and movement cues will be presented separately from the other cues in the quantitative data.

This chapter contains three sections, each related to the contemporary dance level – beginning (Level I), intermediate (Level II) and advanced (Level III). I will begin by outlining the overall structure of the Contemporary I class (instructed by Instructor A), followed by an overview of the themes identified during the coding process. Next, the class structure of Contemporary II, taught by Instructor A, will be presented, along with the themes identified through coding. The same format will be followed for Contemporary II, taught by Instructor B. Lastly, the general class structure of Contemporary III, taught by Instructor B, will be presented, along with the corresponding themes. At the end of each section, I will present quantitative data related to the kind of cues students received from their instructor. Finally, I will present a comparison across the dance levels that merges the data into an interpretive explanation, including each instructor' professional backgrounds.

Contemporary I

General Class Structure (Instructor A)

It is important to note that this was a relatively small class with no more than 8 students, none of whom were dance majors. The class met twice a week and each session lasted 80 minutes. Based on awareness of dance etiquette, attention to movement detail and how quickly phrases were learnt, it appeared that students came with varying

experiences in dance. Overall, class consisted of exercises to work on body conditioning and dance technique, across the floor movement phrases, movements in the diagonal and combinations in the center of the room (Table 2 provides a general outline of the four sessions observed). Discussions were carried out to provide students with exposure to the context surrounding dance and art.

Table 2

General Class Outline, Contemporary I, Instructor A

Session 1 Total Time – 77 mins.	Session 2 Total Time – 79 mins.	Session 3 Total Time – 78 mins.	Session 4 Total Time – 77 mins.
Housekeeping, conversation related to assignments – 14 mins. Phrase on floor (with instructor feedback) - 11 mins. Phrase 2 on floor (with instructor feedback) - 17 mins. Instructor demonstrates modifications for conditioning – 3 mins. Conditioning – 5 mins. Water Break – 2 mins. Across the floor phrase – 5 mins. Across the floor phrase demo (on floor + standing) - 8 mins. Execution with feedback – 9 mins. Stretch – 3 mins.	Housekeeping, discussion about syllabus, circle (need to know's) - 9 mins. Video related to certain choreographers – 12 mins. Discussion by the whiteboard (timeline of dance, spine and isolations) - 10 mins. Demo of Graham inspired phrase – 2 mins. Students execute phrase – 10 mins. Isolations (demo and break down of movement) - 5 mins. Students do the movement – 7 mins. Across the floor phrase demo – 2 mins. Students execute – 5 mins. Demo of phrase across the floor – 2 mins. Students execute (in three speeds) - 15 mins.	Discussion on art– 30 mins. Instructor talks about counter technique – 5 mins. Phrase from a previous session (with feedback) – 7 mins. Phrase 2 from previous session (with feedback) – 8 mins. Spirals in the Diagonal progressively adding new elements (with feedback) - 24 mins. Release, loosening up – 4 mins.	Need to know's - 5 mins. Discussion on dance, anatomy, instructor background – 13 mins. Review the phrase from previous class – 5 mins. Students execute phrase – 2 minutes. New phrase demo – 2 mins. Students execute phrase – 5 mins. Conditioning – 5 mins. Water Break – 2 mins. Exercise phrase related to isolations – 11 mins. Mini discussion on spine – 6 mins. Across the diagonal phrase related to spirals (similar to previous session) - 7 mins. Mini discussion, student question – 4 mins. Instructor marks next phrase and demos – 5 mins. Students execute phrase - 5 mins.

The course was organized into units and students had access to video links that showcased works by Katherine Dunham, Martha Graham, Paul Taylor, Pina Bausch, Merce Cunningham and Isadora Duncan (Watch List - Contemporary I. IA, 2023). I observed sessions related to the spine where students watched videos of works by Katherine Dunham (isolations), and Martha Graham (contraction and release).

A majority of the course grade was based on student effort in class (32%). Related to movement, students were graded on movement skills and were given a clear rubric while 10 % of their grade was on a final in-class performance. Students were required to maintain a journal throughout the semester related to their perceptions on dance and each unit (choreographer and the respective movement style). Students also had to write a reflection paper related to their viewing of the end-of-semester dance concert and write a paper on the topic 'What is Contemporary Dance?' (Syllabus - Contemporary II. IA, 2023).

Themes Observed (Instructor A)

There were six main themes that emerged regarding general class structure for the Contemporary I class with Instructor A. In relation to movement instruction, the themes related to how the instructor broke down the movement, offered feedback and anatomical information to students. In relation to dance theory, elements of dance history gave students context regarding the material they encountered. The other two themes were related to hierarchy within the class and classroom etiquette.

Breaking Down the Movement. Once students had a chance to execute a movement phrase, the instructor would break it down in detail slowing down the movements and explaining the mechanics. For example, "what will help is to bend our

knees the whole time," "let the leg be heavy" or emphasizing "my toe leads – toe, ball, heel, the opposite way of walking down the street." Moreover, the instructor used images such as "sunshine" when the arms moved overhead from one side of the body to the other or would say something like "explode" or "shoot out." Another one to explain radiating energy out through the fingertips was to imagine having "long fingernails."

The instructor typically silently marked the movement to review what they would present to students. Next, they demonstrated the movement in silence for students after which students were to execute the phrase. Throughout instruction, the students predominantly preferred to observe rather than mark or execute the phrase.

Related to breaking down movements for students, the instructor explained in the interview that "some people just have a really tough time following you or mirroring you because they're so unaware of their own body that they think they're doing it and they're not. So then, where's the intervention." The instructor also explained to students in class that if they had trouble with a movement or phrase, it helped to really slow down the movement so that they could experience all the details and would be able to identify what hindered them from executing the movement. The students also mentioned in the focus group discussion that even though they struggled with movement, they appreciated the instructor's patience and how well movement was deconstructed.

Anatomical Information. One session started with an attempt to define the meanings of "contract" and "release" in the body, but the conversation naturally transitioned to the topic of art. In the following session, the teacher resumed the discussion on the topic of contract and release by referencing the work of dance artist Katherine Dunham's focus on the spine and torso. Despite the class having difficulty in

identifying certain major bones in the body, the instructor persisted in getting students to move to identify what muscles or bones they need to use to execute a certain movement. Additionally, the teacher utilized a skeletal model in the studio to help students visualize the internal workings of their body and explain the kinds of movements possible at specific joints. This was done after having posed the questions "What can the spine do?" If students said "curve," the instructor would write the word on the board along with "lateral flexion" or "lateral extension."

Apart from the discussion, as the instructor demonstrated a movement, they would say things like "Feet and knees are together" or "I'm trying to sit on my pelvis." The instructor also offered an exercise to work on isolating movements at the pelvis, the ribcage and the head.

Feedback. After breaking down a phrase and watching students perform the phrase, the instructor would typically provide only one or two specific points of feedback. They would often inform students: "This is what I'm seeing [in the movement]" along with a demonstration, followed by suggesting what they would like to see along with advice on how to achieve it. On one occasion, when a student acknowledged feedback from the instructor but did not attempt to embody the movement. The instructor insisted that the student execute the movement since it was evident that the student had registered the feedback mentally but was struggling to embody it. On another occasion, a student verbally described the mechanics of the movement as a means of clarifying how it was to be executed, and the instructor nodded affirmatively but asked the student "Can you show me what you mean?"

Context (Dance History). There were at least four discussions within the four sessions I observed. One related to anatomy was planned whereas another related to art and the third related to counter technique happened spontaneously based on reading the room or responding to a student question.

The session that introduced the spine unit began with students watching sections of videos related to Dunham and Graham followed by a discussion on isolations, contraction and release. In our conversation, the instructor seemed keen that students learn about the history of dance, and they also mentioned in class how they wished to expose students to forms that challenged the ethnocentric vision of what dance is.

The instructor wanted to get students to think about the definitions of what each of the terms meant and how their bodies executed isolation or experienced contraction. In the interview, related to the spontaneity of the discussion, the instructor said that though they have an idea of what to offer students, rather than come in with a planned lesson, they tend to read the room and decide the course of action in class.

Hierarchy. Some classes would begin with everybody getting into a circle, every student as well as the instructor saying their name, and their "Need to know's." Need to know's comprised of how students were feeling on the day, and these informed the instructor if somebody in class was injured, had not slept enough, or had sore and aching muscles. During the start of a session, the instructor asked students to get into a "non-hierarchical circle formation," and I heard them say the phrase "there is no hierarchy" at least two other times. In the focus group discussion, a student appreciated that the instructor spoke about the dance studio as a non-hierarchical space but also added that "obviously, we all look up, we look at [them] as someone that's the instructor but, it just

makes you feel better." When asked to elaborate on the concept of 'hierarchy' within the dance class, the instructor said that given that their syllabus mentioned "I consider teaching to be non-hierarchical and collaborative." (Syllabus – Contemporary I. IA, 2023), they feel a need to model it, to say it in class, and try to "embody that part of my syllabus."

Classroom Etiquette. During discussions, although for the most part engaged and invested, I noticed instances when students talked over each other or ignored what was being said. On one occasion, two students were having a side conversation for a couple of minutes before the instructor intervened asking them to stay engaged, followed by apologizing to the students for having called them out.

Related to dancing, if the instructor paused between two phrases or marked a phrase, some students would fall into conversation about things unrelated to dance. Once, a student asked their peers if they were ready to dance to redirect their attention. Another time students would chat at the end of the phrase in the diagonal rather than get into position to restart the phrase. This happened for at least ten minutes before the instructor pointed to the corner and told students to be ready to restart. After another five minutes when the class continued to be chatty in a manner that hindered their movement, the instructor stopped speaking after saying "Let's take our voices and put them in a box." communicating using gestures for the remaining 5 minutes of class. This was effective and the last few minutes of class had focused students who could rely on nothing but their bodies to show that they were participating.

Related to a question on expectations for their students, the instructor mentioned that although they try not to have expectations, they sometimes need to mention to their

beginning students about proper dance attire or not wearing street shoes on the dance floor. However, beginning students take time to really "figure it out" and "you really can have to break it down to the level ones [contemporary I], and sometimes it's an ongoing thing."

Quantitative Observational Data for Contemporary I

In the table below (Table 3), the number of cues observed for each of the four sessions (S1-S4) is presented. As previously explained, given the challenge in being specific in terms of what constituted verbal and movement cues, these are presented separately. We can observe that session 2 has more cues offered compared to the other sessions. This is because it was the day the instructor introduced the unit on contraction and expansion and new movement material was taught during this session, elements of which were repeated in subsequent sessions.

Table 3

Contemporary I – Cues Observed for Instructor A

	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Auditory Cue	2	10	3	7	5.5	8	3.69
Image Cue	7	11	5	8	7.75	6	2.50
Anatomical Cue	5	5	6	6	5.5	1	.58
Rhythmic Cue	4	3	7	3	4.25	4	1.89

	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Verbal Cue	13	39	22	16	22.5	26	7.07
Movement Cue	17	44	29	17	26.75	27	12.81

Note: S.D. = standard deviation

There are also higher incidences and wider ranges in the number of verbal and movement cues than in the other types of cues. This was probably dependent on whether a new movement phrase was taught which required more cues compared to if students were reworking a phrase taught during a previous session.

Contemporary II

General Class Structure (Instructor A)

This class had about 16 students, most of whom had had dance experience and were dance majors or minors. Some of these students had gone through Contemporary I with Instructor A the previous semester. Students were given two video lists, one from the Contemporary I dance class. The second list which was meant for Contemporary II's had videos links to documentaries, performances or technique classes related to release and floor work, Limón dance, Trisha Brown, the Cleo Parker Robinson Dance and a few other links (Watch List – Contemporary I. IA, 2023). Students were also required to write a 3-page paper exploring the topic "What is Dance Technique?"

Students were graded on effort and participation (40%), the research paper (20%) and a final evaluation (40%) which involved working on a phrase and performing a solo in class. Clear grading rubrics were available to students for each of the above three categories (Syllabus – Contemporary II. IA, 2023).

Classes typically involved students moving for the majority of the time, and discussion was usually integrated with the movement. There was one class where time was spent discussing the experience of writing the first draft of the research paper, and finding peer reviewers. Table 4 on the next page provides a general outline of the 4 sessions.

Table 4

General Class Outline, Contemporary II, Instructor A

Session 1 Total time – 77 mins	Session 2 Total time – 78 mins	Session 3 Non-verbal Class Total time – 80 mins	Session 4 Total time – 80 mins
Housekeeping, need to know's - 10 mins. Phrase 1 on floor demo + students execute – 2+4 mins. Instructor feedback asking class to do a movement of the phrase – 3 mins. Adds onto floor phrase – 4 minutes. Students execute in 2 groups – 6 mins. Instructor feedback and whole class executes last part of floor phrase – 2 min. Across the floor phrase demo + students execute – 6+3 mins. Instructor and students figure out the same phrase on other side + execute phrase – 4+2 mins. New phrase – demo of crawls across the floor – students execute followed by feedback - 6 mins. Execution and discussion – 2 mins.	Start of class (5 mins late) - studio cleaning, housekeeping, need to know's - 7 mins. Standing phrase demo and anatomical input – 7 mins. Execute movement along with discussion related to anatomy, movement quality – 11 mins. Students execute previous phrase but take it across the floor – 5 mins. Exercise in running and 'falling forward' in a diagonal – 5 mins. Instructor feedback and anatomical input as students move – 23 mins. Demo of next phrase that goes to the floor – 3 mins. Students execute – 3 mins. Feedback – 4 mins. Students execute – 5 mins.	Need to know's - 5 mins. Walking in varying speeds interspersed by exercise from previous class – 4 mins. Demo of exercise from previous class, students execute phrase + Anatomical input – 4 + 3 mins. As students execute, feedback (actions or proprioceptive input) – 6 mins. Across the floor phrase from previous class. Students execute interspersed by non-verbal instructor feedback – 5 mins. 2nd across the floor phrase demo, class marks in 2 groups - 8 mins. Exercise from the start of class with addition of movement – anatomical input along with feedback – 9 mins. Dumb charades to communicate "say out loud shin to shoulder girdle" - 3 mins. Movement in diagonal from previous class – non-verbal feedback – 14 mins. Review combo from last class – feedback – class executes combo in different directions - 13 mins. Discussion – instructor/student feedback on non-verbal class – 5 mins.	Need to know's, housekeeping discussion on research paper – 7 mins. Every student reads 1st para of their research paper – 13 mins. Admin work related to written assignment – 9 mins. Exercise with head rolls – anatomical input and instructor feedback – 8 mins. Across the floor phrase from pervious class with instructor feedback – 9 mins. Water break – 1 min. Movement demo in silence and students execute – 4 mins. New phrase demo on both sides (similar elements from previous class's phrase) - 2 mins. Students execute interspersed with instructor feedback – 12 mins. Diagonal exercise in falling from previous classes with instructor feedback – 8 mins. Movement combo - 7 mins.

Compared to other sessions, in the non-verbal session (S3), students exhibited greater engagement, paying close attention to the instructor. The class also seemed to move at a faster pace. There were a few times in class when the instructor utilized ASL to communicate certain concepts, such as indicating the word 'risk' to encourage students to make bigger movements, and 'safe' to remind them to exercise caution. Additionally, ASL was used to convey the instruction to say 'shin to shoulder girdle' aloud while performing an exercise, although this took some time to communicate effectively through non-verbal means (nearly 5 minutes).

At the conclusion of the class, a student commented that the lack of verbal instructions was very effective, but that using words to provide feedback may be beneficial. The first words the instructor spoke was during the 75th minute of class when they said "Good!" and asked the class to get into a circle to discuss and stretch (only two students actively stretched). A student immediately asked, "What were you trying to say?" related to a feedback point the instructor gave during the class. Another student inquired about the reasoning behind the decision to conduct a nonverbal class which prompted a discussion where both students and instructor spoke about their challenges and experiences during the session.

When I asked the instructor if they would have done a non-verbal class with beginning students, they immediately responded in the negative but added that it really depended on the experience level of the class, elaborating that every beginning group is different. They also indicated that if the movement material was similar to what the group had previously learned or if it was towards the end of the semester, they might opt to speak less.

Themes Observed (Instructor A)

Some of the common themes observed across the four sessions related to the relationship between the instructor and students (camaraderie and hierarchy), emphasis on technique versus feeling the movement, how the instructor constantly worked on changing the facing of the movement, feedback offered, exercises and how often the instructor moved in class.

Camaraderie and Hierarchy. The rapport between the instructor and students in the class appeared to be one of colleagues, with communication flowing in a casual and relaxed manner. One student expressed appreciation for the instructor's reminder that there should not be a hierarchical dynamic in the class, and that the instructor is also learning alongside the students.

Another student however felt that "there does need to be a sense of a hierarchy because there needs to be a sense of respect between teacher and student, but not in a way where it's oh, I'm better than you, I know more than you but it's, oh, I've been through different experiences, this is what I'm offering you in this class." The student added that the hierarchy is apparent especially since the course is graded and that the dynamic between instructor and student needs to remain professional.

Feeling the Movement and Technique. The instructor once introduced lunges across the floor as movement material. Once the entire class had a chance to execute the movement, the instructor said "I notice a focus on the external. Think of the internal." They proceeded to offer students the image of a bear walking and how it would let go of its head. As the instructor demonstrated the movement, they elaborated that a bear was not preoccupied with executing perfect lunges with straight lines. After receiving this

guidance, students achieved a more organic movement. In fact, when one student

expressed that they felt the movement even though they had used the wrong leg, the

instructor immediately questioned if there was a correct or incorrect leg. The instructor

elaborated that being in the moment was more important than being concerned with the

technicalities of the steps. That being said, the instructor devoted sufficient time to help

students execute the movement in a technically efficient manner through exercises and

anatomical input.

      Change in Movement Facing. The instructor often did a phrase or exercise

facing a particular direction and then asked the students to repeat the same phrase while

facing a different wall of the dance studio. When asked about this approach, the instructor

mentioned how they personally had a tendency to face the mirror and that as much as it

was about "breaking out of my own patterns" they felt that the students were ready for

the added layer of taking the same movement in multiple directions. One of the students

also appreciated that the instructor makes good use of space and "flips the space around."

      With regards to spatial awareness, in the interview, the instructor elaborated that

they were interested in "the group consensus and [spatial] awareness." The kind of things

they wanted students to be thinking about were "can I propriocept[ively sense]? Can I

sense their [another student's] timing so that I match my timing? And also, that they're

going behind me and I'm going in front of them" etc.

      Feedback. As evident from the outline of the sessions, (Table 4), the instructor

would constantly offer feedback and additional points for students to consider as they

executed a phrase. The instructor would very often offer general feedback to the entire

class. To offer students a better image of where the movement was traveling, the

instructor would sometimes demonstrate a phrase and ask a student to pull their hand in a specific direction. Once students were comfortable with the memory of a phrase, the instructor would demonstrate the movement, use their arms to indicate the direction and say, "I'd like you to think of the vertical line here." I observed that students appeared taller and more balanced during that particular move after the instruction. Subsequently, the instructor offered an additional input, asking students to add an undercurve to transition out of the vertical. This time, most students executed lovely undercurves, but some had let go of the previous input of the vertical.

The instructor would often offer positive feedback if a student made progress with a phrase or was in the right direction towards achieving a movement. Often as the class executed an exercise, the instructor would walk to a student and offer individual feedback. Other times, the instructor would offer proprioceptive input to a student such as holding down a student's heel as they executed a movement, at times making asking the class to observe, but other times, doing so just for the student to get a feeling of the movement.

Exercises. On two occasions, I observed the instructor lead a ten-minute conditioning session. The instructor would stand in front of the class, everybody faced the mirror and accompanied by a loud energetic music track, the entire class executes a series of exercises. The routine consisted of strengthening exercises such as abdominal crunches, planks, etc., interspersed with isolation exercises like spine roll-ups and arm circles. The session concluded with a few stretches and students settling into a child's pose.

In addition to this, the instructor would have the students perform a particular exercise multiple times in order to ensure mastery. To make the repetitions more engaging, the instructor would vary the exercise by changing directions, adding walks around the room between repetitions, or providing different music accompaniment. During the interview, the instructor explained the purpose of this variation was to "disguise the repetition." To avoid boredom during a 30-minute exercise, the teacher would introduce new movements alongside familiar ones. If the students tended to focus only on the new movements, the teacher would give feedback specific to the familiar movements.

Instructor Movement. Throughout each session, the instructor would constantly move in class covering nearly every corner of class. They would demonstrate a movement in the center or on one side of the class, move across the floor with students as well as execute the movement material alongside them. Occasionally, they would take breaks to observe students and offer specific feedback.

When I asked the instructor to comment on this, they answered that moving through a phrase helped them get a sense of the journey students went on within the class. As a session progressed and more challenging and athletic movement combinations were offered to students, the instructor had to go through the building blocks themselves in order to optimally demonstrate the movement combinations.

Music. The instructor used a wide variety of music of different genres, sometimes switching to different music tracks for different movement phrases. The students appeared to enjoy the music, and this helped the way they executed exercises or

movements. In fact, for a particular exercise, a student asked if they could have disco music and the instructor promptly chose an appropriate track from their playlist.

When asked to comment on their choice of music for class, the instructor replied that if they played the same songs for two or three weeks, "it gets stale." The impetus to constantly look for new music and recycle songs was as much for students as for themself as an instructor to keep things fresh and interesting. Moreover, at times if the instructor felt that students were sick of a phrase but still needed to work on it, it helped to change the music rather than abandon the phrase.

General Class Structure (Instructor B)

Within the Contemporary II class taught by Instructor B, the instructor demonstrated the movement phrases or combinations that were then executed by students across the floor or in the center of the room. Often times, students worked in pairs for peer feedback followed by the entire class having a brief discussion. A couple of times, improvisation prompts were offered, and every class concluded with an effective closure in the form of stretch time or meditation. One class I observed was atypical in that it was what the instructor called a reverse class (explained in detail in a later section).

When I asked students regarding the format of the class, one responded saying that "there's not really a specific format to it, [the instructor changes] it up. Some days, we'll start across the floor and some days, we'll start just in the center. So, there's not really a set structure to it. If [they see] something that we're doing in the combo that's a little challenging, [they'll] take it across the floor. So, [they don't] just throw us into movement." Another student agreed saying that the instructor "comes into class [with] a different structure for every day" and using the reverse class as an example, the student

said that "I feel like [they have] different categories of class setting I guess." Table 5,

below, indicates the general outline of each of the four classes I observed.

Table 5

General Class Outline, Contemporary II, Instructor B

Session 1 Total time – 80 mins	Session 2 Total time – 79 mins	Session 3 Total time – 80 mins	Session 4 Reverse Class Total time – 79 mins
Start of class (5 mins late), housekeeping - 8 minutes. Introductions and discussion related to warm up – 27 mins. Warm up – 25 mins. Demonstration of movement phrase – 5 mins. Students execute phrase (interspersed with peer feedback) - 10 mins. Stretch – 5 mins.	Start of class (4 minutes late), housekeeping – 6 mins. Students execute the movement phrase from last class – 14 mins. Instructor adds movement to the phrase– 2 or 3 mins. Students execute old and new material (interspersed with peer feedback) – 15 mins. Across the floor – 10 mins. New phrase (release technique) - 5 mins. Class executes the phrase a couple of times and break out into their pairs (execution and feedback) - 15 mins. Stretch – 7 mins.	Start of class, housekeeping – 5 mins. Follow the leader (warm up) - 7 mins. Phrase (interspersed with peer feedback and notes from instructor) – 10 mins. Across the floor – 8 mins. Improv in silence – 2 mins. Across the floor – 3 mins. Release technique phrase (interspersed with peer feedback and notes from instructor) - 10 mins. New phrase across the floor with discussion – 20 mins. Meditation – 15 mins.	Start of class (8 mins late), Housekeeping, Explanation of reverse class – 12 mins. Putting past movement material together to create the mega combination – 3 mins. The instructor explains the logistics of what students need to do – 3 mins. Two groups of students take turns moving (while individual feedback offered to students of the group that waits their turn) – 27 mins. Students asked to work in pairs to identify an exercise each – 7 mins. Each student shares an exercise, the entire class does the exercise – 20 mins. Stretch – 7 mins.

Based on the sessions observed, session one commenced with a long group

discussion followed by asking students to "Spread out. Let's start on the floor" while in

session 2, students were thrown into moving when the first words of the instructor were

"I appreciate you all warming up. Let's do the combo from last time." The warm-up

activity in session 3 involved playing "Follow the leader," while in the reverse class, the

instructor briefly introduced the class's purpose and proceeded to create a mega combination by combining parts from the various combinations that the students were familiar with. The constant across the four sessions was that the instructor allocated time for students to quiet down, reflect, or stretch at the end of each session.

Session four was a class where the instructor took students through what they called a reverse class. They explained to students how in a normal class, one did exercises that helped with or led to a movement combination. However, within the reverse class, students would begin with one mega combination (a mix of the various movement phrases from the previous three sessions). Two groups of students would alternatively execute the mega combination over and over for about 30 minutes with the aim of exhausting the body (apart from a student who sat out after the 5th repetition, the rest of the class did the movement combination 7 times). The hope was that students, when exhausted, would discover an economy in how the body moved and find a release and relaxation in the body.

As the first group performed, the instructor offered feedback to every single member of the second group and vice versa. They explained in the interview that "I try to see everybody at least three times before we then move on to the second half [of the class] and I know that that's what they want."

The instructor concluded the reverse class by inviting each student to identify a particular challenge they faced while executing the combination, be it technical or abstract (such as wanting to "dance bigger"). Next, the students were paired up and tasked with devising an exercise to address their respective challenges - "identify an exercise you can to do make that thing better. It could be physical or mental" was the

prompt for students. Finally, each student shared their exercises with the rest of the class and the entire group did a few repetitions of the exercise.

In my conversation with the instructor, they "try to do more of those [reverse classes] but I have to build up certain amount of material before I can do them." They clarified how in the real world, unless one is lucky, one does not have a teacher who is aware of where each dancer comes from, and "So it's really just up to you, right? And so how do we teach the student to be self-teaching?" One of the students spoke about how the instructor says that the reverse class "is something that translates to the real world or the real dance world and getting a taste of what it's like to run over and over and over the material, you need to build stamina and stuff, and I think that's really cool."

Related to the last part of the reverse class where students propose an exercise each, a student said that "I'm sure it's helpful for some people, but for me, I'd rather spend my time doing more movements than seeing how other people need to improve, because I know how I need improve, if that makes sense?"

Themes Observed (Instructor B)

There were five themes that emerged regarding general class structure for the Contemporary II class with Instructor B. These themes were setting the stage, demonstration of movement phrase/combination, opportunities for students to observe and articulate, feedback, encouragement, student input, student responsibility, choreographic work.

Setting The Stage. The instructor's behavior within class reflected that they were mindful about how the studio space was used. Whether it was related to people within the dance studio, the logistics of how to access the studio, the work ethic within the studio, or

student attitude towards feedback; the instructor provided clear explanations as to what was expected.

During the first Contemporary Level II class, the instructor's first words to the Contemporary II group were "I'm your host, [first name, last name]." The instructor explained to the class that they would arrive late on two days of the week and why, and that they would entrust the keys to a Contemporary II student who could ensure that the studio was available to the dancers on time. Through the subsequent classes, apart from engaging with the students as soon as they arrived, the instructor would also chat with the accompanist or myself, the researcher. When I interviewed the instructor, in response to the question of being the host of the studio space, they explained that they saw an instructor as a game show host who "has to be in control of the of the game and has to make sure you're following all of these procedures. At the same time, they have to be entertaining, they have to be engaging." The instructor also elaborated why they ask the accompanist to introduce themselves to the class "because I feel I need to respect their artistry and they're also teaching while they're in there as well" and "talk about how they got into music," "showing the students that wow, what a great thing we have here, right? And setting the tone."

While the first class began with introductions, the instructor seamlessly shifted the conversation to warmups. After a discussion on the importance of warmups and explaining the rationale behind the kinds of exercises that helped the body warm up, significant time was spent taking students through a comprehensive warmup. The instructor emphasized that for the rest of the semester, when they arrived in the studio, they expected students to already be warming up and moving. The instructor clarified in

the interview that "the first day that I walked into twos [Contemporary II], that's what I'm looking for. How are they warming up? How are they approaching class? And I was very disappointed, not in the sense of, oh, you should know better, but it's just, okay, now, I have to take a step back and I have to spend class time working on that, which is fine." The discussion and nearly 25-minute warmup of the first session definitely paid off since students would actively warm up before class during the subsequent three sessions.

Of the sessions I observed, the instructor would take time to settle in as soon as they arrived in class, and they were available to address questions or concerns students may have had before class began. The classes usually began with the instructor addressing housekeeping issues or making announcements, taking attendance and outlining the plan for the day's activities (they once outlined the plan for the subsequent week). When asked in the interview about setting the tone for class, the instructor elaborated how "I used to come in [into class] very differently (. …) Let's get right to work and let's get down to business. And through the years I've kind of softened that a little bit because I realized that it, that created tension."

The instructor also set the tone related to giving and receiving feedback in class. In session one, the instructor clarified for students, that rather than a simple "I like this," to be specific and talk about movement quality or describe anatomically what would help execute the movement. The instructor proceeded to explain how one should approach feedback, saying that if a peer took the time and effort to offer feedback, students should perceive it as "This person cares about me enough to give me a note."

Movement Demonstrations. Generally, the instructor would demonstrate a movement phrase and most of the class would follow, some students would mark the

phrase while a few students watched. When the instructor introduced a new movement that was to be done across the floor, they would demonstrate the movement once across the floor and immediately ask students to move three at a time. They would specify when the next trio could begin moving (when the previous group gets halfway across the room) or they would count the trio in.

Movement performed in the center of the studio, also known as the movement combination, was usually demonstrated in silence. The instructor would execute the combination at least four times. The entire combination would be done in silence once and the instructor would then repeat the combination offering counts that indicated the length of each movement. The instructor would then execute the combination a couple more times, adding auditory cues like "Whoosh!" or "Weee!" or imagery like "Punch!" or "Flick!" during the third repetition, and giving anatomical cues on the fourth repetition e.g., "think of how your spine undulates here."

If the combination was particularly lengthy, the instructor would divide the phrase in sections and present it gradually, for example, they demonstrated section A; they repeat A, but add on section B. Finally, they repeat A, B, and add on section C. Alternatively, they might introduce the second section of a phrase in the following class.

The instructor usually executed rather than marked movements unless the movement went to the floor. However, he would warn the class "I'm marking. I'm old. You're not, you do it [the movement] full."

Opportunities for Students to Observe and Articulate. Before students pair up, the instructor offers a concrete prompt "introduce yourself, choose who goes first and think about what we want to focus on [while executing the phrase]." As students watch

their peers, they are aware that they have to give a note to their partner which gives them a clear intention and helps them formulate their feedback. Other times, the instructor would ask students to give a complement to their partner.

If a student executes a movement well, the instructor might point to the student without the student knowing. Other times, the instructor would say "let's watch x. No tension in the arms. Good! And if she goes lower, she can travel more."

Students often repeated certain notes or observations. The recurring notes were – dancing bigger, releasing my arms, working on the transitions and using the *plié*.

Feedback. In all four sessions I observed, the majority of the feedback students received was from their peers. The instructor would ask students to pair up after a movement phrase had been demonstrated. In each pair, one student would perform the movement phrase while the other observed, and then they would switch roles. Following a few rounds of this, the pairs would come together to provide feedback to one another (student-student feedback). The instructor would invite each pair to share noteworthy observations with the class (student-group feedback). There were times each pair was required to share a note, other times when one could choose to share a note. During this sharing, if there was a note that the instructor thought was important, they would underline it by repeating or adding a nuance. At other times, they would demonstrate the movement by slowing it down, offer an exaggerated 'wrong'/'right' way of executing the movement, or they would ask the entire class to come out and try the phrase keeping in mind the note offered (instructor-group feedback). For example, when one student offered "having a deeper *plié* to move more," the instructor underlined the note saying, "drop your weight to travel."

It was not often that students received individual feedback from the instructor. However, it was during the reverse class that the instructor gave every student individual feedback at least thrice during class (instructor-student feedback). Another time I observed the instructor giving individual feedback was when students had a movement across the floor. Here, the instructor walked through the lines and gave occasional notes to some students.

In the interview, related to feedback, the instructor mentioned how it breaks the hierarchy when students receive feedback from their peers but that they were conscious that students "want to get the attention from the teacher." The instructor uses their reverse classes as an opportunity when they "go up to each every one of them [students] and give them some feedback, and on those classes I try to see everybody at least three times before we then move on to the second half and I know that that's what they want." One of the students in the focus group discussion echoed that "I also enjoy how in those classes [reverse classes], [the instructor] gives us individual feedback and I think that helps me a lot personally. Because when they give overall feedback [to the class], it's always, is [the instructor] talking to me? [Are they] not talking to me? Am I doing it right? Am I not?"

Encouragement. The instructor would offer encouragement by asking students to give a compliment to their partner or offering students a challenge - "You have one last chance to do the phrase." If students struggled through a phrase, as a way of challenging students would say "My ability to sleep tonight just went down," but would later say, "I saw more engagement with the upper body." Another encouragement offered in class was "We did better. I saw you dancing more."

Student Input. After the discussion on how one should warmup, the instructor proposed the mirroring exercise (any movement the 'leader' did was copied by the entire class) as a way to warmup. The instructor started off as the leader but after executing a couple of movements, walked to the back of the class and waited for a student to volunteer to lead the class through the rest of the warmup. At least three students lead the class (and the instructor who followed the exercises from the back of the room) through the mirroring exercise. As the class drew to a close, the instructor gave students the opportunity to share their preferred warmup exercise.

At the end of the reverse class, the instructor asked every student to choose one thing (technical or an abstract aspect such as "I want to dance bigger") they struggled with in executing the combination. The next prompt was for students to work in pairs and come up with an exercise that would help them work on the aspect they struggled with. Every student in the class then shared the exercise and the entire class did a few repetitions of the exercise.

Rather than take students through a formal stretch session, the instructor would dedicate the last five to ten minutes of class where each student could work on the muscle group they thought needed stretching. During this time, as the instructor stretched along with the students, they would give a prompt "Would somebody want to give a compliment?" or "Anybody wants to speak about [your experience of the reverse class] it?" Other times, the question while stretching was "Anybody have anything fun planned for the weekend?"

Responsibility. In class, the instructor would ask, "What are we focusing on?" or "Identify what you need to get better." They mentioned in the interview that "my reverse

class that I do, that's sets up where they are responsible for their own education, right? They are their own teacher in the sense that the question is put to them of given this combo given this movement, what do you need to do to get better at that?"

Choreographic Work. The instructor explained how when they first started teaching, they just "mimicked" their teachers or "regurgitated" material from the classes they took as a student. "I realized that, I, I need to I need to craft my skills as a choreographer. And so that's when I started to approach dance class, more like a choreographer and trying to teach, of course, trying to teach, that's the goal, but realizing that if I don't give the student, an experience of what it's like to work with the choreographer, then they're not really ready to step into a rehearsal."

The instructor would normally choreograph a few pieces for the end-of-semester concert and a select group of students perform in the concert. Some of the movement material offered to the Contemporary II students was from the instructor's choreography and they explained this to students as being able to execute a phrase that they would then see performed on stage by other bodies.

Quantitative Data for Contemporary II (Instructor A and B)

The least number of cues offered were rhythmic cues. This, to an extent, is explained by the fact that students are provided with musical accompaniment that dictates rhythm. Another explanation is that both instructors seemed keen that students develop their own sense of phrasing (determining the duration of each movement within a phrase). Rather than stick to a beat, instructors hoped that students fully experienced the feeling of a movement.

With instructor A, as observed below in table 6, session 3 was the non-verbal class and this skews the mean and range. While the instructor spoke only during the last 5 minutes, they used ASL to spell out words during the session (not more than 5 words during the entire session). The discussion at the end of class was on the experience of being in a non-verbal dance session. This session also had the lowest number of anatomical and image cues, given that these cues were usually communicated verbally.

Table 6

Contemporary II – Cues Observed for Instructor A

	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Auditory Cue	6	2	8	5	5.25	6	2.5
Image Cue	10	15	6	8	9.75	9	3.86
Anatomical Cue	7	12	2	8	7.25	10	4.11
Rhythmic Cue	0	4	2	7	3.25	7	2.98
	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Verbal Cue	28	25	0	27	20	28	13.39
Movement Cue	51	28	26	32	34.25	25	11.44

Note: S.D. = standard deviation

The table on the next page (Table 7) relates to instructor B, and we observe session 2 has many cues since it was a day the instructor taught a new combination as well as added on material to the phrase taught in the previous session. However, Session 4, which was the reverse class has very few cues since students were very familiar with the movement material. The instructor also offered individual feedback to every student, but I failed to record the nature of the feedback.

Table 7

Contemporary II – Cues Observed for Instructor B

	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Auditory Cue	6	11	5	2	6	9	3.74
Image Cue	8	14	4	1	6.75	13	5.61
Anatomical Cue	4	10	3	0	4.25	10	4.19
Rhythmic Cue	1	5	3	1	2.5	4	1.91
	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Verbal Cue	19	37	29	13	24.5	24	10.63
Movement Cue	15	41	21	13	22.5	28	12.79

Note: S.D. = standard deviation

Contemporary III

General Class Structure (Instructor B)

Within the Contemporary III class, there were no more than 10 students, most of whom were familiar with their instructor's movement vocabulary and their teaching style. 90% of the course grade was based on effort in class while 10% was to attend the end-of-semester dance concert (Syllabus – Contemporary III. IB, 2023).

Movement phrases across the floor, the combinations done in the center of the room, and the stretch time towards the end of the class were observed in all four sessions. Students worked in pairs to give each other feedback but this also served as a way to divide the class into two groups. One important observation was that significant time was dedicated to discussions, along with the inclusion of small exercises that helped students discern nuances in movement quality.

When asked about the structure of the class, one student responded saying that

"there's no set structure in that, we walk in and don't know what's going to be thrown at us and we just are expected to know it and do it." Another student added that if there was a structure, "it would probably be us warming up and going across the floor and then we get into a combo, and then maybe we finish with something like fun, or we stretch. That's the only kind of structure we have, but it's not always like that." The students concurred that it was their responsibility to get to class ten minutes earlier to warm up and the instructor expected them to be ready to work and dance at the start of class. Table 8 on the next page, provides a general outline of the four sessions I observed.

Table 8

General Class Outline, Contemporary III, Instructor B

Session 1 Total Time – 80 mins.	Session 2 Total Time – 79 mins.	Session 3 Total Time – 81 mins.	Session 4 Total Time – 75 mins.
Across the floor phrase demo and students execute – 18 mins. Beginning of semester phrase to varying music + discussion – 10 mins. Musicality – 4 minutes. Students mark and execute phrase from last class – 5 mins. Instructor adds on material to phrase + notes – 5 mins. Class executes in two groups + peer feedback – 12 mins. Running (to work on grounding) - 14 mins. Stretch with sharing reflection – 12 mins.	Housekeeping + discussion related to core, pelvic floor, concentric, eccentric and isometric work – 4+7 mins. Conditioning work with discussion – 23 mins. Circles (grounding) + peer feedback – 5+2 mins. Students mark across the floor combo from previous class + execute – 2+5 mins. Discussion on anatomy related to the combo – 5 mins. Students mark 2nd combo from last class + students execute combo – 2+6 mins. Demo of new movement material + students execute movement in two groups – 6+9 mins. Stretch – 3 mins.	Housekeeping – 4 mins. Core warmup – 15 mins. Exercise in letting the center of gravity fall (running forward and backwards) - 5 mins. Exercise in grounding in the center in two groups (running forward and backwards in circles) - 14 mins. Exercise in moving the arm (in the center + at the barre) - 4 mins. Demo of new phrase (release technique) + students execute new phrase (only on one side) – 12+4 mins. Demo of a different combo (across the floor) + students execute – 7+5 mins. Students execute combo from previous class – 7 mins. Stretch – 3 mins.	Video, discussion - 6 mins. Improv based on the video material; discussion; improv in two groups with peer feedback; class discussion – 24 mins. Applying discoveries from video and improv to the movement phrase with discussion – 9 mins. Across the floor movement with feedback – 10 mins. Time to revise the movement combination – 6 mins. Students execute the combination along with peer feedback and discussion – 17 mins. Stretch – 4 mins.

Themes Observed (Instructor B)

Based on the four sessions observed, some common themes emerged. These were as follows - movement demonstrations, feedback, student input and reflection, artistry and technique, improvisation and banter.

Movement Demonstration. The instructor was very detailed in articulating the nuances of the movement. While they usually only marked the phrase during the demo without speaking, they would eventually offer verbal cues offered such as "spiral," "reach," "just legs, no upper body," "feel other muscles by going up slowly," "soft jumps" etc.

For certain moves, the instructor would not insist on how it was executed, leaving it open to interpretation saying, "you do you." Certain other movements that were challenging, the instructor was insistent that it was done in a certain way. However, the instructor would make sure students knew that if they had injuries, that they were free to make modifications.

Feedback. There was quite a bit of peer feedback as well as discussions where students were invited to contribute and did so actively. Often, the instructor acted as a mediator in the discussion, providing a suggestion or thought but waiting for students to fill in the information. There was also a sense of openness from both instructor and students in discussing personal struggles related to dance in the class.

In the interview, the instructor mentioned that they are conscious that one of the things they did not deliver but students expect, is individual feedback. The students mentioned how they were encouraged to meet their instructor during office hours for individual feedback and that they took advantage of those meetings since they were not

only very helpful but also felt more personal. The students believe that the instructor brings this knowledge into the class, keeping in mind the student's personal struggles related to dance. With regards to student providing feedback to the instructor, a student felt that the instructor genuinely listened and cared about their concerns and was invested in helping them improve.

Within class, there were times when as students moved through a phrase, the instructor would constantly offer feedback saying things like "I like how you'll are indulging [in the movement] but also stay with the counts." In addition to verbal feedback, there were also small exercises that helped students understand dance techniques. For example, in the session related to release technique, students were asked to lean forward and let their arm dangle, experiencing how one could move the arm without tensing the muscle.

Student Input and Reflection. Apart from the last few minutes of class when the instructor requested students to complement themselves or a peer or share a discovery made with the rest of the class, each session included brief interludes of discussions. These discussions would typically begin with the instructor suggesting a concept or a question and then waiting for the students to provide additional information. Often, students were comfortable sharing what they learnt about, for example, the pelvic floor muscles without being prompted by a question and the instructor was happy to facilitate the discussion.

Given that students had come back from a break in the school year, during the last few minutes of stretching, the kind of responses from students were related to needing to "relearn how to anchor my center," or "you can feel your body not connected and

strange." Students were also reflective of how they moved through the different phrases, for example, one student shared with the class how connected and grounded they felt executing the across the floor phrase at the beginning of class but not finding that same connection in the combination they did later.

Artistry and Technique. In terms of musicality, in the session where students executed the same movement phrase to different pieces of music, one student reflected on the concept of dynamics in dance at the end of the class. The student said that they believed that they were a dynamic dancer, but that they were dynamic in a certain way when one could be dynamic in different ways. I attributed this reflection from the student, a direct result of the instructor's input related to music at the beginning of the session. With the song playing in the background, the instructor indicated their favorite note in the song. They analyzed the song, saying "long note at the beginning, setting it up," or "it [the note] comes in softer the second time." The instructor also remarked to the class that they could see students make bold choices in their movements but invited them to expand their approach by adding more texture to their dancing.

As an introduction to release technique, the instructor screened a Trisha Brown performance following which students were asked to improvise, drawing inspiration from the movements they witnessed in the video. After a discussion and receiving peer feedback, students went back to improvising and one could begin to see considerably release in their movements. In an interview, the instructor explained that the purpose of using improvisation was to allow the students to play around with the technique without overthinking it, like one would play with a new toy.

There were two sessions where the instructor began with conditioning work (once, as students requested it). However, while demonstrating a phrase, the instructor would connect back to anatomical information from the discussion or the conditioning exercises, thereby compelling students to think about technique as they performed and interpreted the movement phrase.

Both in relation to interpretation and technical skills, one of the students mentioned how the instructor would push their boundaries, elaborating that "challenge comes and goes and it's not that it's a challenge in the way that you can't achieve it, but it's a challenge in the way that [the instructor] knows we can do it."

Improvisation. Rather than come prepared with movement material, the instructor usually created material on the spot, as they were demonstrating the movement phrase for students. In the interview, the instructor mentioned how rather than plan a session, they would walk into the class and based on what they saw, would decide how to proceed. This was echoed by a student in the focus group discussion who agreed that when the instructor "walks into the room, [they] feel the vibe of what we're all feeling and sometimes [they] may go with the vibe, sometimes [they] do not go with the vibe. But I feel like that's a way to help us no matter what. If we're all really down maybe [they'll] start with something easy on the floor or maybe do the opposite, make us do a bunch of fun things and then we're all super high, so yeah, I feel like [they're] just really observant (…) of us individually but then us as a group [too]."

Banter. There was a sense of comfort and ease within the studio while students remained focused. This was a point a student shared with the rest of the class saying that they liked that they could have fun in class but also learn at the same time. Students knew

the instructor was not serious when they said something like, "I'll grade you harshly on it," and students would joke about writing reviews on Yelp for the Contemporary III class. However, even when there was a joke shared, students were ready to jump back into work with focused attention. One instance, the class had a laugh because of a comment the instructor made and to bring the class back, the instructor apologized saying "Sorry, I broke all your focus there!" When I asked the instructor if this environment might be possible in a Contemporary I or II class, they responded saying "by the time they [the students] get to three [Contemporary III] my expectation is they already have that discipline and focus, and I can have that more casualness to them. The twos [Contemporary II] just aren't quite there yet, some of them are, but others aren't.'"

Quantitative Data

  I started observations at this dance level but had difficulty collecting data in the first session. I only considered sessions 3 and 4 to calculate mean and range (in Table 9).

Table 9

Contemporary III – Cues Observed for Instructor B

	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Auditory Cue	6	-	11	11	11	0	0
Image Cue	7	-	14	9	11.5	5	3.53
Anatomical Cue	6	-	14	6	10	8	1.41
Rhythmic Cue	0	-	5	0	2.5	5	1.76
	S1	S2	S3	S4	Mean	Range	S.D.
Verbal Cue	6	-	47	32	39.5	15	17.34
Movement Cue	10	-	30	33	31.5	3	20.85

Note: S.D. = standard deviation

I paused data collection in session 2 and modified the observation form. It was in sessions 3 and 4 that I settled on a consistent observational sheet to collect quantitative data.

<div align="center">Comparison of Levels I, II and III</div>

Through observations within beginning, intermediate and advanced contemporary dance levels, this research aimed to investigate what, if any, differences exist in instructional strategies across the three levels. Based on the three contemporary dance levels observed, comparing instruction across the three levels was challenging given that each instructor had different experiences in dance which in turn influenced their teaching style. Table 10 lists the themes that emerged based on observations across the three levels.

Table 10

Emergent Themes Across Levels

	Contemporary I	Contemporary II	Contemporary III
Instructor A	Breaking down the movement Anatomical Information Context (Dance History) Hierarchy Classroom Etiquette	Camaraderie and Hierarchy Feeling the Movement and Technique Change in Movement Facing Feedback Exercises Instructor Movement Music	
Instructor B		Setting the Stage Movement Demonstration Opportunities for Students to Observe and Articulate Feedback Encouragement Student Input Responsibility Choreographic Work	Movement Demonstration Feedback Student Input and Reflection Artistry and Technique Improvisation Banter

Despite similarities in how each instructor taught at two different levels, there were subtle differences in how they conducted themselves within those levels, what they expected of students at different levels and what they believed each level needed in class.

Comparison between Contemporary I and II with Instructor A

Given that observations occurred during the first part of the semester, time dedicated to discussions on anatomy or dance history were significant in the beginning dance level. The instructor spent considerable time deconstructing movement for Contemporary I students compared to the Contemporary II students. There was also a stark difference in the length of movement combinations with intermediate students offered longer combinations that moved in different directions and levels. Additionally, apart from the technical aspects of executing the movement, more was asked of intermediate students in terms of feeling the movement.

Related to anatomical information, intermediate students were offered input while executing an exercise or phrase. With beginning students, the instructor began with a discussion on anatomy after which students were taken through an exercise and eventually a phrase where information from the discussion was reiterated in instruction and as feedback.

In contrast with the beginning dance class where the instructor occasionally had to intervene in matters concerning how students conducted themselves in class, this was never the case with intermediate students who knew the etiquette and codes followed within a dance class.

Comparison between Contemporary II and III with Instructor B

In terms of movement phrases students were offered, Instructor B often taught the same phrases to both levels but would occasionally offer advanced students more challenging phrases. However, the advanced class required less time to work on technical aspects and would quickly move to dancing and interpretation compared to intermediate students. Concerning movement improvisations, advanced students would be asked to play with a new movement style after viewing a video, whereas intermediate students would use improvisation as a warmup. The instructor explained in the interview that beginning and intermediate students were likely to fall back on habitual movement patterns rather than play with a new movement quality or style.

While I anticipated more movement in the advanced level compared to the intermediate, I observed the contrary. Instructor B dedicated more time to discussion in the advanced level compared to the intermediate level. It was evident that these discussions resulted in a change in the way the majority of the advanced level students approached the same movement material. However, this was not the case with the intermediate level. Even though intermediate students were able to identify and articulate what changes they needed to make, a majority of them were not able to apply those changes to the movement material.

As to class structure, while not serious, the intermediate class atmosphere had a formality in that there was always a structure followed in feedback or discussions. On the other hand, advanced students would spontaneously offer specific discussion points or reflection and both the instructor and students were able to transition seamlessly between movements, feedback, discussions and banter.

In both intermediate and advanced levels, the instructor seemed focused on artistry rather than technique. While it was apparent that feedback was related to the mechanics of the movement with intermediate students, the focus was still on getting students to dance. With Contemporary III, however, in the attempt to help students increase their range in expression, feedback was related to interpretation.

Background of Instructors

During their interviews, the instructors shared information about their upbringing and the influences in their lives that shaped their careers and how they approach their roles as dance educators. The extent of their years of teaching experience also differed by several years. These factors surely impacted how they designed and taught their classes and how they communicated cues and feedback with their students (Alaways, 2020; Hackney, 2002). The following backgrounds of the two instructors are offered as considerations that help to inform the overall findings of this study.

Instructor A

Having had their mother teach dance (primarily modern inspired by Martha Graham), this instructor began dancing at the age of six. After a hockey injury in high school, the instructor relied on dance to recuperate. It was around this time that they seriously got into dancing and had many opportunities to teach dance. Apart from this, working as a camp counselor also influenced their teaching. The instructor majored in dance at university where apart from working on choreography, they took a course in Teaching Theories. As part of the dance curriculum, the instructor worked with elementary school students, gaining experience in creating lesson plans. They are

currently pursuing an MFA in dance and teach various styles at multiple studios, as well as undergraduate dance courses as a graduate assistant.

Instructor B

During their junior year of college, the instructor first encountered dance, despite primarily training in sports as a child. While they did not enjoy the competitive aspect of sports, they found that dance had similarities in terms of the sense of routine and discipline involved in sports. After gaining extensive performance experience, they pursued a graduate degree in dance and where they received practical experience in teaching and choreography, and training in kinesiology, dance history and pedagogy. Currently, they teach multiple dance styles and are involved in choreographing numerous dance pieces and theater productions each semester as tenured faculty member at the university.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

This purpose of this research was to identify differences in pedagogical instruction provided to beginning, intermediate, and advanced contemporary dance students in a four-year BS/BFA dance program in a mid-sized, midwestern university in the United States. The main research question was, What differences exist, if any, in instructional design and techniques and instructor feedback related to student participation in beginning, intermediate, and advanced dance classes?

Through classroom observations, instructor interviews and student focus group sessions, some common themes and differences emerged related to how instruction was provided at the three levels. The classroom observations provide an opportunity to explore how instructors communicated movement material to students while the interviews gave insight into instructor backgrounds and how this influenced their teaching strategies. Moreover, the interviews provided an opportunity to understand the rationale behind certain strategies observed in the classroom. Focus group sessions with students were helpful in deciphering how students processed the information they received in the classroom.

The findings derived from the classroom observations, instructor interviews, and student focus groups across the three dance levels were provided in detail in Chapter IV. This Chapter V will present a summary of the findings including the themes that emerged, a compilation of the quantitative data, a comparison across the dance levels, and support of the findings from the literature presented in previous chapters. Following the summary, this chapter will discuss limitations to the study that were unplanned or

unforeseen aspects that impacted or may have impacted the findings. Next, implications for practice will be identified that are derived from the findings or the literature or a combination of both. Finally, recommendations for further research will be offered.

Summary of Findings

Themes Identified

Contemporary I – Instructor A. One of the major themes observed with Instructor A teaching Contemporary I was how movement was deconstructed for students. While some students thought they were executing a movement, that was not necessarily the case and the instructor felt it was necessary to intervene to help students execute the movement phrases. Apart from movement demonstrations and verbal input, movement deconstruction was through the addition of anatomical input or in the form of feedback. It is important to note that a discussion on anatomy preceded movement execution within Contemporary I.

Not all students were aware of etiquette to follow within the dance studio and the instructor had to find ways to instill rigor and focus in class. While recognizing that there was a difference between the instructor and students, a student mentioned that they appreciated the instructor mentioning that there was no hierarchy in the dance class.

Contemporary II - Instructor A. With the Contemporary II class, the hierarchy dissipated and there was mutual respect between instructor and student and their relationship was that of colleagues. Given that most students could execute the movement phrases, the instructor could quickly shift focus on getting students to feel the movement internally rather than delve into how a movement looked from the outside. Apart from offering verbal and proprioceptive feedback, the class went through conditioning

exercises to build strength and they were asked to verbalize the anatomical information

they received as they executed a phrase. Additionally, the instructor devised dance

exercises that emphasized certain technical aspects that could be applied to the movement

phrase. Once students had an idea of the movement phrase, the instructor would ask the

class to execute the phrase facing the back of the studio, or a side wall. A student

mentioned that they appreciated this change in movement facing and the variety of music

the instructor brought into class.

Within this Contemporary dance level, anatomical input was integrated into

feedback as students executed movement phrases. In addition, the instructor offered

images with the aim of getting students to feel the movement rather than perform the

movement.

Contemporary II - Instructor B. Instructor B was skilled at setting the protocols

within the dance studio for the Contemporary II students. These were related to

expectations, warming up before class or how students should approach exercises, and

feedback. The majority of feedback students received was from peers. This gave students

opportunities to observe, exposing them to different movement styles and articulating

observations related to technical aspects of dance. Usually, instructor feedback was

offered to the whole class rather than to individual students. Collaboration between peers

was guided by specific questions that helped student reflection. While the instructor

provided honest feedback, it was non-judgmental, and encouraging, asking students to

take ownership of their learning within the dance studio.

Contemporary III – Instructor B. With Contemporary III students, it was

evident that the class moved at a quicker pace compared to Contemporary II. Students

picked new movement material with ease, were reflective and articulate in terms of what they needed to do. The instructor's contribution to class was to provide material that challenged students but also to provide input that helped students refine the way they interpreted and expressed themselves through movement. This was done using varying modes such as film, listening to music, asking students for inputs related to imagery. Improvisation sessions at this level required students to play with new movement qualities. Additionally, mini-interventions in terms of discussions and exercises focusing on grounding and releasing muscles helped improve the quality of movement.

Within the Contemporary III level, the instructor's role was that of a participant/facilitator in class, with students contributing to discussions spontaneously.

Quantitative Data

Consistent with Sims and Erwin's (2012) observation, both instructors relied on movement demos and verbal instructions. Related to the cues (verbal or movement signals) offered, as indicated in Chapter IV and on Tables 11 and 12 on the next page, the difference observed between levels was minimal.

Contemporary I and II taught by Instructor A. As observed on Table 11 on the next page, Instructor A offered more cues to the intermediate level compared to the beginning level. However, there was considerable information given to students during discussions (which I did not factor since I recorded cues offered during movement demonstrations).

Table 11

Comparison Between Number of Cues Offered to Level I and II by Instructor A

	Contemporary I Mean (S.D.)	Contemporary II Mean (S.D.)
Auditory Cue	5.5 (3.69)	5.25 (2.5)
Image Cue	7.75 (2.50)	9.75 (3.86)
Anatomical Cue	5.5 (.58)	7.25 (4.11)
Rhythmic Cue	4.25 (1.89)	3.25 (2.98)
	Contemporary I Mean (S.D.)	Contemporary II Mean (S.D.)
Verbal Cue	22.5 (7.07)	20 (13.39)
Movement Cue	26.75 (12.81)	34.25 (11.44)

Note: S.D. = standard deviation

Contemporary II and III taught by Instructor B. Instructor B offered more cues to the advanced level compared to the intermediate level. Rather than cues on how a movement could be executed, these cues were related to how the movement could be interpreted.

Table 12

Comparison Between Number of Cues Offered to Level II and III by Instructor B

	Contemporary II Mean (S.D.)	Contemporary III Mean (S.D.)
Auditory Cue	6 (3.74)	11 (0)
Image Cue	6.75 (5.61)	11.5 (3.53)
Anatomical Cue	4.25 (4.19)	10 (1.41)
Rhythmic Cue	2.5 (1.91)	2.5 (1.76)
	Contemporary II Mean (S.D.)	Contemporary III Mean (S.D.)
Verbal Cue	24.5 (10.63)	39.5 (17.34)
Movement Cue	22.5 (12.79)	31.5 (20.85)

Note: S.D. = standard deviation

Differences Across Levels

Movement Demonstrations. With Contemporary I, Instructor A would spend significant time deconstructing movement while they would typically only demonstrate movement phrases for Contemporary II. Similarly, Instructor B would demonstrate the phrase for Contemporary II students a few times giving auditory or image cues, while with Contemporary III, they would demonstrate the phrase mostly with verbal or movement cues, leaving out other cues that provided lyrical or expressive elements. Both instructors spent less time demonstrating movement phrases at the higher level of the contemporary dance class they taught at.

Focus on The Internal versus External. With Contemporary I, the instructor had to help students execute the movement phrase focusing on how movements looked externally. With Contemporary II, both instructors focused on the dancing, on getting students to start to feel the movement and try to connect to the body. Contemporary III students could execute and feel the movement. Instructor B provided input to help Contemporary III students interpret and express through the movement, taking how a movement felt internally and projecting this feeling outward, focusing on the external expression and artistry.

In student reflection, students of Contemporary II were more preoccupied with the technical aspects of dance compared to Contemporary III who focused on the feeling of movement and how they chose to express this feeling. Moreover, compared to Contemporary II students, Contemporary III students picked up the technical aspects of the movement phrases with ease and would very quickly move on to interpretation and

expression. This relates to Hackney's (2002) observation of the link between "Inner Connectivity with Outer Expressivity" (p. 36).

Feedback. Overall, the higher the level of the dance class, feedback shifted from the more obvious technical aspects in executing movements to the more nuanced aspects related to expression and interpretation. Moreover, as the levels increased, I observed that students were able to incorporate feedback into movement phrases. With Contemporary I, this involved being able to execute the dance phrase. While Contemporary II students were able to articulate what they needed to do technically, for the majority of the class, this did not necessarily translate to executing this knowledge in the movement phrase. However, the majority of Contemporary III students were able to execute the movement phrase incorporating the feedback they received.

Classroom Etiquette. In terms of student behavior in the dance class and how the dance class was set up, it was evident that Contemporary I and II needed more structures compared to Contemporary III. Contemporary I needed reminders related to dance studio etiquette while Contemporary II had structures guiding discussions, movement phrases and improvisations. With Contemporary III, students and the instructor intervened related to topics in dance as well as lighthearted moments that seamlessly transitioned into focused dancing.

Opportunities for Improvisations. Within the four Contemporary I sessions I observed, students did not have opportunities to improvise. Instructor B offered improvisation opportunities to Contemporary II students as they warmed up for class or through mirroring exercises, whereas Contemporary III was asked to improvise with new qualities of movement that they were briefly exposed to via video.

Support from the Literature

There were some findings derived from classroom observations, instructor interviews, or student focus groups, or a combination thereof, that are supported by the literature cited in Chapter I and II. This section offers a discussion that integrates the findings with some of those sources.

 Consistent with the view that teachers fall into habits of how they were taught (McCarthy-Brown, 2017), both instructors spoke candidly of activities borrowed from classes they were part of. However, this borrowing was done in a reflective manner. As substantiated by Shapiro (1998), both instructors were able to open space for self and student reflection. This was apparent during the interviews, as well as within their respective classes.

Andrzejewski's (2009) rationale in how the dance teacher identity was inextricably linked to the instructor's personal and dancer identities was evident. Instructor A was engaged in performance, had just completed a BFA and was pursuing an MFA in dance during the time of this study. Their focus in class was on the body, helping students zoom in on the technical aspects of how the body functioned while dancing. Instructor B's past performance experiences and ongoing choreographic practice had a significant impact on the dance class being facilitated as perhaps a rehearsal space might be. This instructor tended to emphasize the aspects of expression and interpretation in dance, while giving students a sense of what working as a professional dancer might entail.

Beginning, intermediate, and advanced dancers had different needs in terms of instruction and discernable differences were identified in instruction offered at the three

levels. Similar to Erkert's (2003) observation, given that students were able to pick up movement phrases with greater ease at the higher levels, the pace of the class quickened. Related to the assertion by Kirschner et al. (2006), that beginner learners need more structure compared to advanced learners, based on classroom observations, rules and protocols within the dance space were not articulated as much by instructors within the higher levels they taught at. Related to improvisations which demanded creativity and spontaneity on the part of learners, Contemporary II students had bigger constraints whereas the improvisation structure offered at the Contemporary III level was more open. Moreover, with increasing levels, learners were more articulate given that they had greater awareness of their needs and struggles in relation to dance, and this in turn helped them take up more responsibility for individual work.

The experiential nature of the dance class was evident in the kind of movement material students were provided. Both instructors and all students referred to how the movement material was challenging which according to the Association for Experiential Education is one of the principles of experiential education. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) asserted that challenge needed to match skill for any activity to be engaging. This challenge was in the form of a goal that was complex enough that it required that learners exerted effort. However, learners also had to be equipped with the necessary skills to attain the goal.

Students were aware of the progress they had made in dance, and this refers to continuity advocated by Dewey (1938/1997). Interestingly, both instructors mentioned this recognition of progress by students to be one of their aims. The loop of experiencing new movement, reflecting on it, conceptualizing it and finally applying the concepts by

way of action is reminiscent of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984/2015). Opportunities for repetitions were available but these were interspersed with feedback. Feedback either came from the instructor, peers or resulted from self-reflection via question prompts or written assignments. The reflective aspect is a crucial principle of experiential education. At times, there were small interventions in terms of exercises or drills that would reinforce an aspect of the feedback. Additionally, instructors were careful to highlight no more than two points during feedback. This focused student attention as they would attempt to incorporate feedback points in movement. Both instructors were mindful of individual student differences and students had agency to contribute their ideas as well as modify movement material to suit their bodies. Students' mindfulness, and awareness of their bodies was proof of the space for learning and growth within the dance class, that are also seminal tenets of experiential learning.

Limitations

This study was designed to analyze instruction in three levels of contemporary dance class at a mid-sized university. The study was limited to classes taught by only two instructors over the first half of a single university semester. Given that only four sessions at each contemporary dance level were observed, this may not accurately represent the full range of activities that occur within a dance class over the course of an entire semester. The findings are limited, therefore, to only the particular setting and context within which the study took place and may not be transferrable to other similar situations.

Additionally, despite the aim being the comparison of instruction across the three levels, this proved difficult. Comparing classes taught by different instructors introduced

too many confounding variables for useful comparison. Given that two different instructors taught the beginning and the advanced contemporary dance class, and both instructors taught the intermediate class, it seemed beneficial to compare and contrast instructional strategies for each instructor within their own dance levels rather than comparing across the three levels.

Further limitations were related to focus group discussions. Only two students from each of the levels participated, which limited the student perspective. Apart from the beginning level students who were taking their first dance course at university, the intermediate and advanced level students had taken at least three semesters of dance classes prior to this study, which may have influenced the depth of their insights into the instruction they received.

Class sizes were also very different, which might have affected instructional strategies used. While both beginning and advanced levels had no more than ten students each, the energy within the beginning dance class was palpably quieter and more subdued compared to the advanced dance class. The intermediate level classes had approximately twice as many students as the advanced class and yet, the energy in both these levels was comparable, characterized by a sense of enjoyment in engaging in the dance activities proposed.

Having an additional researcher involved in the classroom observations in this study would have been holistically beneficial. Another set of eyes would have helped to verify or eliminate the quantitative data related to cues offered by the instructor, which would have strengthened the findings overall. Furthermore, another researcher would have provided a useful opportunity to distinguish characteristics of specific cues. Lastly,

because there was not an additional researcher, it was not possible to calculate inter-rater reliability since I was the sole observer.

Implications for Practice

Although this study had limitations in terms of number of instructors, small focus group sizes, and classroom observations over only the first half of a semester long course, some implications for practice emerged that would be helpful for dance instructors, and especially so for newer instructors. The following list provides ideas that were evident in the research literature, and confirmed as valuable by the students in focus groups, by student responses in the classrooms, and by the instructors themselves.

- Spending time to set up the tone related to general behavioral expectations in class, or specific to an activity.

- Offering activities based on reading the energy within the dance class (also mentioned by Erkert, 2003).

- Deconstruct movements and present smaller phrases for beginning levels (also supported by Hackney, 2002).

- Finding a balance between offering challenging movements and those that are fun to execute (also underlined by Chavasse, 2015).

- As observed in the findings and supported by Chen and Rovengo (2000), exposing students to varying ways of moving - through embodiment, viewing videos or peers in class, or interpreting movements to different kinds of music.

- Offering specific prompts as students observe peer performance and provide peer feedback.

- Offering space for individual and group reflection in class.

- Being intentional about encouraging students' voices and increasing their agency.

- Taking time for self-reflection as an instructor; detecting hierarchy and biases that may exist in instruction and communicating pedagogic decisions to students (as suggested by Dragon, 2015).

Recommendations for Future Research

The research findings might be more effective if one could observe the same instructor across all three dance levels. Moreover, data collected over the course of an entire semester might provide deeper insight into the varying instructional strategies used to offer movement material to students. Additionally, it would be interesting to compare the number of cues offered to teach the same phrase (sequence of movements), by the same instructor, across the three levels. If one monitored the time taken to demonstrate the phrase, and the kind of instructor interventions to improve student performances, one might be able to compare the pace of the class at each level.

While this study was restricted to the contemporary dance class, studying instruction across levels in different dance forms would also be informative. Dance forms could dictate certain teaching strategies, however, the research study could examine if certain consistent themes emerge across forms, based on levels.

Conducting studies such as these with several instructors over time could begin to establish accepted standards of best practices that might aid dance instructors in better articulating the differences between dance levels. Continued research could also establish accepted standards of what defines a beginning, intermediate, and advanced level contemporary dancer.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form for Instructors

Dear (NAME),

My name is Aditi Bheda. I am a graduate student in the MS Experiential Education program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I would like to conduct research for my thesis in your Contemporary (I and II) Dance Classes under the supervision of my advisor from the Department of Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services, Dr. Julie Carlson. The main focus of this project is to compare instructor teaching approaches based on the level of the dance course offered within the university setting, and you are invited to participate in the study

Should you agree to participate, I'd like to observe your Contemporary Dance classes (I and II) and take notes on the general class structure, the instructions provided as well as the behavior of participating student/students in your class (observations will start 10 minutes before the commencement of the dance class and will continue to 10 minutes after the termination of the class). These observations will occur between January and April 2023. I will potentially conduct a focus groups session with some of your students.

Before I begin these observations and after I observe a total of 10 sessions between the two Contemporary dance Classes (I and II) that you lead, I'd like to interview you to get your perspectives on dance pedagogy and dance instruction. The two interview sessions will be arranged in person at a private location on the MNSU campus (or if needed, held virtually) and should last no more than 90 minutes each. The class observations and interview sessions will be voice recorded for analysis purposes only, and recordings will be deleted after the research is complete.

Your participation is totally voluntary. If at any time during the interviews, or observations, you decide that you would prefer not to answer a question or discontinue the study completely, you are free to do so.

The risks you will encounter as a participant in this research are not more than those experienced in your everyday life or those which you normally would experience when facilitating a contemporary dance class. There will be no penalty should you choose to refuse or discontinue participation. There are no direct benefits to participating in the research.

The only identified risk associated with your involvement in this study is the possibility that your participation could be discovered by other people, including faculty and staff in your school. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. You can stop participating by telling/contacting me (the student researcher), if you no longer want to be in the study.

INITIALS:

All your answers will be kept confidential. Your name will not be recorded on any of the data collected in this study. Instead, your identity will be recorded as the "The Instructor". Student participants' names will not be on the data forms either. In the thesis report, pseudonyms will be used for you and your students who participate in the study. Interview audio recordings and other digital data will be kept on a password protected flashdrive stored in a secured location and deleted after the conclusion of the study. Hard copies of collected data will be kept in a locked, secure location and shredded after the conclusion of the study. All consent forms will be kept for three years in a locked filling cabinet in a secured office at Minnesota State University, Mankato, after which time they will be shredded.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me, Aditi Bheda, in person, or at aditi.bheda@mnsu.edu or (507) 520-4018. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Carlson, at julie.carlson@mnsu.edu, or (507) 389-5441. If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board at (507) 389-1242.

Enclosed is a copy of this consent form for you to keep. If you are willing to participate in this study, please initial the previous pages and sign this page of the form and return it to me. Your signature indicates that you have read the information above and willingly agree to participate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Your Name (printed) _____

Your Signature _____ Date _____
Minnesota State University, Mankato

IRB # 1987126

APPENDIX B

Consent Form for Students

PURPOSE

You are invited to participate in a research project that explores the differences in instruction provided in a beginner, an intermediate and an advanced contemporary dance class. The main focus of this project is to compare pedagogic approaches and instructions based on the level of dance course offered within the university setting.

This research is a part of a master's thesis in the department of Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The research is conducted by Aditi Bheda under the guidance of Professor Julie Carlson in the Masters of Experiential Education Program.

PROCEDURE

If you choose to participate in the study, your participation in the contemporary dance class will be observed 10 minutes before the commencement of the dance class to 10 minutes after the class has ended. These observations will occur between January and April 2023. Should you choose not to participate in this study, the researcher will ensure they do not collect data relevant to your actions within the dance class. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

You might potentially be invited to participate in a focus group discussion that will last no more than 90 minutes with up to 5 other dance students. Discussion questions will be based on your experiences as a dancer within the context of the contemporary dance class, as well as your perceptions related to instructions offered in dance class. Indicating your interest to participate in the focus group discussion is available at the end of this form.

The focus group sessions will be audio or video recorded for analysis purposes only, and recordings will be deleted after the research is complete. In person focus group sessions will be held in a private location on campus at MNSU Mankato. If a focus group session is conducted via Zoom, participants will be asked to participate from a private location. You will never be required to provide personal information. Identifying information such as your name will not be included in publications and presentations, a pseudonym will be used.

RISKS & CONFIDENTIALITY

The risks you will encounter as a participant in this research are not more than those experienced in your everyday life or those which you normally would experience when participating in a contemporary dance class. If, at any point, you feel discomfort in participating in the study or in discussing your perceptions about how you receive instructions within the dance class, you are free to discontinue your participation at any time. There will be no penalty should you choose to refuse or discontinue participation. There are no direct benefits to participating in the research.

INITIALS:

Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits. Individuals may discontinue participation at any time before the data collection is complete. To discontinue, participants may contact the student researcher by email or in person.

You have a right to a copy of this form. Collected forms will be kept in the principal investigator's locked office. Interview audio recordings and other digital data will be kept on a password protected flashdrive stored in a secured location and deleted after the conclusion of the study. Hard copies of collected data will be kept in a locked, secure location and shredded after the conclusion of the study. All consent forms will be kept for three years in a locked filling cabinet in a secured office at Minnesota State University, Mankato, after which time they will be shredded.

If you have any questions about this research, you can contact the student researcher, Aditi Bheda at aditi.bheda@mnsu.edu or 507-520-4018. You can also contact Dr. Julie Carlson at julie.carlson@mnsu.edu.

If you have any questions about participants' rights and for research-related injuries, please contact the Administrator of the Institutional Review Board, at 507-389-1242.

By signing this form (please check all the relevant boxes), you indicate that you are at least 18 years of age and that …

☐ you do not wish to participate in this research (if you choose not to participate, you don't need to print your name or sign this form. Simply tick this box and return the form).

☐ you consent to participate in this research by being observed within the context of the contemporary dance class
Please print your full name:_____.

☐ you consent to participate in a focus group discussion with a select group of students that will be voice/video recorded. Indicate your interest in a focus group discussion by providing your email address:
_____)

Participant Signature:

Date:
IRB # 1987126

APPENDIX C

Classroom Observation Form

Tally Marks		Tally Marks
	Verbal Cue	
	Movement Cue	
	Auditory Cue	
	Anatomical Cue	
	Image Cue	
	Rhythmic Cue	
0 to 5 minutes of class.	Field Notes 5 to 10 minutes of class.	