

Lesley University

DigitalCommons@Lesley

Expressive Therapies Capstone Theses

Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences
(GSASS)

Spring 5-16-2020

Dance/Movement Therapy and its Implications in a Studio-Based Dance Program: A Community Engagement Project

Akeila Sharp
asharp@lesley.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_theses



Part of the [Child Psychology Commons](#), [Community Psychology Commons](#), [Dance Commons](#), and the [Dance Movement Therapy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sharp, Akeila, "Dance/Movement Therapy and its Implications in a Studio-Based Dance Program: A Community Engagement Project" (2020). *Expressive Therapies Capstone Theses*. 236.
https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_theses/236

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Arts and Social Sciences (GSASS) at DigitalCommons@Lesley. It has been accepted for inclusion in Expressive Therapies Capstone Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Lesley. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lesley.edu, cvrattos@lesley.edu.

Running Head: DMT IN A STUDIO DANCE PROGRAM

Dance/Movement Therapy and its Implications in a Studio-Based

Dance Program: A Community Engagement Project

Capstone Thesis

Lesley University

May 16, 2020

Akeila Sharp

Specialization: Dance Movement Therapy

Thesis Instructor: Elizabeth Kellogg, PHD

Abstract

Adolescent females often struggle with emotional regulation, developing relationships, and poor body image. Research indicates that taking dance classes or participating in dance movement therapy sessions can be an effective technique to improve in these areas. However, there is limited research on the use of both in one setting. Therefore, this capstone explored the impacts of dance on adolescent females and the implications of dance/movement therapy (DMT) in a studio-based dance program. The objective of this project was to examine how restructuring a dance class using DMT interventions could improve problem areas such as low self-esteem, lack of communication skills, and negative peer relationships. The method was conducted as a community engagement project with participants ages 10-18. They engaged in five weekly dance classes at a studio in central Florida. The classes consisted of dance movement therapy exercises and traditional dance techniques. Dance was used to increase the technique of the young dancers, while dance movement therapy interventions such as Laban Movement Analysis, improvisation, and imagery were used to explore areas including emotional regulation and body awareness. Observations were recorded through the use of journaling, art work, and movement charts. The results show a shift in the dancer's communication with one another, along with a more positive attitude towards moving in class. Dancers also developed a greater sense of self and a deeper connection with their bodies. Thus, indicating that when combined DMT and dance technique are beneficial to the physical, cognitive, and social growth of adolescents.

Keywords: adolescence, self-esteem, confidence, Dance/movement therapy (DMT), dance curriculum

Dance/Movement Therapy and its Implications in a Studio-Based Dance Program:
A Community Engagement Project

Introduction

“I feel that the essence of dance is the expression of man-the landscape of his soul. I hope that every dance I do reveals something of myself or some wonderful thing a human can be.”

-Martha Graham

Dance acts as an instrument by which the creative, expressive, and emotional potential can be drawn out and realized within individuals. Through the provided physical, social, and emotional benefits, dancers have the opportunity to gain self-confidence, improve discipline, strengthen cognitive performance, and develop social skills (Levy, 2005). Dance classes not only provide a fun time for youth, it also allows individuals to regain a connection between the mind and the body. Dance courses provide a safe haven for children and adolescents by keeping them off the streets and away from violence. For many underprivileged youth, dance allows them to step away from the stressors of their everyday lives. Children impacted by financial struggles, living in single family homes, suffering from low self-esteem, and lacking the ability to cope with their surroundings are able to separate themselves from their troubles while they dance (Nguyen, 2014).

Through my own experiences as a dancer and dance instructor, I have noticed first-hand the impacts of dance on children and adolescents. I have worked with youth who begin a dance season, shy and not saying a word in class, to ending the season, wanting to stand in the front of class and lead warm-ups. I have watched children make friends and gain support systems. However, it was not until I began to study dance/movement therapy (DMT), that I truly understood the deeper impact that dance has on the mind, body, and soul.

Dance/movement therapy is defined as “the use of movement as a healing tool, focused on the idea that body movements reflect the inner emotions and when brought awareness to, can promote a change in mental, physical, and emotional health” (Levy, 2005, p.1). Three main focuses of DMT are: the acceptance of deeper emotions, development of imagination, and body wellness (ADTA, 2014).

Reflecting on the changes in emotional awareness that can be developed using dance movement therapy, I realized that, like the adolescents I counsel at a residential center, my dancers have trouble with adjusting to being adolescents. They struggle to understand the changes of their bodies, seek approval from peers, and have a hard time grasping “who they are.” Since, traditional dance classes follow similar goals as DMT sessions such as improving the physical health of dancers, encouraging creativity and independence, and developing leadership and teamwork; I felt that using DMT with dancers could illicit similar responses to a therapeutic setting.

Therefore, this project explored the impacts of incorporating DMT techniques into a dance curriculum. The intent was to gain insight into how blending “traditional” dance techniques with DMT techniques could result in a shift in the dancers I teach. My goal was to discover how to restructure a dance program to nurture adolescent girls and help them uncover a deeper understanding of “self” as they develop as dancers. Ideally, the dancers would develop body-awareness, gain confidence, increase communication skills, decrease low self-esteem, build positive peer relationships, and discover personal identity. The concluding objective of this project was to observe the implications of the method, examine the challenges, and note the advantages; in hopes of developing a creative arts therapy program for the dance studio where I work.

I anticipate that this research will answer the question of whether DMT can be incorporated into the dance program. This will be done by examining literature that supports the objective and aids in the creation of a five-part class that combines dance/movement therapy and traditional dance technique. Then, results will be presented to analyze the findings. Finally, the project will be summarized, and future implications will be discussed.

Literature Review

The following section will examine resources that provide support for the impacts of dance programs for adolescents. The research will also aid in the development of a method for a community-based dance program that incorporates DMT techniques to foster a sense of community, increase personal strength and self-esteem, decrease negative body image, and provide a safe space to address power and oppression.

Adolescence Stage of Development

Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) defined adolescence as the “transitional time between the ages of 10-19,” resulting in psychological, social, and moral changes within a young person. This developmental stage can be filled with frequent social conflicts, changes in behavior, and increased mood disruptions (Csikszentmihayi, 2020). During this era, youth begin to separate from their parents, establish personal morals, and start to make choices that will impact their adulthood (Beardall, 2017).

It is a challenging time in which “there is a required coordinated set of expectations about oneself and others and well integrated social and emotional skills for handling complex life situations, especially when under emotional pressure” (Elias et al. 1997, p. 40). Adolescents who fail to cope with external stressors often exhibit higher levels of stress which coincide with low-self-esteem and lack of social skills. An increase in external stressors, puts adolescents at a

higher risk for depression and the decline of “play” hinders the development of intrinsic capabilities and the inability to develop coping skills (Gray, 2011 as cited in Demesa-Simpson, 2014).

Therefore, it is important for youth to be supported as they are trying to bridge the gap between childhood and adulthood (Mancini, 2018). Successful support and nurturing of adolescents will allow them to gain resilience, become more aware of their personal strengths and weaknesses, and develop a stronger sense of identity.

Impacts of Dance on Adolescents

Dance is its own language that provides a way for people to express who they are (Ferris, 2008). According to Nguyen (2014), dance training can provide positive impacts for dancers during life adjustment issues. In relation to this proposed thesis, life adjustment issues are being considered during the adolescent developmental stage. During this time, adolescents are beginning to think more logically about their choices, developing personal moral standards, and learning to accept the views and opinions of others. Challenges such as lack of confidence, the desire to fit in, conflicts with parents, and poor decision making may occur.

However, participating in dance classes may strengthen an individual's perception of their bodies, act as an outlet for energy release, increase the understanding of emotions, and provide a safe space for communication and connection. Dance classes keep youth off the streets and away from negative influences; along with fostering positive adjustment and be able to handle the challenges of everyday life (Zichi, 2015).

A study conducted by Beaulac, Kristijansson, and Calhoun (2011), explored the impacts of hip-hop dance on the well-being of disadvantaged youth in Canada. The study focused on the implementation of a hip-hop dance class in a community center to promote well-being, openness

to explore movement, and positive relationship building. Through the use of surveys and participant feedback results were collected showing that hip-hop dance classes increase dance skills and promote positive behavior. The researchers concluded that children who participate in dance classes are able to develop self-confidence and increase self-image over time. The successful use of hip hop as an intervention for emotional well-being and social growth in an underprivileged neighborhood supports the theory that all forms of dance can be therapeutic.

Dance as Therapy

In 2014, Koch, Kunz, Lykou, and Cruz examined the therapeutic use of dance as a method to strengthen the developmental growth of individuals. The article focused on the meta-analysis of 22 studies that examined the impacts of creative movement and dance. The results supported DMT as a meaningful evidence-based intervention for psychological outcomes. They concluded that DMT was useful in addressing symptoms associated with anxiety, depression, stress, body image, and self-esteem.

Dance/movement therapy (DMT) is defined as “the psychotherapeutic use of movement to integrate emotional, cognitive, social, and physical aspects of an individual (American Dance Therapy Association, 2014). Dance movement therapy can function as an outlet for unconscious memories to come forward. Through the use of movement, people are able to let go of their cognitive defenses and attune to their bodies sensations and needs (Beardall, 2017). Beardall (2017) stated “our earliest memories are stored in our bodies and we attune and connect through our bodies” (p.476). When the mind and body are reunified as a working whole, individuals are able to regain body awareness, gain understanding about bodily responses to environmental triggers, and learn to understand the meanings behind their behaviors (Merrill, 2011).

They become more whole as the attention is on both the outer physical state and the inner emotional state. They start at their own level of need and over time progress to an extension of self as they work with others. Through the guidance of the therapist, individuals are able to seek self-discovery. Similar to the way dance teachers nurture and support the dancer, the therapist creates a “safe container” for the growth of the client (Dale-Anderson, 1979).

DMT Pioneers

Many of the pioneers of DMT began their work as dance teachers. They often used DMT techniques within their dance practice. In my method I incorporated the styles of Marian Chace, Blanche Evan, and Trudi Schoop because I felt connected to their various techniques. As a result, I created a technique that was unique to me as both a dance/movement therapist and dance teacher. The technique was used to ensure DMT was used effectively within the dance class.

Marian Chace. Chace started off as a dancer and performer before beginning her work as a DMT. Her contributions to the field are centered around dance as a means of communication, expression, and interaction. Chace believed that through the observation of nonverbal movement, she could understand the needs of clients and emphasize with them as people. Thus, helping them gain support and find satisfaction in their abilities (Levy, 2005). She wanted her clients to know that they were heard, seen, and accepted through movement (Ferris, 2008). Her sessions were run on the principle that the structure and use of “dance” all depended on the needs of the individuals and the goals of the leader. Thus, allowing dance to be either fun, therapeutic, or both at the same time.

Blanche Evan. Evan’s also began her career as a dancer and choreographer. According to Levy (2005), Evan’s felt that once a child was taught to move and sense their body, then they were better equipped to explore expression. Overall, she felt that dance was the natural tool that

would allow the mind and body to reunite. She started sessions off with a physical warm up to help release tension within the body and focused on the relationship between client and therapist to help clients learn to co-lead through the development of positive relationships (Ferris, 2008). This is similar to the way dance teachers often focus on guiding students to their goals through building positive supportive relationships. As well as the way they start class with a warm-up to help dancers warm the muscles and decrease the risk of injury (Levy, 2005).

Trudi Schoop. Schoop used improvisation as a tool to improve the understanding of self and aid in positive self-reflection (Ingram, 2013). She believed that postures and movements of the body were outward reflections of inner feelings and that “who we are is reflected and manifested in the body” (Levy, 2005). She felt that this exploration created a stronger connection with one’s self that improved self-esteem. While the individual created their own movements, they were guided by the therapist/teacher resulting in confidence and independence.

DMT, Creative Movement, and Dance Courses

In her research, Robin Dale-Anderson (1979), asked the question “is technical dance training in itself therapeutic or is it necessary to link it with other elements such as client-therapist communication or group interactions to achieve therapeutic results?” (p.12). She stated, “the initial focus of dance is on endurance and technique and it is not until dancers are well trained that they are taught to become more attuned with their emotions” (1979, p.37). My approach to this project seeks to examine this idea, as I believe that technical dance has the ability to be therapeutic when combined with the goals and structure of a DMT session.

Teaching dance through a DMT lens changes the perspective of the instructor. Instructors use exercise, body language, and verbal tone more constructively when focusing on growing the inner being of the dancers and not just strengthening the technique. Thus, recognizing an

individual as a whole person and empowering them to contend with and think positively about themselves (Ryder, 2019).

Dance movement therapists can guide individuals through experiences using movement narratives (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009). Storytelling, movement, and drama games can facilitate creativity, enable exploration of feelings, and encourage children and adolescents to take up space. Thus, fostering leadership skills and reducing fear and feelings of inadequacy.

According to H.K. Victoria, “the creation of dance choreography out of psychological material for performance, transforms movement from simple performance to that of psychodynamic meaning. The dance goes beyond the “norm” to be about the external representation and metaphor of the nonverbal” (2012, p.170). Inferring that the transformation of the material occurs when the choreographer is able to develop awareness and meaning of the unconscious for others to see, move through, and experience in the conscious state. The product that is created generates emotions that are connected to the dancer. It is no longer simply moving but experiencing (Victoria, 2012). The leader, therapist, or teacher has a more focused approach to the group, in that the goal is about support of the inner being and encouragement through both verbal and nonverbal affirmations and feedback. The end concept is centered around the individual making sense and meaning of the movements rather than having the correct steps or skills (Zichi, 2015).

Using a method combining dance/movement therapy with community-based participatory research (a research style that allows individuals to provide insight on issues within their environment and supports unity through community bonding), Estella Thomas was able to gather data on the benefits of dance with adolescents as a means of developing personal identity, exploring race, and decreasing cultural biases (Thomas, 2015).

The study was conducted in a middle school with 8th grade girls. Thomas identified three reasons for creating the intervention: 1) to gain understanding about one's identity through narrative embodiment (the use of moving the body to tell a story); 2) to gather qualitative data from movement observation; and 3) to create an informative study to help the community better understand issues impacting it.

The research occurred over the course of 10 weeks and ended in a performance for the entire middle school that was co-created by the participants and the facilitator. The results showed the girls behavior and acceptance of self and others changed over the course of the experience. Thomas concluded that the use of movement was a positive resource for developing unity, personal growth, and acceptance of self in relation to gender norms. She stated, "in order for people to conceptualize the experiences of others, one must allow the individual to find their voice" (p.194). Thus, supporting the use of improvisation techniques in dance classes to foster the development of independence and social connections within adolescents.

This concept was also reflected by Melanie Ryder (2019). Ryder examined the use of dance/movement therapy within a dance program by restructuring the curriculum for a dance team that she taught. In doing so, she sought to build a stronger group dynamic through the incorporation of emotions within choreography. Ryder concluded that by participating in physical activity increased self-esteem in the dancers as evidenced by expansion of limbs and larger free gestures in movement. Ryder noted seeing dancers opening up and gaining confidence, bringing their own ideas to class, and increased bonding with peers. She stated, "if dancers are given the opportunities to understand themselves and develop their own identities in more dance classes, it will improve their self-esteem and performance qualities" (Ryder, 2019, p.26). When allowed to stop thinking about the need for "perfect" technique, dancers can focus

on what dance means on a deeper level. Therefore, learning to connect with their bodies and see dance as a way to explore and play.

DMT with Adolescents

People begin dancing before they start to walk, and children learn to move and use non-verbal skills to communicate with others at an early age (Levy, 2005). Yet, by the time they reach the adolescent developmental stage, they stir away from moving and playing. However, youth can rediscover the ability to connect with themselves through the use of DMT. DMT with adolescents often fosters the development of trust, creativity, individual expression, decreased anxiety, and a feeling of safety (Malchiodi, 2007). It allows individuals to connect with themselves and others, while increasing self-esteem, attunement, and empathy for others. Through movement youth can learn to engage with one another, develop the ability to be vulnerable, set and achieve goals, and build relationships.

According to Lessing and Fourie (2010), "...if DMT interventions are employed with the child's active and willing participation, the human body provides information. The body acts as a tool for expression and as an instrument for change" (p.299). When youth allow their bodies to lead, they are able to gain a greater sense of self, work through issues, and connect on a deeper level. Movement acts as a metaphor for other areas within the adolescent's life. Through movement, they are able to work through situations they feel "stuck" in, reflect on areas that will help them gain self-identity, connect experiences within their own lives with those of others, and expression of emotions which are otherwise hidden (Lessing & Fourie, 2010).

Effects of DMT on Adolescents

DMT provides an alternative therapy, which is beneficial when adolescents may not want to talk or even know how to talk about issues impacting them. Corteville (2009) examined the use of dance/movement therapy in a suburban high school. The study was conducted in order to help adolescent females deal with developing positive self-esteem, body image, and communication skills. Corteville (2009) backs up the research by including information on the history of DMT and its implications with relational issues, such as fostering openness, developing coping mechanisms to help individuals learn how to express feelings, and allows individuals to learn to be present and honest with themselves.

The intervention consisted of three 15-year-old high school females from varying economic backgrounds. Prior to beginning the intervention, girls were given a pretest created by using the concept of Morris Robinson's self-esteem scale. The test was given upon completion of the intervention to explore if DMT had impacted the response to each individual assessment. The intervention consisted of an hour of DMT over the course of eight weeks. The set-up of the group was as follows: warm-up, theme development, and closure (which included discussion and debriefing about each session).

Results were collected using the Morris Robinson self-esteem scale and surveys from the participants. Results showed that each girl individually had a better understanding of how to communicate with others, they learned to open up about issues that were bothering them and gained skills for self-motivation. Corteville concluded the study accomplished the goal of using alternative therapy techniques with adolescents dealing with self-esteem issues (Corteville, 2009). The use of DMT within this study provided adolescents the chance to learn non-verbal communication skills that are beneficial when they found it hard to verbally communicate. While

there were limitations, the results provide beginning research for further development and exploration for the use of DMT with adolescents.

In another study, Shuper-Engelhard (2013) conducted a research study with the help of 20 dance movement therapy students in Israel. The focus of that study was on the emotional milestones of adolescent development. According to Shuper-Engelhard the transition from childhood to adolescence is often a struggle due to multiple changes that may occur.

Unfortunately, many adolescents do not have the coping skills to deal with the physical and emotional changes. Shuper-Engelhard stated, “It is possible that structured movement provides adolescents with the containment they need to feel secure in sharing emotional experiences via their bodies” (p. 501). Therefore, through the use of DMT adolescents, can begin to explore a changing body image and gain self-awareness through expression.

The research concluded that movement brings about two themes for adolescents who are discovering a true sense of self. The first theme concluded that movement is a form of expression. Within this theme, movement provides a “safe container” for openness and exploration, thus allowing an individual to explore internal feelings through the use of the body. The second theme concluded that “movement was a threat”. At a time when the body is changing, adolescents may feel there is little to no control and struggle with movement as a result. However, through the use of DMT, movement can be explored in a protected environment, in which adolescents can learn how to use non-verbal language as a means of communication, self-exploration, and interpersonal relationship building (Shuper-Engelhard, 2013).

Self-Esteem. Self-esteem is defined as confidence in one’s own worth or abilities (Mancini, 2018). Many adolescent girls struggle with low self-esteem and feelings of inferiority

(Ingram, 2013). They tend to have a heightened awareness of others yet lack the reality of the self which increases the difficulty of self-acceptance. Yet, DMT and dance can change negative body perceptions and create a positive acceptance of self. Resulting in adolescents who are able to better cope with stress and environmental changes that occur during adolescence.

According to Chaiklin and Wengrower (2009), “Incorporating properties of self-conceptualization, self-esteem, and selfhood, brings about authenticity of the movement and enhances the search for self.” (p.152) This implies that the movement leads to greater self-expression and increases independence.

Communication. It is often said that actions speak louder than words, yet many times our movements speak louder than both. Movement based group sessions allows participants to mirror, reflect, and respond to others. This action allows members to gain awareness of the needs of others and to learn how to communicate first on a body level and then on a verbal level (Beardall, 2017). Individuals are able to practice social skills through movement which allows them to learn to take turns, acknowledge the needs of others, practice self-control, and learn to delay gratification (Chaiklin & Wengrower, 2009).

Awareness of The Body. Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) was developed by Rudolf Laban in the early 1900s and integrated into the field of dance/movement therapy in the 1950s (Levy, 2005). According to Levy (2005), “He (Laban) saw its potential use as an expressive medium of both conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings, and conflicts and also a vehicle through which societies pass on traditions, coping behaviors, and religious rituals” (2005, p.106). Laban wanted to focus on the way in which people expressed themselves and coped with the world through the use of the body. He developed an approach to observing movements that

explored what parts of the body were moving, where the parts were moving, and when they were moving.

Laban's system consists of four dominant areas: effort, shape, space, and body. Effort is defined as "movement dynamics in terms of four motion factors: space, weight, time, and flow" (Levy, 2005, p. 107). Each effort has an opposing possibility. For example, light and heavy in regard to weight. Shape is the where of the movement in relations to self and others. Shape is generally used to bring meaning to movement. Space describes the exploration of motion and its connections to the environment. Finally, the body category focuses on initiation of movement, connection of different body parts to one another, and patterns of movement within the body (Levy, 2005). To further develop the use of the body, Laban worked with Irmgard Bartenieff to create the Bartenieff Fundamentals, a set of exercises that center around the "initiation of movement including Effort initiation and Spatial initiation, plus how these transfers their motivations by sequencing through different parts of the body" (Longstaff, 2007, p.2). LMA techniques can be used to understand, interpret, and describe the movements of humans (Levy, 2005). Thus, it has the ability to help individuals gain awareness of their movement patterns, deepen movement sequences, and interpret the meaning of the non-verbal.

Melzer, Shafir, and Tsachor (2019) studied the use of LMA as a means of examining emotional recognition through the use of movement. Participants included 62 men and women ages 19-48 from diverse backgrounds who were considered healthy. The word *healthy* within this study referred to individuals who were free of psychological and physiological ailments. The method was conducted so that LMA components could be paired with emotional states, such as the use of moving up and rising as a sign of happiness. Participants were provided with a video clip of a movement phrase. Over the course of the study participants were provided 100 clips and

were asked to respond with the emotion they felt were represented. Overall, 63% of the clips were matched correctly to the emotion that it represented. The results indicated that mirror neurons in the brain are stimulated when observing movement, causing feedback from the body to respond by feeling and recognition of specific emotions. The researchers concluded that the results support that movements can contribute to the recognition and expressions of emotions. Therefore, teaching LMA techniques to dancers can allow for a broader movement vocabulary that gives way to the ability of dancers to express inward feelings outwardly (Beardall, 2017).

Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Relationships. The format of a group can impact the dynamics of the individuals involved. Therefore, the facilitator must pay attention to the needs of the group and develop plans around them. According to Witting and Davis (2012), a crucial role of a group facilitator is being able to foster leadership and independence of the group members while ensuring safety and support. They stated,

As the group continues to consider questions of safety and trust, we involve them in the work of making and deepening relationships in the group. During this process, group members consider several things: how to lead, when to give up leadership, and whom to give the leadership to; this exercise assists the group in deepening the relationships that have begun to form. (2012, p.169)

As the group matures, each individual participant will begin to foster their own sense of independence. They will work on how to become leaders and followers. Thus, coming to a place where they can trust themselves and trust others.

Chaiklin and Wengrower (2009) have also researched the benefits of group structure and its relationship to the overall success of an individual. They examined the simultaneous process that occurs through the body when movement and dance activities including DMT techniques are

used in group session. First, the structure of session encourages rapport building and communication skills between members. Secondly, a group session allows individuals to explore feelings and emotions and learn to express them within the body. Thirdly, physical, cognitive, and emotional skills are honed. Lastly, participants rediscover “play” and find joy in their movement through self-discovery.

Chaiklin and Wengrower (2009) discussed the development of self- confidence through DMT group sessions in their work. They stated, “rejection becomes a less threatening, less self-defeating experience. Individuals learn to work through receiving feedback and constructive criticism as they uncover ways to use movement to decrease self-judgement and negative self-image” (p. 129). Thus, group members are able to gain acceptance of self and confidence through movement exploration.

Structure and Support. Part of the success of group work is established through structuring the session with a beginning, middle, and end. Structure and rituals are powerful tools to ensure the development of positive relationships with group members, nurture safety that allows for vulnerability, and foster continued growth of the group as a whole and individually. The use of the circle is one way to provide support within the group setting, as it allows for easy visibility of group members, a safe and secure container that can be used when the facilitator feels the group needs reconnection and allows for individuals within the group to feel supported by one another (2012). The use of the circle along with other themes can be attributed to the successfulness in a group setting.

According to, Pylyänäinen et al. (2015), the structure/format of a group provides guiding principles for cohesion and stability (2015). The research considered the following five themes for DMT group sessions:

- 1) Supporting the safety of the body through a focus on what is happening at a body level.
- 2) Supporting the sense of agency as a means to explore independence in the movement.
- 3) Supporting mindfulness skills in hopes of gaining awareness of body sensations.
- 4) Being attentive to interaction and the bodies' response to others while in a group.
- 5) Fostering the interaction, which is the role of the group leader to notice what is occurring within the group and to help the members be seen, heard, and felt during group session.

While these areas are geared towards DMT group sessions, these same principles can be applied within a traditional dance class as long as the facilitator or teacher has knowledge and training in the field of DMT and is mindful of how to respectfully use these techniques outside the therapeutic realm.

To conclude, this section reviewed literature to provide support for dance/movement therapy as an evidence-based technique that can be beneficial to the emotional, physical, cognitive, and social development of individuals. Data was presented to show the impacts of dance classes on youth development. Further research is needed to assess the ability of DMT and traditional dance courses to be used in conjunction. Use of the research can support adolescent female's abilities to gain confidence as dancers and learn to connect with their bodies and understand their emotions on a deeper level. This is where my research will begin. In the next section, I will present a method which incorporates both DMT interventions and traditional dance technique in a curriculum used in a dance studio program with adolescent females.

Methods

The objective of this study was to explore the use of dance/movement therapy techniques within a traditional dance class. The purpose was to examine how DMT could be implemented into the dance curriculum to help foster body awareness, encourage openness within movement, discover inner strength, increase self-esteem, and develop a sense of community and trust.

The project took place in a weekly lyrical dance class during the 2019-2020 school year. The project was conducted over the course of five weeks between December and February. Classes started with a 60-minute time limit but were extended to 90 minutes due to student interest. At the completion of the project, continued incorporation of DMT techniques were added to the class structure.

The lyrical course was chosen because of the uniqueness of the style and connection to improvisation, exploration of emotions, and dramatic storytelling. Lyrical dance style is a combination between ballet and jazz. The word lyrical itself means to have a “poetic, expressive, quality, expressing spontaneous feelings and deep personal emotions” (OSMD, 2017). A few focuses of the style are to dance in a way that expresses the lyrics of the music, to showcase emotions and tell a story through movement. Unlike other forms of dance, lyrical challenges dancers to occupy space, interpret the meaning of music on a deeper level, expand the movement of their bodies, and connect with the audience on an emotional level.

Participants

The class consisted of seven young ladies at the beginning of the project but ended with only four. The age range of the dancers were 10-18 and each dancer had at least 6 months of training in ballet and lyrical. Therefore, DMT interventions and dance exercises were chosen based on a consideration of both age and level of training.

The dancers were approached in November of 2019 and asked if they would be interested in participating in this project. I informed them about my current studies as a graduate student in dance/movement therapy and explained my purpose for wanting to try this project. They were given the choice to discuss it as a class and decide if they wanted to participate. They all agreed that they were interested and were then given details on what would follow in future classes.

Materials

The interventions consisted of using a large space for movement; phone and speakers to play music; yoga mats and props such as streamers, balls, hula hoops, and chairs; art supplies and check-in worksheets.

Study Design

The layout for each class followed the session plan of Nancy Koprak. Koprak worked at the Maimonides Medical Center for 20 years using creative arts therapies as a way to provide a safe place for her patients by focusing on their individual needs (Merrill, 2011). She combined the techniques of various DMT pioneers, such as Marian Chace, Blanche Evan, and Trudi Shoop; incorporating movement with improvisation techniques to help her patients learn and develop within their own means (2011). Koprak's session plan consisted of the following: warm-up: the social component, release: the tension reduction component, theme: the exploration of the topic/theme, centering: the regrouping section and closure: the transition (2011).

When considering Koprak's session plan for my class, I first examined my goals and objectives for this project. I thought about the needs of my dancers in relation to continuing development of their technique while also helping them learn to develop emotional regulation and inner strength through the use of DMT. Therefore, I combined Koprak's plan with the themes created by Pylyänäinen to create a unique lesson plan. This plan was designed to help the

dancers, build relationships, explore their bodies, discover freedom through dance, and develop coping skills. The class layout was as follows:

- 1) Warm-Up/ Fostering the interaction
 - a. Quote of the day
 - i. Quotes chosen related to the theme/ topic of each week.
 - b. Check-In
 - i. Encourage dancers to be present and in the moment.
 - ii. Every class started and ended in a circle, which acted as a container for security, engagement, and community building.
- 2) Release/ Supporting mindfulness skills
 - a. Stretching
 - i. Use of body scan activities and meditation as a means of energy release and relaxation.
 - ii. Dance technique and exercises
 - iii. Use of props, mirroring, drama exercises, and “free play”
- 3) Theme/ Supporting the sense of agency:
 - a. Learning and creating of choreography
 - i. Provide dancers the opportunity to create choreography and teach it to their peers. Thus, allowing for both the development of independence and cognitive functioning.
- 4) Centering/ Supporting the safety of the body:
 - a. Cool down/ self- reflection

- i. Use of improvisational dance to allow dancers to pay attention to their own needs on a body level and gain respect for their own movement style.
- ii. Time allowed for the facilitator to observe the group's interactions and encourage non-judgmental exploration.

5) Closure/ Fostering the interaction and connection

a. Check-out

- i. Activities used to wrap-up any feelings or concerns that came up in class.

Weekly Class Structure

Week One: Body Awareness. Week one began with a re-introduction to the project and checking with dancers to ensure the dancers were comfortable participating. Dancers were asked to check-in with a feeling and were given the opportunity to use words, gestures, or movements to tell the group how they were feeling. After the check-in, I began to focus on the theme for the week. This was completed by using Laban Movement Analysis technique (Appendix A) to help them explore new ways to use their bodies. They were then asked to use the new knowledge and explore using improvisation. They were encouraged to explore as much as they felt comfortable, making sure to not be judgmental to themselves or their peers. The class was brought back together using yoga stretches and deep breathing and were then asked to discuss what they had experienced. Class ended with each dancer repeating the check-in activity placing emphasis on any changes of feelings throughout the night.

Week Two: Openness and Self- Expression. Week two started off with me reading the class a quote and leading the check-in, which was “what is your spirit animal and why”? As the

group leader, I also participated in the check-in and group exercises. This was to show the group how to be vulnerable and to increase rapport. The dancers were then given props and allowed to explore for 20 minutes. They were given instructions to explore individually, in pairs, and as a group. After 20 minutes, I brought the group back to the circle, and asked how they felt being allowed to play with the props. Afterward, I explained what they would be doing for the rest of class. They were asked to pick slips of paper from a hat. On the slips were movement initiations, body parts, Effort force terms, and dimensions of space. Each dancer was instructed to combine the terms that they were given to create a short piece of choreography. They were given 15 minutes to choreograph and then performed their piece for the class. The class ended with each dancer providing one word that described their feelings for the day.

Week Three: Inner Strength. As with previous weeks, class opened with a check in. The dancers were asked to state how their day had been and then instructed to follow along with a guided meditation. After the meditation, the dancers were asked questions around the theme of inner strength. They were then guided through dance technique exercises. Next, I played the song they would be dancing to and had them listen to the words. Once, the song ended, I led a discussion about the lyrics and asked the dancers if they found any personal connections to the song. The dancers then learned choreography. Class concluded with another guided meditation and then we each went around the circle doing a movement that represented strength to us.

Week Four: Body Image and Inner Beauty. The check-in for week four was a feelings chart (Appendix B). The dancers were given a sheet and directed to circle two feelings that they had experienced throughout the day. We then discussed the feelings that came up. Once this was complete, I provided the dancers with two body structure templates. Next, I instructed them to write, draw, and use symbols to express the things they have heard or been told in regard to body

image. They were asked to think about what they heard from society, things said about their own bodies (from others and themselves), and things they had heard specifically about the bodies of dancers. They were to put negative statements on one sheet and positives on the other sheet.

After they finished, we discussed what they had written and then 10 minutes was allocated for free movement. I split the time into 5-minute intervals having them move around negative feelings first and then positive feelings. During the second interval, I asked them to consider the words “inner beauty” and to explore what the statement meant in movement. Next, I allowed the dancers to listen to the song for the class and explained how the lyrics related to the theme of inner beauty. I also asked what the song meant to them and taught choreography. After learning choreography, the dancers wrote affirmations to one another and explored movement around the affirmations. Class concluded with each dancer stating one positive word/statement about their inner beauty.

Week Five: Power and Oppression. During check-in, the dancers were asked to tell a short story about something that happened to them that day. This allowed them to chat and connect with one another and release tension before class started. They were then instructed in a cardio based exercise sequence to continue tension release and energize the body. After 30 minutes, I discussed the impacts of power and oppression, and spoke to them about standing up for what they believe in. Each dancer was provided with a sentence from a song (Appendix C) around the theme of not backing down from obstacles and standing one’s ground. They were instructed to think about the words they were given and create movement that would tell the story of the words. I informed them they had 20 minutes to work on the choreography before teaching the other dancers. The centering and closure of the class were combined into one activity. We sat in a circle and debriefed about what it felt like to create movement based directly

on lyrics and how those particular lyrics resonated with each of them. Finally, we took a collective breathe and body shake out before ending.

Data Collection

Over the course of the project, I tracked my observations through journaling, movement observation charts (Appendix D), and art making (Appendix E). These methods of reflection were chosen because it allowed me to process in multiple ways. Thus, providing me a broader understanding of what occurred, what I noticed, and how I felt about the project.

Results

The results section was compiled from personal self-reflections. I kept a journal and at the end of each class, wrote down my thoughts and observations. Then, I would read through my journal and create art work as a visual representation. This art work is included in Appendix E. I also completed body observation charts (Appendix D) based on my responses to the group's movement each week.

Observations

Pre-Project. My decision to complete this project resulted from watching my dancers at the beginning of the school year. I noticed that many were shy and reserved. One dancer in particular would have breakdowns in class if she felt she could not figure out a move. Another was very talented but lacked confidence in herself and no matter how much I encouraged her, she could not accept her self-worth. Therefore, I felt the need to find a better way to encourage them and knew through my training as a DMT that the non-verbal was often more powerful than words.

Week One: Body Awareness. Week one of the project was met with some resistance. The dancers were taught Laban Movement Analysis principles such as Effort force and

movement initiation. They were very uncomfortable with the check-in since it was a new approach to starting class. They all looked around at one another nervously until one girl took the lead. As the class went on, I perceived continued nervousness which was exhibited by stiffness of the torso and moving with tense shoulders. They seemed jittery and anxious as observed by the shifting back and forth on the feet. When I walked around and observed, I noticed that the girls were tense and hesitant to move. However, when I demonstrated movements they became more relaxed. Upon realizing this, I asked if they felt ok with me joining in. They conveyed they felt it was less awkward when I joined in.

I believe this was an important observation. As the teacher, I am often leading and watching. I rarely get an opportunity to join in. Yet, with this particular style of class, my vulnerability and openness with joining into the activity, allowed the girls to feel comfortable and to be vulnerable with the activity themselves.

At the end of class, we discussed feelings about the experience and I thanked the class for trying something new. This was done as a way to support their willingness to try new techniques and to foster safety and security within the group. My reflections (Appendix E Figures 1) for the week centered around my fears about my ability to lead the project after the first week and my hopes for its success.

Week Two: Openness and Self- Expression. Week two started off with a check-in that focused on “spirit” animals. Each girl gave an example of theirs’ and explained why they connected to each animal. I chose this activity simply to see what animal the girls connected with and noticed that many of them picked representations of personality traits that I noticed in class, but they rarely see in themselves such as tiger (fierce), dog (playful), and cheetah (focused).

The girls were then allowed to free play with the intent to allow them to be kids. The only rules were to be safe and try to see what they could do with the provided props. I remembered how they reacted to my watching versus being a part of the group the previous week and grabbed a prop and joined in. This not only made it less intimidating for the dancers but allowed for a release of energy that was personally needed.

The theme development of the session resulted in increased body awareness, confidence, and freedom in movement of the dancers as evidenced by relaxed shoulders and loose torsos. Along with, less tension on the knees and straining of the jaw muscles as they danced. They asserted independence and dependency by creating their own mini choreography. When given the option to perform their piece for the class, each dancer expressed interest and at the end the young ladies asked if they could try more improving activities in the next class. Class closure consisted of the girls stating a word or feeling about their experience. Somethings expressed were “I feel full, I am free, extravagant, and I want more.” After they spoke, I told them proud of them I was. I encouraged them to keep trying and thanked them for their vulnerability.

My reflection (Appendix E figure 2) focused on the changes in movement that I noticed from the girls during this week. Each color represents a different dancer and the lines depict the ways in which they moved. I noticed that each movement was unique to their personalities but also incorporated new material they were learning.

Week Three: Inner Strength. Discussing strength in week three proved to be a challenge for me. First off, only 2 girls came to class and I was already feeling overwhelmed as a result of things outside of class. The girls were also very quiet coming into class which was not normal. Therefore, I decided to do a guided meditation to center the girls and to help bring focus

to the class. Both girls mentioned that the guided meditation made them feel calm and was very enjoyable.

Before moving to the theme development section, I lead a discussion around strength and asked the girls what strength meant to them. They struggled with the prompt. However, once they listened to the song that would be used for choreography, they were able to provide an answer to the question. They expressed that part of being strong, is believing in their inner strength. I kept what was said in mind as I engaged in art making after class. I noticed that my art work (Appendix E Figure 3) turned into a collection of words about what strength meant to me. One statement that stood out was, “at your darkest hour, strength will shine through.” The statement resonated with me, due to my own struggles with this project and seeing the girls find their strength as dancers and young women going through it.

Week Four: Body Image and Inner Beauty. Discussing positive and negative body image was an easier topic for the girls to explore than I expected. I was concerned that the topic would be a trigger due to their age difference. I was also unaware of the girl’s individual perceptions of their own body image. However, I knew that it was an important topic to approach with adolescent girls.

A discussion about body image brought about interesting themes such as dancers needing to be slender and tall. The dancers stated that they knew society placed ideals on what women “should look like.” They stated, “if we fit into this stereotype, then we would probably be more accepted, especially within the dance world.” Yet, they were also able to express that they wanted to learn to love their body as it was. They expressed enjoyment in coming to our dance class because it was the one place they did not feel judged and were allowed to leave the “negativity” at the door. One statement resonated with me, “dance helps me love my body as it is

and accept me for me. I may not look like the other dancers in society but when I walk into this class, I know that I am loved, beautiful, and powerful. I have scars, but they tell a story that is unique to me.”

Reflecting on these words became the basis for my own art (Appendix E Figure 4). I was hesitant to explore body image and how it impacted me. I realized that there are parts of my body that I do not enjoy, but over time have learned to accept who I am. “My scars tell a story” and through my own experiences, I can be more supportive of my dancers through this challenging time of discovery.

Week Five: Power and Oppression. The final week resulted in the girls taking on the leadership role and creating choreography to teach their peers. I opened the space with the discussion by giving details around the song that was chosen and its meaning. I gave examples of oppression and asked the girls to think about other examples they could connect with. The dancers expressed extreme frustration with this exercise. They expressed feeling upset with the topic and challenged by having to create movements to the lyrics that they would then teach their peers. As they choreographed, I walked around offering assistance and encouragement for those who were having a difficult time. I learned the choreograph with the girls recognizing that my presence was needed. I did not want to talk too much and wanted to let the girls find their own path but still wanted them to know I was “there with them.” I closed class by checking in with each girl individually to make sure that they were ok before allowing them to head home.

Reflecting on this class took a few days as I felt a heaviness. I was fearful that I had pushed my dancers too hard. It hurt to see my girls cry and shut down, but I knew they needed that push. The interventions were important in helping the girls address tough topics, learn how to explore lyrics deeper with their movement, and gain independence as choreographers. The

drawing (Appendix E Figure 5) I created represents taking a stance against oppression but also the class coming together as a unit. I drew the enclosed hands as a representation of the connections we made as a class, and, how even though we are from different cultural backgrounds, we are a community.

After the project ended, I continued to incorporate DMT interventions into class. I realized that the dancers' perception of "dance" had shifted and that they were more aware of how they felt than how they looked. I was no longer looking for perfection in the way they danced but instead looked at how they grew as they explored dance and how they developed as individuals. They continued to grow as a unit and they looked forward to stepping outside the "normal" structure and engaging in a more body centered and emotions focused style. This was affirmed by one dancer's statement, "It has been different, and I am not sure what to expect when I come to class, but I always leave having learned something and wanting to explore more."

The next section will discuss how the results compare to the literature and explore further research that should be considered.

Discussion

A community engagement project was designed to explore the use of dance/movement therapy techniques within a traditional dance program. This was done in order to examine whether a class using DMT interventions could foster an increase in self-esteem and body awareness, stronger interpersonal relationships, and development of independence and leadership skills. The project was conducted over the course of five weeks and the goal was accomplished as I was successful incorporating DMT therapy techniques into the dance class.

The restructured curriculum created a shift in perception of self and others, along with a greater understanding of the use of the body. This was evidenced by continued exploration and openness to explore in movement after the project's conclusion. The young ladies continued to ask for inclusion of exercises that would allow them to explore the topics from the project and one dancer even wanted to use concepts that she learned within her solo recital piece. This supports the literature showing that while females experience difficulty during adolescence they are able to develop coping mechanisms when provided the opportunity to explore through movement narratives and improvisation techniques (Dale-Anderson, 1979).

There was an overall shift in the attitude of the girls about dance and movement including a more open response to constructive criticism as evidenced by a decrease in frustration and crying from dancers. Dancers who were quiet before the start of project became assertive in their vocalization and movements, which was observed in their ability to speak out about what they liked and disliked in class and their desire to lead class warm-ups. One dancer reported that she felt “free” to be herself when she danced and appreciated that the group allowed for this. Thus, supporting the literature stating “DMT reduces stress, anxiety and provides social support” (Nguyen, 2014, p. 12).

The results were also consistent with research suggesting that adolescents can learn to work through problems and seek guidance using dance (Ryder, 2019). This was noticed in the dancer's ability to independently work out complex technique while still seeking help from their peers and teacher when needed. I realized I was doing meaningful work, when one of my dancers stated, “thank you for pushing me outside my comfort zone and believing in me when I cannot believe in myself.”

While there were successes to this project, there were also challenges and limitations. One challenge was trying to find the balance between teaching technique and leading DMT based exercises. I found myself feeling stressed and overwhelmed. I felt like I was juggling multiple task and wanted to ensure that the dancers received all that I could give them. I struggled with how to make sure they were receiving both the physical and emotional support that they needed. Secondly, due to the limited time allotted for class, dancers were often unable to create full pieces of independent choreography. This caused frustration for them and anxiousness for me. Lastly, the project was also limited as a result of studio requirements. While I wanted to continue working on the project throughout the rest of the school year, I was unable to as I needed to prepare the dancers for performances and events.

As I move forward to expand the project in the upcoming dance season, I will consider the following: First, development of a stronger curriculum that takes into consideration class time restrictions and performance schedule of the studio. Secondly, the project will begin at the start of the year and activities and interventions will be broken down each week so there would be less stress on me as the teacher. Finally, I will work with the dancers in the creation of the curriculum. In order to allow the dancers more leadership and freedom in which topics are explored.

Suggestions for anyone seeking to further explore this project themselves are as follows: First, be open to deviating from the “normal” structure of the dance class. This could be a challenge especially for seasoned teachers as sticking to a routine is important for reaching technical goals with clients. Secondly, take careful consideration on ways in which one incorporates DMT interventions into class. Be aware that the class is not therapy and therefore be mindful of activities that they use. Facilitators should inform dancers of the new goals and layout

of class, so they can be aware of the shifts in instruction. Next, since this project was completed with only females, instructors who have male dancers should explore the differences between genders during the adolescent stage of development and how dance impacts males. To conclude, the capstone provides effective evidence for incorporation of dance/movement therapy in a non-therapeutic setting such as a dance studio.

Reference

- American Dance Therapy Association (2014, November). What is DMT? Retrieved from <https://adta.org/2014/11/08/what-is-dancemovement-therapy/>
- Body Attitude Coding Sheet. Retrieved from https://my.lesley.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id= 73293_1 &content_id= 1978443_1&mode=reset
- Beardall, N. (2017). Dance/movement and embodied knowing with adolescents. *The Oxford handbook of dance and wellbeing*. DOI: 10.1093/oxford/9780199949298.013.25
- Beaulac, J., Kristjansson, E., Calhoun, M. (2011). “Bigger than hip hop?” Impact of a community-based physical activity program on youth living in a disadvantaged neighborhood in Canada. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14(8), 961-974.
Doi:10.1080/13676261.2011.616488
- Chaiklin, S., & Wengrower, H. (Eds.). (2009). *The art and science of dance/movement therapy: Life is dance*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Corteville, M. (2009). *Dance your way to communication: Dance movement therapy to increase self-esteem, poor body image, and communication skills in high school females*. (Master’s thesis). The college of Brockport: State University of New York City. Brockport, New York.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2020). *Adolescence*. Britannica. Retrieved from https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/reference_list_electronic_sources.html

- Dale-Anderson, R. (1979). Dance and self-concept change in women. (Doctoral dissertation). Portland State University. Portland, Oregon.
- Retrieved from https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/3007/
- DeMesa-Simpson, D. (2014). *The impacts if dance/movement classes on adolescent behavior in an urban high school setting*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <https://rdw.rowan.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1434&context=etd>
- Elias, M. et al. (1997). Promoting social and emotional learning. Alexandria, VA: Association for supervision and curriculum development.
- Ferris, C.D. (2008). *Listening to movement: The use of dance movement therapy in groups to reduce anxiety in males struggling with addiction*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=edc_t_heses
- Ingram, M. (2013). *Unfolding self-esteem: Adolescent girl's self-esteem and the dance/movement therapy intervention of improvisation and planned movement formation: A pilot study*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9270/18532b33699583d2a9d09d80d3e4e804c628.pdf>
- Koch, S., Kunz, T., Lykou, S., & Cruz, R. (2014). Effects of dance movement therapy and dance on health-related psychological outcomes: A meta-analysis. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 41(1), 46-64.
- Lessing & Fourie. (2009). The influence of dance and movement therapy (DMT) on the body Image of female adolescents. *African Journal for Physical Health Education*, 16(2), 297-315.

Levy, F. (2005). *Dance movement therapy: A healing art*. Reston, VA Society of Health and Physical Educators.

Longstaff, J.S. (2007). Overview of Laban Movement Analysis & Laban notation. Retrieved from http://www.laban-analyses.org/lab_analysis_reviews/lab_analysis_notation/overview/summary.htm

Malchiodi, C.A. (2007). *Expressive therapies*. New York: London: Guilford, 2007.

Mancini, V. (2018). *Dance/movement and drama therapy methods to assess resistance in adolescents with low sense of identity and self-esteem: Development of a method* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=expressive_theses

Melzer, A., Shafir, T., & Palnick Tsachor, R. (2019). How do we recognize emotion from movement? Specific motor components contribute to the recognition of each emotion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10(1389), 1-12.

Merrill, C. (2011, March) Dance Therapy: A profession with its own rhythm. International Business Times. Retrieved from <https://www.ibtimes.com/dance-therapy-profession-its-own-rhythm-372020>

Nguyen, K. (2014). *Therapeutic aspects of dance for dancers experiencing life adjustment Issues*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Therapeutic-aspects-of-dance-for-dancers-life-Nguyen/8f27030123dd75566621d6e94365ff6b1ecd6a67>

Omaha School of Music & Dance. (2019). What is lyrical dance, and what is the meaning behind

It? Retrieved from

<https://www.omahaschoolofmusicanddance.com/our-blog/lyrical-dance-meaning-lessons/>

Pylyänäinen et al. (2015). DMT treatment effects. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6(980), 1-15.

Richter, C.B. & Coley, K.C. (n.d.) Dance for life: A resilience model to foster positive body image and prevent body image dissatisfaction. *Columbia Social Work Review*. X, 1-10.

Ryder, M. (2019). *Dance/movement therapy for competitive dancers: A community*

engagement project. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from

https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/expressive_theses/151/

Shuper-Engelhard, E. (2013). Dance/ movement therapy during adolescence- learning about adolescence through the experiential movement of dance/movement therapy students. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 41(2014), 498-503.

Thomas, E. (2015). The dance of cultural identity: Exploring race and gender with adolescent girls. *American Journal of Dance Therapy*, 37, 176-196.

Victoria, H.K. (2012). Creating dances to transform inner states: A choreographic model in dance/movement therapy. *Body, Movement, and Dance in Psychotherapy*, 7(3), 167

183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17432979.2011.619577>

Wittig, J., & Davis, J. (2012). Circles outside the circle: Expanding the group frame through dance/movement therapy and art therapy. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 39(3), 168-172.

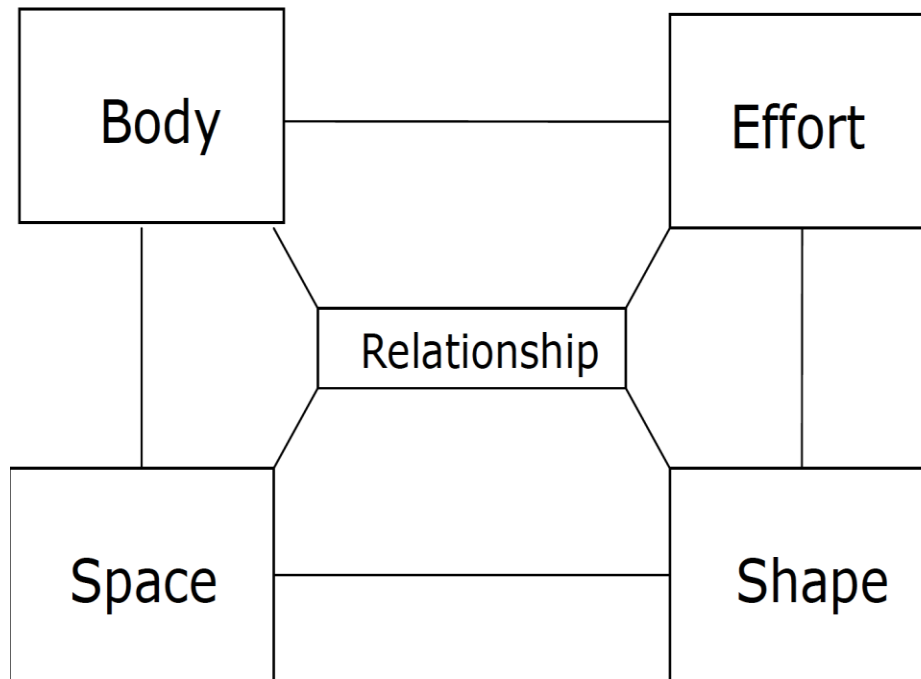
Zichi, S. (2015). *Dance/movement therapy at an after-school program for at risk adolescent girls in Yonkers, New York*. (Master's thesis). Retrieved from

https://digitalcommons.slc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1009&context=dmt_etd

Appendices

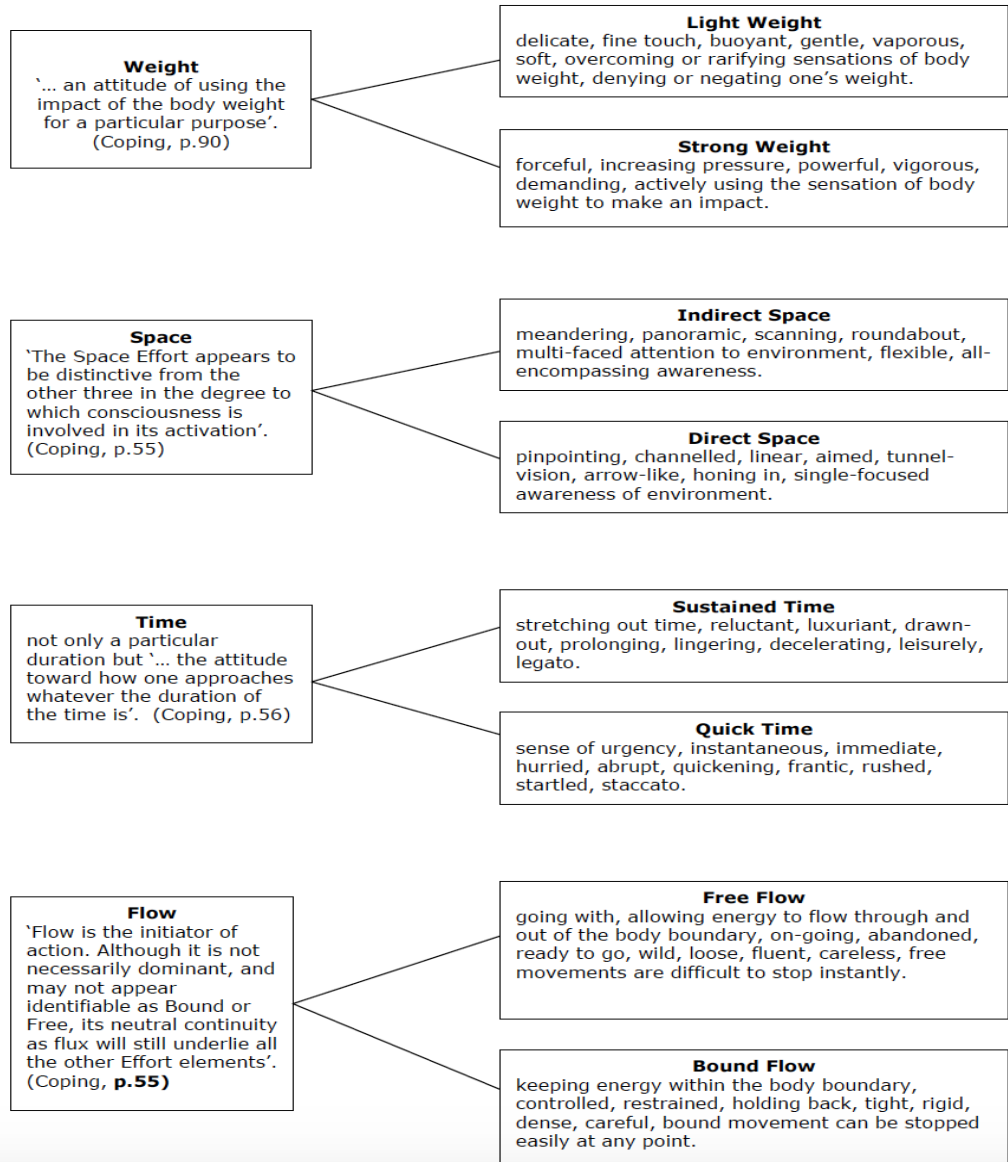
Appendix A: Laban Movement Analysis

Categories Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis:

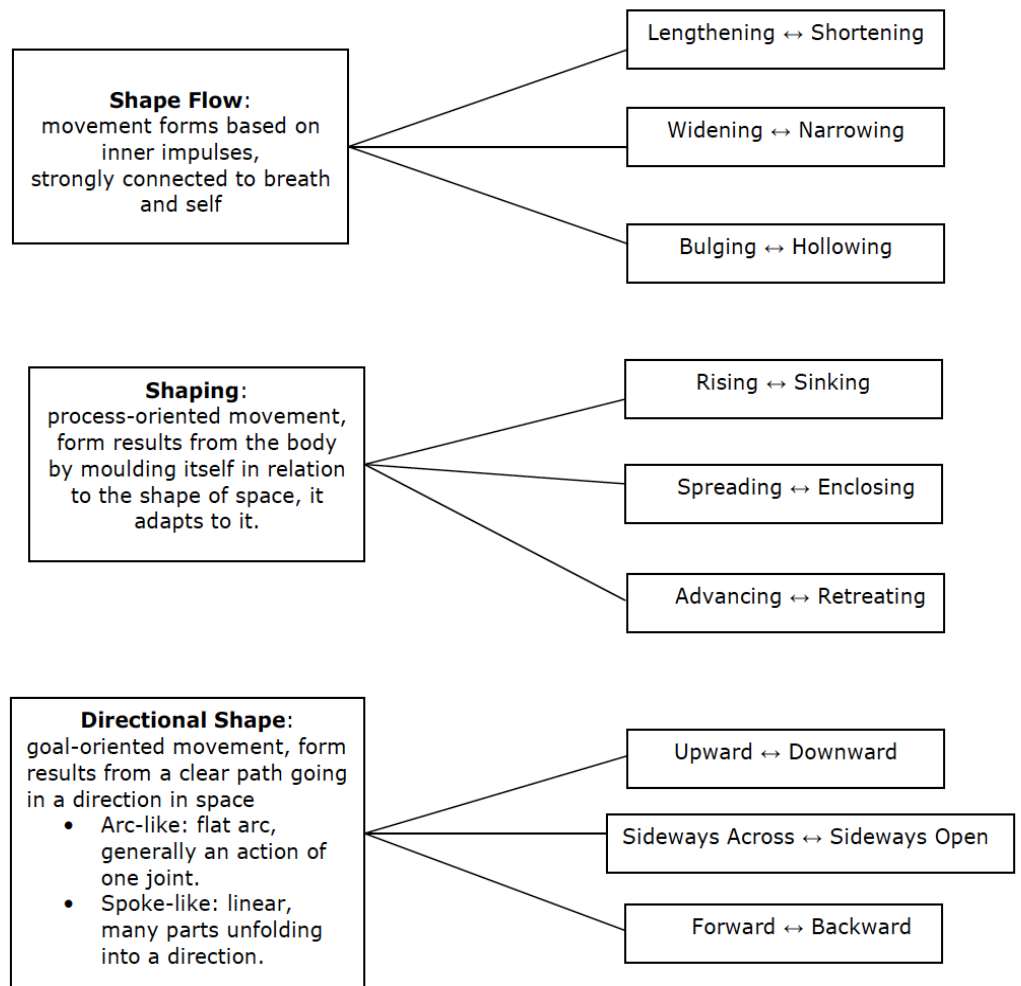


Effort

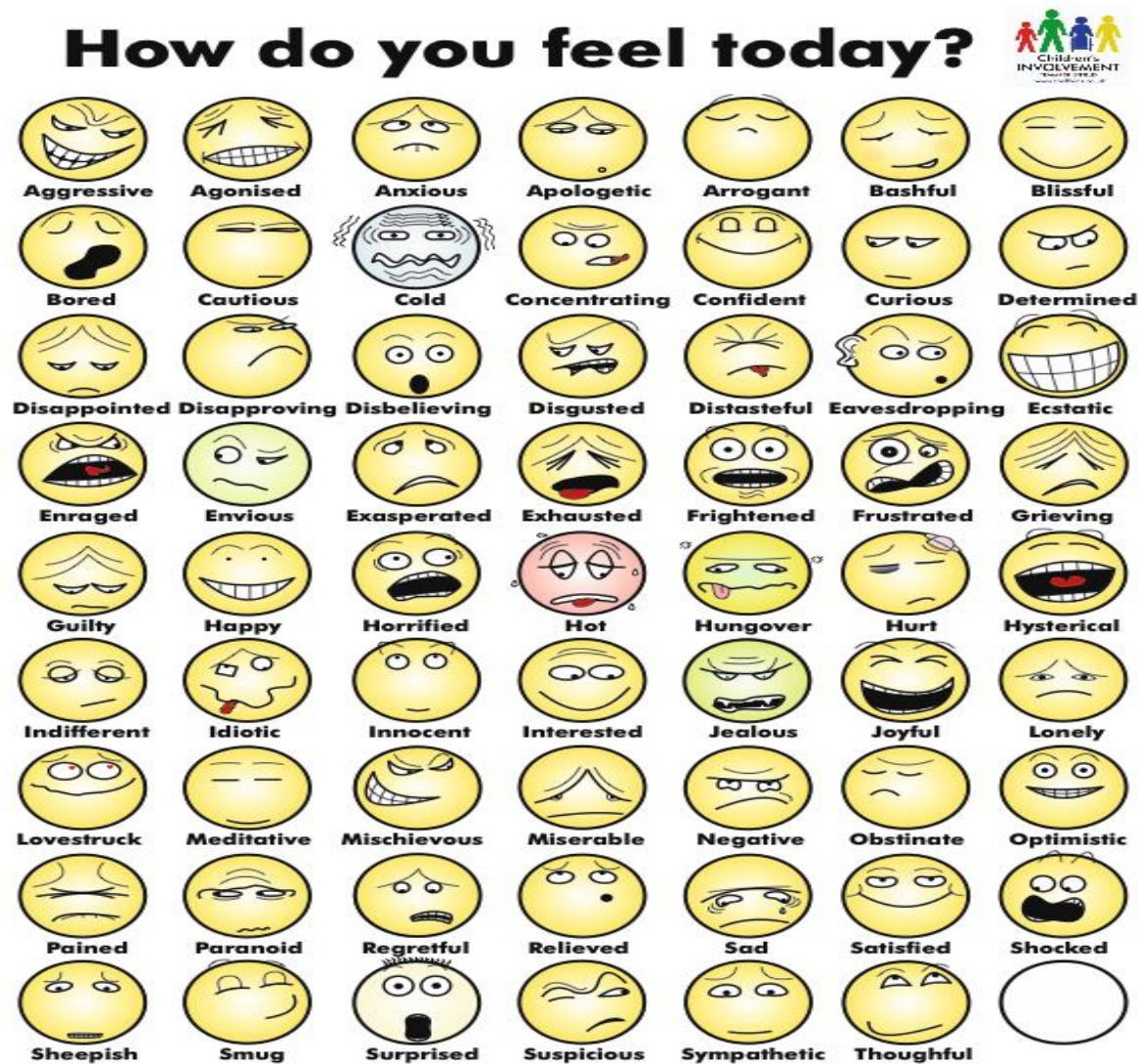
single Effort Factors



Shape



Appendix B: Feelings Chart



Appendix C: Week Five Song

We Won't Move

Arlissa

Sweep it all beneath the rug
Doesn't mean the dirt won't come up
There's a fire burnin' up
Only thing stronger than hate is love
We need a change, oh yeah
The song Amazing Grace

Won't be quiet anymore
Not unless they hear us loud and clear
Damage can't be undone
Let's not pretend it disappears
We need a change, oh yeah
The song Amazing Grace

Let's go step by step
And brick by brick
I'll carry the weight
For you
When I'm gone, don't stop
We can stand here all day
We won't move
No, not at all

We won't let the silence drown us out
They'll say a moment's not about
But we won't back out
Hands up, we're 'bout to take this down
It's gonna change, oh yeah
With love and humanity

So step by step
And brick by brick
I'll carry the weight
For you
When I'm gone, don't stop
We can...

Source: LyricFind

Appendix D: Body Observation Chart**Body Attitude Coding Sheet**

Name: _____ Date: _____ Context: _____

Body	Tally	Notes
Breath		
Kinesphere		
Far Reach		
Near Reach		
Medium Reach		
Posture/Gesture		
Gesture (distal)		
Posture (torso)		
P/G Merger		
Spatial Stress		
Vertical		
Horizontal		
Sagittal		
Active/Held		
Body Parts Held		
Body Parts Active		
Fundamentals		
Head/Tail		
Heel/Coccyx		
Scapula/Arm		
Thigh/Pelvis		
Diagonal (upper-lower)		
Body Half		

Appendix E: Art Reflections

Figure 1: Hope



Figure 2: Openness

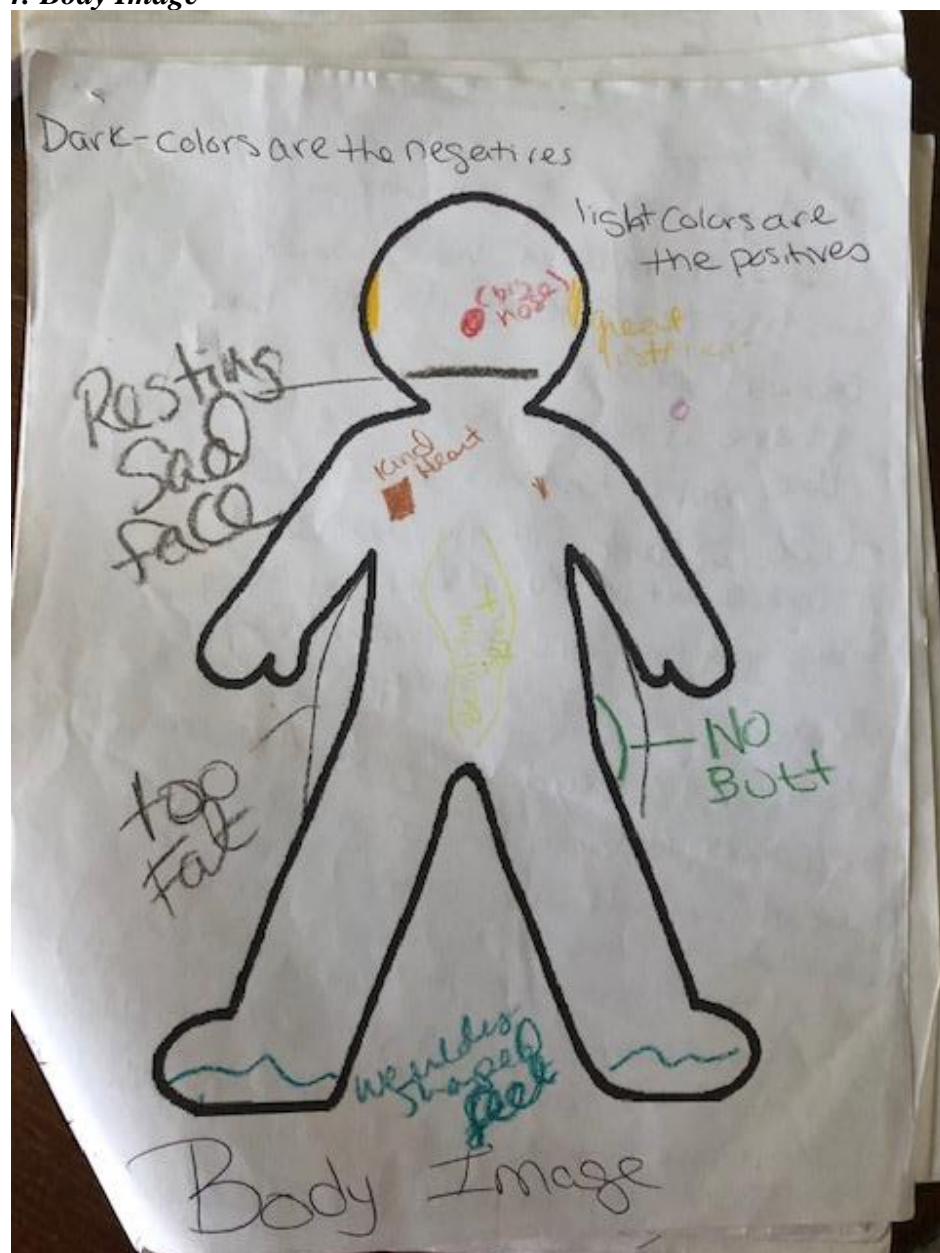
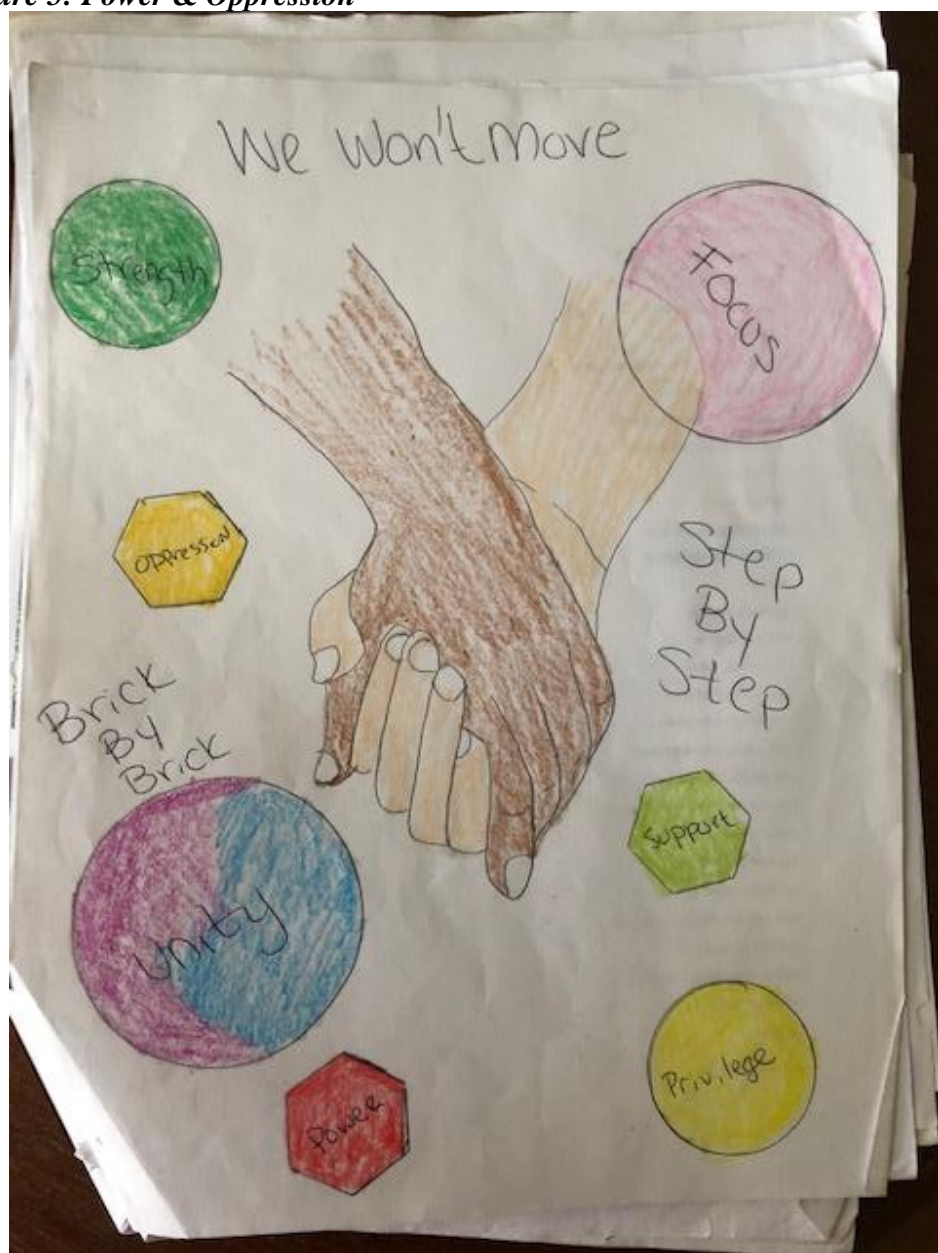
Figure 4: Body Image

Figure 5: Power & Oppression



THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Lesley University
Graduate School of Arts & Social Sciences
Expressive Therapies Division
Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling:
Dance/Movement Therapy, MA

Student's Name: _____Akeila Sharp_____

Type of Project: Thesis

Title: Dance/Movement Therapy and its Implications in a Studio-Based Dance Program: A Community Engagement
project_____

Date of Graduation: _____May 16, 2020_____

In the judgment of the following signatory this thesis meets the academic standards that have been established for the above degree.

Thesis Advisor: _____E Kellogg, PhD_____