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2015

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

The Growth of Civic Engagement Through International Service Learning in Dance

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in Dance

by

Blair Elizabeth Brown

Thesis Committee:
Professor Lisa Naugle, Chair
Associate Professor John Crawford
Assistant Professor Sheron Wray

2015

DEDICATION

To

Movement Exchange, the international organization that “inspires dancers to be more civically engaged global citizens through its network of university chapters, international dance exchanges, and year-round programs in underserved communities.”

To

Movement Exchange UCI, a newly emerging organization at the University of California, Irvine;
And to all the dancers and faculty who are making it possible to create such a wonderful project for undergraduate students to create a sustainable impact on the lives of youth across the globe.

To

Marsha and Dave Baskins; Richard Brown; Andrew Stephen Lee
for being my endless support in life, giving me constant encouragement, and having faith in me.

To

The students who went on this research journey with me and
who gave their hearts to all the people they met in Panama.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: Review of Literature	5
CHAPTER 2: Method	16
CHAPTER 2: Findings: “ <i>Communitas</i> ”	26
Communitas: <i>University to University</i>	28
Communitas: <i>At-Risk Youth Populations</i>	37
Communitas: <i>Taking Action At Home</i>	46
CHAPTER 3: Conclusion	52
REFERENCES	55
APPENDIX A: Panama Exchange Application	57
APPENDIX B: Independent Study Course Syllabus	58
APPENDIX C: Movement Exchange Itinerary	61
APPENDIX D: Panama Exchange Reflection Prompts	65
APPENDIX E: Student Testimonials	67
APPENDIX F: Movement Exchange UCI Club Constitution	69

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express appreciation to my Thesis Committee Chair, Professor and Chair of the Dance Department, Lisa Naugle. I am thankful for her guidance during this project and her mentorship for the UROP and Medici Scholar Program that allowed me to complete this work.

I would like to thank my committee members, Professor John Crawford and Professor Sheron Wray, who showed me the importance of taking risks as an artist while also making leaps to engage the community with dance, technology, and education.

I thank the non-profit organization, *Movement Exchange*, specifically founder Anna Pasternak, for her constant support of this project. She is an inspiration for me to continue working with service-learning in relation to dance and her mentorship keeps me inspired.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude towards the funding supporters of this project, without their generosity this research would not have been possible: The Medici Scholar Program, Claire Trevor School of the arts, Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, Summer Undergraduate Research Program.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Growth of Civic Engagement Through International Service Learning in Dance

By

Blair Elizabeth Brown

Master of Fine Arts in Dance

University of California, Irvine, 2015

Professor Lisa Naugle, Chair

This thesis research project is comprised of a written document, documentary film, and choreographic work. The written research examines the role of international service-learning within higher education dance programs and how such opportunities abroad build a sense of civic responsibility within undergraduate dance students. This project is looking into how and if international service learning in the arts develops personal agency to create change in one's own community as well as internationally. The research was conducted by taking twelve undergraduate students to Panama with the education organization *Movement Exchange* to teach dance in orphanages as well as the National University of Panama. *Movement Exchange* is a non-profit organization dedicated to building civic engagement and cross-cultural exchange within the dance community. The documentary film and choreographic work were presented together at the University of California, Irvine on April 2 and 3, 2015 in the William Gillespie Performance Studio 1100. The presentation consisted of a documentary film entitled *Youth in Movement* and a ten-minute choreographic work entitled *Reflecciones*. The documentary followed the process of the movement exchange to Panama through the lens of the undergraduates who participated in the program, and the choreographic work represented their movement reflections from their experience.

The supporting research paper contained herein examines the themes of civic engagement, service-learning, and international dance practices as they relate to the *Movement Exchange* in Panama. A common finding from the exchange in Panama was an understanding and embodiment of community through dance. The findings of the research draw upon Victor Turner's notion of "communitas" to reflect upon the shared human experiences had through dance with the students in Panama. Connections are made between Turner's writings on "communitas" and the observations of the undergraduates' experience in Panama.

Introduction

My research question for this thesis project was as follows: How does international service learning in dance enhance a student's sense of civic responsibility and personal agency to take continued action in one's home community as well as abroad. The motivation that led me to this question stemmed from wanting undergraduate students to gain a wider perspective on the world. I also had a drive for the undergraduates to deepen their knowledge on who they are as artists and become aware of the many ways in which they can contribute to society through their art form. I was influenced by my previous work with *Movement Exchange* as well as the volunteer placements I had in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New Orleans during my undergraduate career. Based on experience I came to believe that if a group of dancers could travel together to do work focused towards the service of others that the experience would add dimension to their understanding of the relationship between themselves, dance, and social responsibility. I chose to use the practice of service-learning in relation to dance to aid in the understanding of civic engagement and social responsibility in a new way. I wanted to observe if the understanding of civic engagement would bring about a sense of personal agency to not only perform acts of service abroad but also take action in the home community of Orange County.

My interest in service-learning and civic engagement as it relates to the undergraduate experience led me to organize a cross-cultural service learning event in dance to Panama with the non-profit organization *Movement Exchange*. This exchange was cross-cultural in the sense that participating members were born and raised in separate countries, spoke different languages, and practiced diverse cultural customs. I was interested in whether or not this opportunity would influence the students to such an extent that they might continue to explore their civic responsibility in their own or other community after the exchange. I wanted to use this one

project to begin looking into how Movement Exchange develops civic engagement, artistic integrity and reflective growth in the undergraduate student and how I might model some of Movement Exchange's methods.

From my observations I perceive there needs to be a parallel track of awareness in addition to technique training initiated by university dance departments on the social service that dance artists can be doing in underserved communities. Dance training requires many years of dedication to acquire technical skills for performance. For ballet dancers in particular, the use of the mirror creates a situation where the individual dancer spends a great deal of time looking at him/herself as an object in the mirror. Within the context of competing for dance roles, perceived judgments from peers and teachers in the studio, and frequent attention on oneself in the mirror, an intensified focus on oneself is created (Green, 81). This type of focus on the self is in sharp contrast to the kind of outward attention necessary for engagement with others, both in performance and in engaging with one's community of dancers, colleagues, audience members, teachers and students.

While beginning my graduate studies at the University of California, Irvine, I noticed that many of the undergraduate dancers had a singular focus in their practice. Though the dancers were pushed in their technical and performance abilities, I did not see many moments where the dancers were being offered opportunities or asked to give back in the form of service to the Orange County or the international community. UC Irvine does offer the *Creative Connections* internship program that I have been a part of for the past two years. It places UC Irvine students in local schools to teach their specific art form. This program is a wonderful opportunity but it is also highly selective and usually has between two to three dance students participating each year.

There have been initiatives and exchanges started by many dancers that aim to connect the civic responsibility that dancers have to their local and international community. Experiences such as the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange, New York University's Uganda Exchange, Americans for the Arts, UC Irvine's trips to Ghana, Italy, and Spain have already proven successful. There is space for something different in the field that I would like to add to, and I see that as the practice known as service learning in regards to dance. Service learning is the act of participating in volunteer work that is connected to academic curriculum and has learning outcomes associated with a service project as well as ample time for reflection. In addition, civic responsibility is the understanding that an individual has a role within a given community and has a responsibility to take part in that community by giving back, interacting with its citizens, and becoming politically invested. Service learning is one method of creating a sense of civic engagement in young dancers, and this study looks at how service learning, specifically in a cross cultural community, can enhance the civic responsibility of undergraduate dancer majors.

This study explores the purpose and placement of service learning in the undergraduate experience for dance majors. Additionally, I am interested in investigating UCI as a model of how university dance departments can promote an understanding of the civic responsibility artists hold in carrying culture and sharing with other cultures around the world. Dance attempts to educate the whole person and such opportunities in service learning could add to that education because it necessarily requires practical skill and knowledge towards community engagement, interpersonal communication as well as empathy and understanding.

Defining a Central Term

The word community has been brought up throughout the research project and has become a central term involved with the exchange. When I speak about “a community” I refer to a group of people who share a social and communal life together. When I refer to “communitas” I bring in Victor Turner’s definition of the term to imply the feeling of a sense of community in the intangible moments shared between human beings.

Background

In the summer of 2012, I ventured to the country of Panama with the non-profit organization, *Movement Exchange*, to teach dance to at-risk youth and university students as well as take dance classes from local professionals. *Movement Exchange’s* mission statement: “Movement Exchange fosters civic engagement, cross-cultural understanding, and creative expression through dance and service. Movement Exchange provides dance education to underserved populations, both locally and internationally” (www.movementexchanges.org). Anna Pasternak, founder of *Movement Exchange* dreamed of an experience that would allow trained dancers to use their specialty skills to give back to underserved populations. While living in Panama and working for an NGO, Pasternak had this thought and decided to pull her resources together between the United States and Panama to do a one time cultural dance exchange. She received support from the US Embassy as well as the National University of Panama to initiate the cross-cultural exchange. The first trip was produced in 2010 and proved to be a success, which led to the foundation of the organization *Movement Exchange* (November 3, 2014, group discussion). The non-profit now holds one open-call exchange a year for dance professionals and also hosts many exchanges for university chapter affiliated clubs. They recently expanded their efforts and had their first open call exchange to India in January 2015.

Review of Literature

Civic Engagement

Many educators, researchers, and social and political activists believe that higher education plays a role in influencing students' ability to think critically about their role in the community. Higher education institutions not only deliver Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees but also have a responsibility in forming well-rounded citizens before they enter the work force as adults. Educational scholar, Thomas Ehrlich edited the book titled *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, in which many authors address what they perceive to be the problems between higher education and moral character building and the lack of civic activities in the community. Authors examine what universities are currently putting into practice to aid in the civic engagement of their student population and also suggest ways in which this practice could be improved upon. In the opening paragraph of the preface to his book, Ehrlich mentions the key point to the importance of this issue at hand, "Our society requires civic engagement to realize the potential of its citizens and its communities...education is the key to that engagement" (v). It is believed by many authors presented in this text that higher education needs to create opportunities for its students to have experience in the community to connect one's civic responsibility with academic intellect.

Linda Sax, professor at UCLA for Higher Education and Organizational Change, wrote about the heightened participation in civic engagement activities when the student body and the school itself are promoting that kind of behavior, "First is the positive effect of a commitment to social activism among the student body at the institution...they tend to become even more committed to these goals if they attend a college where other students espouse a social activist

mentality” (13). In her concluding paragraph she states a message to university programs in ways that they can further the development of civic engagement in their student body:

Therefore, the message to institutions is to provide a wide variety of opportunities for student involvement, particularly in ways that expose students’ to a diversity of people and issues. The more involved and connected students become during college, the more likely they will seek out forms of involvement in their communities after college...education for citizenship can be accomplished more broadly by encouraging students to become active and proactive participants in the learning process by pursuing their own interests and making meaningful connections with students and faculty (17).

Anne Colby is an education researcher and consulting professor at Stanford University and notes in her book *Educating Citizens: Preparing America’s Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility* that curriculum focused on civic engagement should include the following elements: “...active learning, learning as a social process, knowledge shaped by contexts, reflective practice, and capacity to represent an idea in more than one modality.” Arthur and Davison as well as Welch look to the work of Richard Battistoni, professor of political science at Providence College who specializes in the research of civic engagement and service learning. Battistoni created eight skill sets that students should possess to be engaged citizens and they are as follows: “Political knowledge and critical thinking skills, communication skills, public problem solving, civic judgment, civic imagination and creativity, collective action, community/coalition building; and organizational analysis” (Welch, 104). In chapter 2 I will refer to four of the eight skills as they relate to the findings of the research. It is agreed by the presented educational scholars that experiential learning should be a key component of curriculum because of its promotion to educate the whole person. Although, in order to have service learning practices be productive growth opportunities for students, experiences provided need to ensure that they are addressing specific learning outcomes. My specific learning

outcomes for this experience were for the students to learn how to properly develop creative dance lesson plans, work collaboratively with one another, develop an understanding of civic engagement and cultural respect, and to think critically about how they can use dance as a means for social change in Irvine.

Ehrlich's definition of civic engagement: "At the core of the issue, civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community..." (vii). Given Ehrlich's definition there are many examples where dance engages civic responsibility such as Liz Lerman's Dance Exchange¹ and Civic Engagement in America and the Arts². The new piece of information I am investigating that is different from the previously mentioned organizations is that of service learning and sustainability. When *Movement Exchange* decides to start a program in a new country, they commit to not only bringing US volunteers abroad to teach, but to also pay local dance instructors to keep teaching in the orphanages when volunteers are not present. Many American dance companies around the country will give workshops to the community when they tour, but it is a one time event and the people they interact with may never have dance again until that particular company returns. *Movement Exchange* engages with a community by creating a sustainable dance program so that all participating children engage in year round dance programs

¹ Dance Exchange breaks boundaries between stage and audience, theater and community, movement and language, tradition and the unexplored. Founded in 1976 by Liz Lerman and now under the artistic direction of Cassie Meador, Dance Exchange stretches the range of contemporary dance through explosive dancing, personal stories, humor, and a company of performers whose ages span six decades. The work consists of concerts, interactive performances, community residencies, and professional training in community-based dance. Dance Exchange employs a collaborative approach to dance making and administration. Recent and current projects include explorations of coal mining, genetic research, human rights, particle physics, ecology, land use, and rest in a hyper-driven society. <http://danceexchange.org/about/mission-vision/>

² Our mission is to serve, advance, and lead the network of organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts in America. Connecting your best ideas and leaders from the arts, communities, and business, together we can work to ensure that every American has access to the transformative power of the arts. We believe the arts transform the lives of at-risk youth by providing powerful tools to spark curiosity, stimulate downturned economies, students into engaged learners and active thinkers, dialogues about diversity and help us celebrate our differences, and cultural understanding helping people make connections around the world. <http://www.americansforthearts.org/about-americans-for-the-arts>

Service Learning

Service learning involves the combination of experiential learning, community activities, and structured reflection in relation to academic content, whereas community service simply involves the community activity without reflection or academic ties. Ehrlich again makes mention of the fact that many universities attempt the teaching of civic engagement by striving to have questions of morality reflected in their coursework, while others instill community outreach programs that promote experiential and service learning, “Colleges and universities try to promote civic responsibility through both curricular and cocurricular programs, including service-learning programs and problem-based learning courses” (xxx). From what I have observed being a student in higher education, there are often university departments dedicated to service and outreach within a university, but they are rarely connected to the curriculum of an academic course.

Service learning, as defined by educator Edward Zlotkowski in his article *The Case for Service Learning* states, “For an activity to be considered service-learning in the full sense of the term, it must evidence: explicit, assessable learning objectives, community-sponsored activities that promote civic responsibility, structured, multi-layered reflection opportunities...” (45). Service learning is the meeting point between volunteer, philanthropy work and experiential education in regards to pre-professional training. The reflection component is what makes it unique and connecting the social engagement piece with the academic curriculum in an active way differentiates this learning module (Zlotkowski, 45).

Engaging in service learning gives opportunity for experiencing community practices, interactions, and cultural customs first hand through observation or involvement with individuals. It gives way for students to learn from community experience, to stay civically

minded as they mature into professional adults. There is a different sense of accomplishment when working with hands on projects; there is a different product than what might result from being in a classroom. It elevates the role of practice based learning versus theoretical learning; students have a chance to apply the knowledge they have gained in the classroom by practicing it in real life situations. Marshall Welch wrote an article titled *Identifying and Teaching Civic Engagement Skills through Service Learning* and speaks about the outcomes of service collaborations: “The reality of ‘coming through’ with an actual product for a community partner transcended previous learning experiences of submitting papers or passing an exam” (114). Going out into one’s community and giving back or connecting with the inhabitants gives way to deeper learning and understanding because of embodied experience.

Thomas Batchelder and Susan Root conducted a study on the effects of service-learning on undergraduate college students titled Effect of an undergraduate program to integrate academic learning and service: cognitive, prosocial cognitive, and identity outcomes. Both authors conducted this research by evaluating students both in non service learning courses and service learning courses and tracked their journal entries throughout the course. The following statement comes from the results that they collected from the study:

Service-learning students demonstrated greater resolve to act in the face of acknowledged uncertainty and greater awareness of the multiple dimensions and variability involved in dealing with social problems...The participants made greater gains than students in traditional classes on several dimensions of thinking about social problems, such as multidimensionality. Service-learning appears to have influenced participants’ use of prosocial decision-making and advanced forms of prosocial reasoning as well as their tendency to reflect on occupational identity issues (352 – 354).

The value of service-learning has been studied and evaluated and as a result there seems to be an added want for service learning to take part in the curriculum in higher education (Welch, 103).

Most service learning activities are through education science departments, political science departments, or service and outreach departments. This work sets out to contribute to the research in service learning as it relates to arts education. Artists have a unique ability to connect with people from a specific community by creating music, dance or visual art together.

Experiential Learning

Service learning is connected to the practice of experiential learning; it allows for academic learning through experience in a given community. Higher education plays a role in the development of not only academic intelligence, but also character and social/emotional intelligence. Character cannot be nurtured only in the classroom; outside experiences related to classroom curriculum can help stimulate self-reflection and discovery, which leads to the building of citizenship. In their article, *Experiential Learning, Social Literacy, and the Curriculum*, James Arthur and Jon Davison look at the placement of experiential learning in the curriculum, “Pupils need to develop active, collaborative, and cooperative working patterns focused on real problems in a real community - what is variously called service learning, community-based learning, community participation, community education, or experiential learning”. Arthur and Davison go on to provide their own definition for experiential learning: “We define it as the knowledge, skills, and understanding acquired through observation, simulation, and/or participation by engaging the mind and/or body through activity, reflection, and application. It should facilitate pupils’ affective and cognitive development. Experiential learning is therefore about doing something that integrates concrete experiences with reflective observations about the experience”. Paula Garb, professor of anthropology, international studies, and peace and conflict studies at UCI leads many international experiential learning exchanges

for students. She helped create the program at UCI called the *Olive Tree Initiative* and has years of experience creating and leading these types of exchanges. Professor Garb stated: “[students] never forget what they learn when they learn it through experience” (personal interview, March 8, 2015), which is another promoter for this type of learning. Experience is embodied and lived and for that reason, the content learned and challenges met and overcome are never forgotten; these experiences stay in the long-term memory and guide future choices and passions.

Peer Learning

Within the collaboration needed during experiential learning, working with peers on problem solving is essential. I anticipate that peer learning is another practice within the realm of experiential learning that will be used highly during the exchange in Panama. K.J. Topping, professor of psychology at the University of Dundee in Scotland defines peer learning as, “...people from similar social groupings who are not professional teachers helping each other to learn and learning themselves by teaching” (322). KJ Topping discusses the work of Robert Sternberg, a lead researcher in the field of education and intelligence who is known for his theory of Information Processing, in relation to the cognitive benefits of peer learning. In reflecting about Sternberg’s Triarchic Theory of Intelligence, Topping mentions several of Sternberg’s components of peer tutoring that effect cognitive thinking, “...the cognitive processes of perceiving, differentiating, selecting, storing, inferring, applying, combining, justifying, and responding. Just preparing to be a peer tutor has been proposed to enhance cognitive processing...by increasing attention to and motivation for the task, and necessitating review of existing knowledge and skills” (324). Thomas Ehrlich also mentions life skills that he has noticed come out of service learning and civic engagement, which relate to Sternberg’s list:

“...abilities to communicate clearly orally and in writing; to collect, organize, and analyze information; to think critically and to justify positions with reasoned arguments; to see issues from the perspective of others; and to collaborate with others. They also include the ability and willingness to lead, to build consensus, and to move a group forward under conditions of mutual respect” (xxvii). Peer learning can be seen to have many benefits on the growth of the emerging adult but the skills learned are best developed through hands on tasks and experiences.

John Dewey

Many of the sampled texts on service-learning and civic engagement have spoken about “education of the whole person.” When I use this phrase I refer to John Dewey’s notion of the whole child in relation to his/her education. John Dewey lived from 1859 – 1952 as an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer whose ideas have greatly influenced modern day educational and social reform. When he speaks about the child as a whole person he connects many topics back to experiential learning and education through practice to build practical skills needed in the adult world. In his book, *Moral Principles in Education*, Dewey discusses his notion of the whole child that many educators have adopted today,

The child is an organic whole, intellectually, socially, and morally, as well as physically...The child must be educated for leadership as well as for obedience. He must have power of self-direction and power of directing others, power of administration, ability to assume positions of responsibility. This necessity of educating for leadership is as great on the industrial as on the political side (8-10).

John Dewey believed strongly in the power of the arts as there is a connection between art making and experiential learning. John Dewey wrote an entire text titled *Art as Experience*, and many art educators today look toward his philosophies for teaching in the classroom. Patricia

Goldblatt, program officer at the Ontario College of Teachers wrote an article titled *How John Dewey's Theories Underpin Art and Art Education*, which analyzes the connection between art education and moral responsibility:

For Dewey, art functions as experience. Processes of inquiry, looking and finding meaning are transformative, extending connections with what is good and right...*Transformative experiences* occur when people intuit new concepts that occasion seeing in valued ways. Art communicates moral purpose and education...Changed perceptions, increased interest, and moral sensitivity engender thoughts and actions in regard to societal roles and responsibilities (Goldblatt, 18).

Dewey and his followers make clear connections between the development of the whole, moral, and responsible child and the importance of art education and experience in building that character. Experience through artistic practice leads to the building of leadership skill, practice, and transformation.

Communitas

Putting into practice the theories of experiential learning, service learning, and peer learning at the aims of achieving a greater sense of civic engagement brings about the spirit of communitas as is defined by Victor Turner. The results of this research project further strengthened Turner's notion of communitas in relation to dance service. Social critic and poet, Paul Goodman first claimed the word "communitas" in 1947 for his book, *Communitas*, which was later picked up by anthropologist, Victor Turner, in his 1969 publication *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. While Turner's use of the word communitas refers more to a community and system of interactions between human beings, Goodman's use of the word refers more to community urban planning and political structures (Goodman, 5-11). Turner's research into Africanist ritual and African social structures developed his meaning of the word

communitas. I summate Turner's definition of communitas into the intangible experience of a deep human connection, created outside of social structures and hierarchies with true equality of spirit in a short moment of time (Turner, 96-165).

Turner classifies communitas into three categories, the one that is most important to me for this research is spontaneous communitas. Spontaneous communitas is not a lasting entity but rather in existence for short spurts of time, "We are presented...with a 'moment in and out of time.' and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals...some recognition...of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties" (96). This moment in time however short it may be often feels timeless because of the embodied shared equality that exists. Having this feeling gives the notion of being out of structured time because in our world we live such structured lives in a set hierarchy that when it is demolished one is left with a profound sensation. When we abandon ourselves from the structure to be in the present moment in relationship with other individuals we are, "giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be *no society*" (97).

Turner's influence has become far reaching over the past forty years and has influenced thinking in the fields of anthropology, religion, sociology, and education to name a few. Tim

Olaveson wrote about Victor Turner's theory of communitas:

...the 'quick' of human-interrelatedness, devoid of judgmentality; it is comprised of egalitarian, direct, non-rational bonds between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals who are equal in terms of a shared humanity...The experience of communitas is also usually a 'deep' or intense one, and belongs in the intuitive or emotional realm, as opposed to the rational one (Olaveson, 104).

Turner explained the effects of *communitas* that connects to the core value of this research; “What they seek is a transformative experience that goes to the root of each person’s being and finds in that root something profoundly communal and shared” (Turner, 138).

Turner speaks about the cycle that occurs between experiencing *communitas* and taking that feeling forward to create change. Spontaneous *communitas* is experienced in short bursts of time, in moments that transcend the tangible structure of society and allow you to connect to others in a real way. In his writing he mentions the need to experience *communitas* regularly but also be able to apply it to the structures of daily life, “Spontaneous *communitas* has something ‘magical’ about it. Subjectively there is in it the feeling of endless power. But this power untransformed cannot readily be applied to the organizational details of social existence. It is no substitute for lucid thought and sustained will” (139). There is a cycle between experiencing service learning, sharing common humanity through the work, and then using the knowledge of that experience to influence the civic life in a given community. It is this cycle that was at the root of the method to the research and influenced the resulted findings.

Method

The research project examined the role of international service learning within higher education dance programs and how such opportunities abroad build a sense of civic responsibility within undergraduate dance students. I was interested in looking into how and if international service learning in the arts develops personal agency to create change in one's own community as well as internationally. The tools that I used for conducting my research were preparation classes, journaling, video, oral reflection, one to one interviews, the hands on experience in Panama, observation, and dance making.

Preparation Classes

In Spring 2013, I solicited attention from undergraduate students about their interest in participating in the *Movement Exchange* program for a summer trip to Panama. I placed flyers in the dance studios, locker rooms and went to dance technique classes to talk about the project. I then held an informational meeting, provided more information to the attendees, and also learned about their knowledge and interest in dance, service, and travel. I created an application to select students for participation in my research project (Appendix A). I was initially looking for ten students to participate because I felt that any more than that might be too large of a study. Of the thirty-one initial interested students, twenty-five were dance majors which equates to one sixth of the dance department. Twelve undergraduates completed the application, and upon reading their statements, I made the decision to select the ones who expressed a very strong passion for service work. I knew four of the students before beginning our process, the others were new to me.

In preparation for the trip, we met every two weeks for three months with the basic agenda being discussion of the topics such as Panamanian history and culture, Anne Gilbert's

BrainDance, lesson planning strategies, financial planning and grant writing. A detailed syllabus is provided in Appendix B. My pedagogical goal for the participants prior to arriving in Panama was to have them begin learning the *BrainDance*³ work of Anne Green Gilbert⁴ so that we could incorporate that material into the lesson plans in Panama. Gilbert created the *BrainDance* in 2000 as a way to actively address cognitive development through motor skills. The *BrainDance* consists of eight movement patterns that derive from Rudolph Laban's Body Category of movement analysis, and when these patterns are performed in order, Gilbert has seen that students are more focused because they are stimulating their central nervous system and brains. I have found the *BrainDance* to be useful in my teaching experience because it is an accessible tool for working with students of all ages and technical abilities. It was for this reason that I wanted to pass along this teaching module to my undergraduate students at UC Irvine before traveling to Panama. After doing the Summer Dance Intensive for Teachers with Anne Gilbert I was more informed and able to share the information. I taught the research participants the fundamental movement patterns of the *BrainDance* and then asked them to create their own *BrainDance* within the theme or movement concept of their lesson plan. The material they created in these preparatory meetings gave them a base for what would later be taught in Panama.

³ Developed by Anne Green Gilbert, the *BrainDance* is a series of exercises comprised of eight developmental movement patterns that healthy human beings naturally move through in the first year of life. As babies, we did these movements on our tummies, sides, and back on the floor. However, cycling through these patterns at any age, daily or weekly while sitting or standing, has been found to be beneficial in reorganizing our central nervous system. Repeating these patterns over time may help us fill in any missing gaps in our neurological system due to birth trauma, illness, environment, head injury or not enough floor time as a baby. This "dance" is an excellent full body and brain warm-up for children and adults and can be done in any setting.

⁴ Anne Green Gilbert founded the Creative Dance Center and Kaleidoscope Dance Company in Seattle, Washington in 1981. Anne is recognized as one of the leading dance educators throughout the United States and abroad. Anne is the author of *Teaching the Three Rs Through Movement*, *Creative Dance for All Ages*, *Brain-Compatible Dance Education*, *Teaching Creative Dance* (DVD) and *BrainDance* (DVD), as well as numerous articles. Anne is also an active member of the National Dance Association, National Dance Education Organization, and Dance and the Child International. Anne has received numerous awards including the WAHPERD Honor Award, NDA Outstanding Dance Educator Award (Northwest District), the 1999 AAHPERD Honor Award, and the 2005 NDA Scholar/Artist Award, and was featured in *Dance Teacher Magazine* May 2006. In October 2011 the National Dance Education Organization presented Anne with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The Exchange

On September 13, 2014 all undergraduates from UC Irvine arrived in Panama for our exchange. Our daily activities consisted of teaching at the National University of Panama every morning and conducting dance classes in orphanages and at-risk youth foundations in the afternoons. The foundations that we worked with were Danilo Perez, Aldea SOS in Colon and Panama City, and Fundacion Gente Y Cultura. We also had cultural excursions to the Panama Canal, Casco Viejo⁵, and Cerro Ancon⁶. An additional three days were spent on the San Blas Islands⁷ staying on the island of Nalunega in a Kuna⁸ village (Trip Itinerary Appendix C).

The structure of interaction between UC Irvine and the National University of Panama was reciprocal and understanding. UCI students gave master classes in their specialty forms and both North American and Panamanian students participated as students. The Panamanian undergraduate students also gave workshops to the UCI group in the forms they were most familiar. The interactions at the orphanages operated as workshops, community building activities, and playtime bonding. UCI students had the role of teacher and mentor to the younger children.

⁵ Originally built and settled in 1671 after the destruction of Panama Viejo, by Captain Henry Morgan, Casco Viejo Panama (also known as Casco Antiguo & San Felipe) was constructed as a walled city on a peninsula off of Panama City to protect its settlers against another siege such as that suffered in Panama Viejo only 8 kilometers away www.cascoviejo.org

⁶ Ancón Hill is the highest spot in Panama City, reaching an altitude of 199 meters, and from its summit you can overlook Panama City, the Panama Canal, Amador Causeway and Albrook. After Old Panama was destroyed from the attack by pirate Henry Morgan, the city authorities decided to relocate it where they could build a protective wall and have a fresh water supply. They selected the site of today's Old Town, or the colonial city, because its rocky soil was perfect for the wall they wanted to build and a nearby creek called El Chorrillo flowed down from Ancón Hill. This source of water to the city suddenly became part of the canal territory when treaties were signed that provided the Americans with eight kilometers on either side of the canal for their operations. Once Ancón Hill was back under Panama's control, the government hoisted a flag there the size of a basketball court as a symbol of sovereignty. That is why the hill has been declared a National Historical Heritage of Panama site. www.visitpanama.com

⁷ The San Blas islands are a group of islands in the archipelago de San Blas, located in the Northwest of Panama facing the Caribbean Sea. There are 378 islands within the archipelago and they are scattered around in an area of about 100 square miles. If you leave the Golfo de San Blas by boat you will enter the Caribbean Sea. The majority of the 378 islands have no inhabitants, but on the larger ones you will find the gentle native people known as the Kuna's. www.sanblas-islands.com

⁸ With approximately 60,000 members the Kuna* represent the largest indigenous group in Panama. The worldwide second smallest people after the pygmies populate the 360 islands in the San Blas archipelago and the narrow strip on the Caribbean coast of Panama and Colombia since the 18th century. While the Kuna who settled in Panama City mostly work as cooks or unskilled workers, the Kuna in the traditional communities are still engaged in agriculture, fishing, and trading with coco nuts. The biggest part of the financial power belongs to the women, who, by selling their Molasses, are responsible for the main part of the family income. <http://www.panama-mola.com/kunaindios-en.htm>

Journals and Reflective Practice

At the first UCI group meeting all students were given a journal to keep throughout the preparation, exchange, and reflection process. The journals would not be collected as data, but the material within the journals would be drawn upon for group reflections and discussions. While in Panama, every night before our group reflection I gave journal prompts so the participants could write and gather their thoughts before presenting their ideas publicly to the group. Writing helped the participants to clarify their emotions and reactions to events that happened during the day as well as have a safe place to express their inner thoughts due to the trust between our group members. I made a decision not to collect the participants' journals so that they knew the journal was truly a place for personal outlet. I had one student that did not feel connected to the journal and did not do much writing but participated fully in reflection discussions. All other students did use their journals daily to write down thoughts and record their experience. The students were most engaged with their journals during our pre-trip meetings and seemed to be less engaged with writing in them while in Panama. We were experiencing an exorbitant amount of information during the trip and I observed that the students had a hard time processing and writing while the stimuli was still fresh around them. Due to this lack of vigor for writing that occurred during the exchange, I responded and changed my method asking them to do a one-word response to topics and ideas instead of writing paragraph responses. This gave them another way for reflecting with words that was less comprehensive since their minds and emotions seemed to be overwhelmed. Many students started to write more in their journals and online blogs to process the experience once we returned to UCI. At the end of the exchange, all the participants wrote letters thanking me for the experience and notes from those letters can be found in Appendix E.

Video Observation

All reflections and interviews throughout the entire process were recorded both on video and audio recorders and used to support content in the research paper and the documentary film. I video recorded all dance classes in Panama and all group reflections. By having live video footage of the exchange as well as one-to-one interviews over an extended period of time, I was able to track the growth of the undergraduates through this process. Viewing and editing footage for the documentary allowed for ample time of processing and analyzing reflections, scenarios, and situations that occurred in Panama. Having video footage from the yearlong process allowed me to compare and contrast the participants thoughts from before and after the exchange in Panama. I could also constantly rewind and watch interactions that happened while the students were teaching in Panama and analyze how their collaboration and problem solving skills were being developed.

Oral Reflection

While in Panama, every evening we came back to our hostel, Magnolia Inn, and I led a group reflection. We started our reflections with personal “Apples and Onions” of day; the positive/negative moments had by each student. We then proceeded to discuss a series of questions that centered around the topics of cultural awareness, the impact of dance in service work, the role of travel in an artist’s life, and the civic responsibility of dancers (Appendix D). I arrived at the reflection questions based on my review of literature and what topics and questions came up with the participants after my first set of one to one interviews prior to the trip.

Having these structured reflections every night really connected the experience with the academic content and made the practice of service learning complete, which reaffirmed Zlotkowski’s notion that service-learning must have opportunity for structured reflection. For

example, students were able to see and experience firsthand how the *BrainDance* could be used with at-risk youth and during reflection participants were noting that they were now actively thinking about the cognitive development of the orphans while they were teaching dance. Participants also began to understand through reflection the importance of dance in the Panamanian youths' lives and were able to have vocabulary and vocalize their reasoning. Reflection was also a place where the students were able to brainstorm and discuss the ways in which they wanted to bring their Panama experience into action back at UCI. Even though students were often tired at the end of the day, everyone enjoyed coming together to discuss what we had experienced and dialogue often extended to consider what that meant for their futures and the future of dance.

One to One Interviews

I conducted one to one interviews with the participants before and after the exchange and all interviews were voluntary and not mandatory. Before leaving for Panama, I asked the twelve students if any of them would be willing to do a one to one interview with me, and eight agreed. During this interview process I was able to accumulate knowledge on what the students felt and expected of the project, as well as their reflections on the many aspects of the preparation process. I conducted my last series of one to one interviews in January 2015 and observed the students' actions so that I could assess if the students were interested in continuing the work we started in Panama. I was eager to understand how Panama had influenced their career choices, their dance practice, and their outlook on the communities they call home. From the interviews and observations I wanted to get more specific about in what ways they would actualize agency in a community.

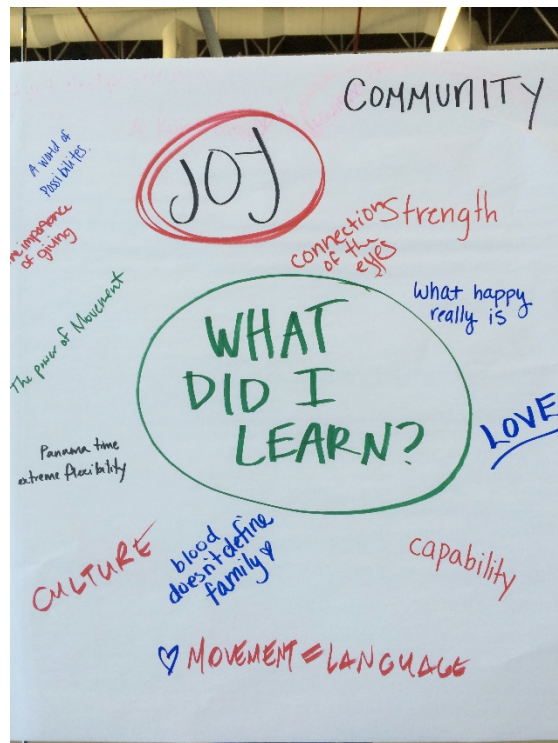
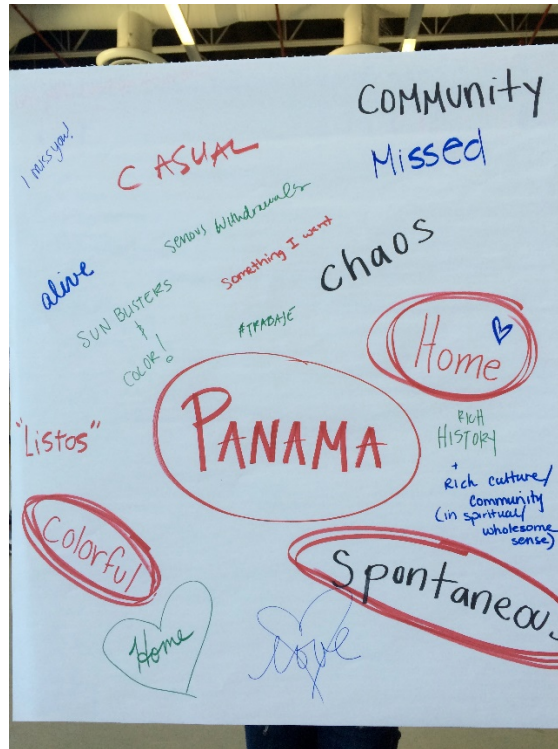
While in Panama, I also conducted one time personal interviews with Anays Labrador, the Chair of the Dance Department at the National University of Panama and Walkiria Pimentel, one of leaders at Malambo Orphange. Once I returned to UC Irvine, I conducted personal interviews with Paula Garb, professor of peace and conflict studies and anthropology, and Daniel Brunstetter, professor of political science and faculty director of UCI study abroad. I conducted an interview with Anna Pasternak, founder of *Movement Exchange*, and Kimberly Lucht, university chapters coordinator for *Movement Exchange*. I wanted to conduct these interviews with professors and working professionals to get a broader perspective on the importance of the experience in Panama.

Post Exchange Dance Reflection

My post-exchange analysis process involved observing and reading interviews, video footage, and Internet blog entries. Upon returning from the exchange I kept daily reflections in a journal about my thoughts on the trip. I wrote about topics such as perspective, mentoring, community, reverse culture shock, and the impact on the undergraduates. My process for digesting the experience was reading the students' blogs, watching the video footage and then free writing in reaction to what I observed.

Throughout the fall quarter I created a choreographic work with the undergraduates as a reflection of our experience. Through group discussion, word charts, and improvisation the students began to create their own movement vocabulary that was derivative of their experience in Panama. I observed that the movement they created had texture and life; the movement was coming from a deeply personal place and I saw the emotion in their faces come through during performance. I assembled these personal pieces of movement into a ten-minute piece titled *Reflecciones* that was shown at the New Slate graduate dance concert in December 2014. This

work was a collaboration between myself and the students as a combined reflection of our experience in Panama. This venue gave the participants their first outlet for sharing what they learned in Panama to the population at UC Irvine.



(As a group we created word charts reflecting on our experience when we came back to Irvine. These word charts were the starting points for our movement creation for Reflecciones. UC Irvine; October 2015)



(Cast Picture, New Slate 2014, *Reflecciones*; December 13, 2014)

Findings: “*Communitas*”

Based on observations of the UCI participants while they were teaching and having reflection, three major themes deepened in understanding over the course of this research (April 2014 - April 2015). These three themes of action included: communication, collaboration, connection, and love. All three actions affected each other while working in Panama: effective communication was needed to collaborate, collaboration resulted in a deepening connection, and strong connections allowed for positive communication and collaboration. As a result of the participants embodying these three components, they were able to understand the practice and concept of *communitas*.

Communication was a key component to the experience because in many instances the participants were using their bodies and movement to communicate instructions and ideas to the Panamanian students. They began to see dance as a form of communication between human beings, which then brought about a deepening of connection between participants from both countries. Collaboration between the undergraduates while teaching created a necessity to bond with each other in order to teach an effective lesson. The language barrier in existence between North American and Panamanian participants caused teacher and student to collaborate while conducting classes. There were also many different tasks that arose during the trip that had a need for problem solving such as weather conditions, space layouts, and the number of children taking each class, which in turn created a need for improvised collaboration between the UCI participants. Their necessity to collaborate for effective communication resulted in successful dance classes that allowed for personal connections to be made with the children in the orphanages and the undergraduates at the National University of Panama. The use of the body and dance movement allowed for deep connections to be made in a different way than the use of

words and language. They were able to form deep friendships and have meaningful moments of social interaction because of the vulnerability and community building that takes place through dance.

Thomas Ehrlich mentions a set of life skills that develop as a result of service learning and civic engagement and three of those are the ability to collaborate with others, the ability to lead, and the capacity to think critically. I saw these life skills practiced by the UCI participants in Panama when they were using effective communication while teaching, solving problems as a group, and thinking about their role in society as a result of connections made with local Panamanian youth. Additionally, in Richard Battestoni's eight principles of an engaged citizen, public problem solving and community building are both listed. Building community, or moments of *communitas*, involves organization, problem solving, collaboration and leadership. I observed the UCI participants actively using Battestoni and Ehrlich's skills while building moments of *communitas* with the Panamanian students that ultimately brought about shifts in identity and perspective.

I observed the elevated relevance of embodying *communitas* as a feature of development in this research that was of great importance. The abilities for interpersonal communication were made more evident and allowed for the intangible moments of connection that led the students to feel and understand *communitas*. The indescribable moments of personal relationship ultimately made the shift in perspective and personal agency for the participants. I observed how the collaboration, problem solving, and peer support set up an environment in which to establish meaningful personal connections, and those connections ultimately have led to collective action and civic creativity back in Orange County.

Communitas: University To University

Peer Learning

A cross-cultural relationship began when the Dance Department at the University of California, Irvine, and the Dance Department at the National University of Panama exchanged dance practices by teaching one another master classes in their own particular specialties. The relationship developed in an educational environment through the process of dance and movement sessions for the two groups of university dance majors. The relationship formed through daily peer-to-peer activities over a one-week period in which all students had varied proficiency in different dance forms and they all shared in the equality of learning from and with each other (Boud, 4). UCI students were learning from being teachers and were helping their US and Panamanian peers learn something new about their related field.

The relationship that exists between the undergraduate students at the National University of Panama is unusually supportive and unusually encouraging because of their vocal supports to one another and their hands on corrections to friends and peers while taking dance class. The UCI students were affected by the comradeship displayed by the Panamanians, and had an inner turmoil about their perceived lack of comradeship back in their own school environment. UCI participant, Jazmine Curie stated the following in reflection: “For me its really taught me how impactful a sense of community can be when you’re dancing. Like to be around these kids who, when one of them falls down the other will pick the other up...and at the university how everyone’s just like helping us out, helping each other out. They are so in it together. I’ve never seen that before in dance...It’s incredible how different it is to have a sense of community in dance” (group reflection, September 17, 2014). The Panamanian undergraduates helped each other physically in classes giving hands on corrections to each other, and it was not seen as

invasive or rude, but just a part of the normal social structure. This peer support gave a comfortability to the environment and social dynamic of the class. One of the US participants Sara Schroerlucke spoke about the similarities and the differences she felt between the two dance departments:

I mean there were a lot of differences between our type of university and their type of university in dance. Just by observing in class today, they all were really supporting each other, they had each other's backs, and they were helping each other...I feel like we are also that way, but it's hard to tell when you're in class...everything is so independent and individually based because you are really trying to work on yourself, that you don't really think about supporting each other. In a community based class setting I felt more comfortable. (September 15, 2014, group reflection with author).

Despite the differences in perceived peer support and community, reflection on these ideas helped bring out a deep-rooted sense of connection and similarity. One of the US participants Simon Harrison, noted, "We're dance majors who are interested in dance for a reason and I feel like they have that same passion" (September 15, 2014, group reflection with author). There was an understanding that even though the two groups came from different backgrounds, there was a shared common humanity. The participants were able to see and feel this connection because of dance and movement, which ultimately gave them moments of experiencing spontaneous *communitas*. Elizabeth Tuttle, third year UCI dance major, noted that she felt she created a bond deeper than friendship with the Panamanian students because of the use of dance and the body (September 19, 2014, group reflection with author). Elizabeth was referring to the vulnerability and honesty that exists between two human beings when they are using touch and the body to connect, versus surface level oral conversation that arises when two people do not know each other. Her reflection touched on the theme of love that evolved out this project; she had an understanding of love and compassion as a result of the deeper interactions that took place

between herself and the Panamanian students. The UCI undergraduates were able to see how students with their same academic major live their lives and use their bodies in a different university and country. There was deep satisfaction in getting to know peer dance majors of the same age and with the same passion.

In the book *Peer Learning in Higher Education*, editor David Boud comments on the different motivation developed as a result of peer learning: “The advantage in learning from people we know is that they are, or have been, in a similar position to ourselves. They have faced the same challenges as we have in the same context, they talk to us in our own language and we can ask them what may appear, in other situations, to be silly questions.” (1) I noticed the UCI students were the most nervous before they taught at the National University of Panama compared to teaching at the orphanages because they were teaching their peers, “Well, I personally was very nervous this whole morning...but just being able to give your own sort of movement, what you want to give to them, and that they were just so willing to accept it was really heart-warming. When they would finally get [the movement] right they would scream and it was so great, I loved it” (Shirine Rehmani, group reflection, September 15, 2014). Even though there was a comfort in being surrounded by dancers of the same age, there was also a motivational drive to show knowledge and creativity to one’s colleagues and when they were successful in the task it was deeply satisfying.

Collaboration

Before teaching at the university, I noticed the students had a different sense of engagement than I had observed back at UCI because of their commitment to create detailed lesson plans, rehearse their ideas before teaching, and take leadership roles in the classroom and

within their own cohort. They had to work collaboratively before and during the exchange to execute their lessons well. Students demonstrated in action the concepts mentioned by KJ Topping and Thomas Ehrlich in the review of literature. There was communication, listening, preparation and planning, time management, direction, leadership, deconstruction and construction, and reflection while teaching dance classes with a partner. UCI participants were paired up in teams to co-teach at the National University of Panama, so participants had to decide together what dance form they would teach, what music they would use, as well as choreograph their exercises and combinations. While preparing for and teaching at the university the UCI participants had the opportunity to practice and hone some of the life skills mentioned by Topping such as perceiving, applying, and responding, which helps develop their persona not only as artists and working professionals but also as whole human beings. The participants also demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of Ehrlich's peer learning components such as organization, analysis of information, critical thinking, collaboration, and the willingness to lead.

Teaching to and with peers provided an opportunity for all participants to share a part of who they are with each other. The UCI students had not previously seen their peers take leadership roles such as performing as a teacher in a higher educational setting. One senior UCI undergraduate dance major, Kaila Holford, mentioned her appreciation for peer-to-peer teaching during group reflection, "I think it's actually really rare that we get to take class from our peers. It doesn't happen as often as it really should, so when we do it's actually really special" (September 15, 2014). Although there is peer-to-peer learning that can happen in a dance studio when students teach each other choreography or practice movement together, in this context it was elevated because the peer learning that took place in Panama was not directed by faculty. The participants used their own sense of agency to make critical decisions about their class,

which separated this experience from a routine context. I believe bringing in more peer learning into the institutional curriculum could create higher thinking and collaborative skills and also build upon concepts of experiential learning.

Learning from and with one another brought about the students' understanding of *communitas*, which has been sustained since the exchange. I believe this understanding started with the community that was already in existence in Panama. If the environment had been cold and judgmental a strong bond might not have been built. The peer system that was already part of the culture of the department allowed for the continuing of a shared communal experience when we arrived. Due to the language barrier, communication of the body and collaboration between student and peer coach was necessary to complete the tasks in the lesson. Tactile connection created with the body during dance allowed for the embodiment of spontaneous *communitas*, friendship, and trust.

Meaningful experiences encourage passion in young adults and can give them a motivation for taking action. I suggest universities grasp this opportunity for their artists to share in culture, language, and connection with communities nationally and internationally. Cross-cultural exchange in higher education dance programs help to broaden the perspectives of undergraduate students, thus developing the whole person, one's character, and exposing possible career opportunities to dance majors. Understanding how positive community engagement can function in a dance class has now made the UCI participants want to maintain that supportive environment wherever and with whomever they dance. During my last set of interviews with the participants in January 2015, three of the students mentioned having a more positive outlook during dance technique class at UC Irvine because they were able to draw upon *communitas* and channel that understanding. They were also able to look across the dance studio

and see faces of their friends from Panama, which gave them positive encouragement. Seeing the smiles of the community of people they traveled with helped them bring *communitas* into practice while back at the ballet barre in school.



(National University Of Panama; After a class taught by UCI undergraduates Ginny Ngo, Janine Montag, Keira Whitaker; UCI and NUP students pose together; the pose is from Donald McKayle's movement in the piece, "On My Way")



(National University of Panama; After a class taught by UCI graduate student Cara Scrementi; UCI and NUP students pose together in a playful gesture)



(Folklorico class taken at the National University of Panama taught by university faculty; both US and Panamanian students participated together)



(Contact Improvisation class taught by Blair Brown at the National University of Panama; UCI and NUP students dance together)



(Movement Exchange UCI 2014, National University of Panama; Contact Improvisation class taught by Blair Brown)

Communitas: At-Risk Youth Populations

Public Problem Solving

Our focus while teaching at orphanages in and around Panama City was to build community, social interactions, and friendships through dance. Flexibility and adaptability were embodied during this one community interaction, which connects to the life skills Topping and Ehrlich mention in the building of civic and peer engagement. On our first day of teaching at an orphanage we were under prepared for what was to follow. We had planned an hour-long dance class for each age group that we would meet. When we arrived at Aldea SOS in Colon, it was pouring with rain, which meant we would have to teach our classes in the covered walkways around the orphanage. Upon arrival, we also discovered that we were going to be there for four hours instead of one hour. As a result, the students had to immediately adapt to their new spatial environment and come up with material and games that would be interactive and fun for the children all afternoon. They could not stick to the original plan; the plan had to change on the spot and instead of being frustrated with this, I observed the students rising to the challenge. Right away they were creating new choreography to teach, making up new games, and spending one on one time talking and bonding with the children. Paula Garb, professor of peace and conflict studies at UCI stated: “In peacebuilding you have to be open to creative moments and being attune to the arts in one way or another is essential for having that kind of openness...” (personal interview, March 8). The UCI students took an unpredictable situation, collaborated together through art, and found solutions by being open to the moment.

One of the solutions that resulted from public problem solving was using the special talents of one of the UCI participants. Jazley Sendjaja, the only non-dance major on the trip, ended up teaching Bachata to the children in Panama based on her experience with Latin social

dancing. We had not previously planned for Jazley to teach social dance, but when we ran out of activities on our first day, it was suggested and she followed through. Teaching *Bachata*⁹ to the children at the orphanage ended up being a wonderful tool that we continued to use everyday for the rest of the exchange. The orphans had to learn how to touch hands respectfully with a partner, dance in rhythm, and synchronize movements with another body. All of these skills required listening, collaboration, responding, and concentration. Bachata also connected culturally to the students in the orphanage because the music and the dance have been a part of their Panamanian popular culture for some time. Jazley rose to the occasion and taught social dance for the first time on the exchange; she now teaches dance weekly as a regular job in Irvine.

The fact that there was a language barrier between teacher and student brought about a role reversal where student had to become teacher to help with words and translation. Even though we were in the orphanage to be the “teachers” of dance, the children in turn had to be our teachers as well to help us with Spanish for the motions we were miming and communicating. The UCI undergraduates and children in the orphanages had to collaborate and work together in an equal, communal shared experience to make the dance classes happen successfully. Even though we had anticipated being the sole teachers in this setting, it became an exchange of knowledge once more, just like at the university, but in a different form.

Cultural Community Building

The differences that might have existed between both groups in socio-economic status, age, ethnicity, or gender temporarily dissipated because all participants were there for the same reason: to share dance and movement. It was no longer about where each group came from in the

⁹ Bachata is a dance from the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean islands. Both the music and the dance have been influenced by Cuban Bolero, the Merengue (also of Dominican Republic origin), Salsa and Cumbia. <http://www.heritageinstitute.com/danceinfo/descriptions/bachata.htm>

past; everyone was completely living in the present moment through shared movement experiences. In the text *Dancing Cultures*, editors Helene Kringelbach and Jonathan Skinner describe why dance has the capacity to transform the energy and relationships in a room, “Dance movement carries aesthetic dimensions, a projection of energy and an intended communication between performers and audience that gives it a specific potential to transform human experience in multiple ways. It is in this sense that dance is a powerful form of social action; it is part of the social fabric and not simply a reflection of it” (12). For UCI dancers, taking part in the social fabric of a Panamanian orphanage through dance allowed for a transformative moment in time that developed a change in perspective and understanding and ultimately developed compassion and character.

UCI undergraduate, Keira Whitaker, created a special dance from her previous teaching experiences called the *Banana Dance*. She brought her Banana Dance to Panama and we closed every dance class with this sequence. When we had finished teaching our dance class at Aldea SOS in Panama City, one of the children that Keira had bonded with, came up to her and gave her an actual banana, to show her how much she enjoyed the *Banana Dance*. I watched as Keira had tears well up in her eyes and she had a distant look in her focus. She spoke to me later about how that moment was the turning point in the trip for her. It was in that instance that she realized the extent of the orphans’ lives and how much she wanted to help and connect with them. She began to take their perspective, have empathy and compassion, and it ignited the fire within her that keeps her performing acts of dance service today.

Service Learning / Dance Activism

Service-learning really took its shape and action while we were teaching in the orphanages. Service-learning was demonstrated through the act and practice of giving one's time and knowledge of dance to children who don't regularly participate in the art form. Using dance as a form of communication to create community ultimately led to the building of empathy, understanding, and perspective through service. Movement gives way to vulnerability, touch, listening, and communicating; when you are in the moment embodying this transcendent feeling of dance all parts of the ego that control our judgments leave us for a short time. John Paul Lederach is a professor of international peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame and in his book *The Moral Imagination*, he makes connections between the power of the arts and peacebuilding activities:

What would it mean if peacebuilders saw themselves as artists?...To nurture the artist however does not require becoming whom we are not. The opposite is true. It requires that we pay attention to what already lies within us, within our capacity...Art and finding our way back to our humanity are connected...To believe in healing is to believe in the creative act (161-162).

My addition to this statement is: what would it mean if artists saw themselves as peacebuilders? This exchange aided in the UCI participants' awareness of the common humanity they shared with the children in the orphanages through service-learning and they gained insight into how they could use their art form for social change. Moving forward I surmise there could be reciprocity between the arts and peacebuilding in both departments.

Using dance as a form of communication allowed for the students at UCI to become part of a new cultural context for a short moment in time. Perspectives shifted when students shared common human experiences with children from another part of the world by being present with them in time and space. Turner describes this type of true connection between human beings,

“...community is quintessentially a mode of relationship between total and concrete persons...This relationship is always a ‘happening,’ something that arises in instant mutuality, when each person fully experiences the being of the other” (136). This moment of true connection is where students experienced the practice of *communitas*, and from that moment the way they saw themselves and the world began to change. A separation from the self and the ego began to emerge as a result of this direct service through dance.

I observed this change by watching their interactions with the children, seeing their emotional state when sitting on the bus leaving an orphanage, and hearing their ideas during group reflection. UCI undergraduate Elizabeth Tuttle made an important connection toward the end of our trip, “I think for me social justice, the main thing is social integration, like people from all socio-economic backgrounds, race, religion, ages, everything. If you can find a way to bring that together through movement, through participating with other people in something they enjoy and they go to, then that’s almost more important than us dancing ourselves” (September 18, 2014, group reflection with author). The embodiment of *communitas* with these children allowed for the undergraduates to see themselves, dance, and their relation to expressing movement in new ways. This subsequently led to changes in academic majors, careers outlooks, and life choices. As a result of this exchange, three participants are going to study abroad for a whole semester, and seven of the participants either added a second academic major or minor.

When looking solely at the UC system, there have been a few courses started in relation to dance and social action such as: “Pedagogy and Teaching Dance in Community: Fundamentals of Engaging the At-Risk Youth Artist” and “Dance as Social Protest Art, Dance and Film 1955-1975” at the University of California, Santa Barbara, “Choreography: Dance and Society” at the University of California, San Diego, and “Dance, Citizenship, and Location” and

“Political Approaches to Dance Studies” at the University of California, Riverside. Based on research and experience, I conclude that courses such as these can be expanded upon and adopted in more dance departments across the country to help dancers think about their social, political, and ethical activism.

Batchelder noted that from his study on the effects of service-learning, students gained insight into making prosocial decisions and that service-learning also contributed to the development of their morale and ego (352-354). UCI undergraduate, Janine Montag, discussed her ideas on our work with the orphanages during group reflection, which displayed to me how she was developing her self-image, “We know now what it’s like to see people in need firsthand, like real working with kids who don’t have anything...we know now how much we have and how much we can give. It’s our responsibility to go out into the community to get to know other people and to help people in need” (September 18, 2014, group reflection with author). The building of personal values that developed through experiential service-learning caused a desire to keep doing service. The development of personal values created a passion for continued action.



(Children waiting in line for the dance class to start;
Average 20-30 students per dance class;
Fundacion Gente Y Cultura; September 17, 2014)



(Group picture at the end of class;
Fundacion Gente Y Cultura;
September 17, 2014)



(UCI participants leading the “BrainDance” warm-up at the start of the dance class at Aldea SOS, Panama City;
September 18, 2014)



(Bonding with the Kuna children on the San Blas Islands, Panama; September 21, 2014)



(Keira Whitaker teaching the Banana Dance; San Blas Islands, Panama; September 21, 2014)



(Doing the mirror game during dance class; Danilo Perez Orphanage, Panama City; September 17, 2014)



(UCI students dancing Bachata with children at Aldea SOS, Panama City; September 18, 2014)

Communitas: *Taking Action At Home*

Civic Imagination and Creativity

When we returned to the United States, the students were immediately drawn to take action at UCI; they wanted to create a *Movement Exchange* student chapter club on campus that was dedicated to traveling back to Panama every year while also performing service locally during the school year. I consider that learning to take the experience into one's own reality and community at home is important; I conclude it is the final step in the full circle of service-learning. As part of my inquiry, I interviewed Daniel Brunstetter, professor of political science at UCI and faculty director of study abroad, who leads experiential learning exchanges overseas that focus on leadership and conflict resolution. During an interview with him, he spoke about the importance of bringing the experience learned abroad back to the home community, "...but when these students come back, this is why I think leadership training is really important, they're going to be the ones who are going to recruit the next generation of students to go abroad, so you really need to train them and help them think about how they're going to do that. Part of the way of doing that is bringing knowledge back and inspiring other students who don't have that knowledge to take the first step and say I'm going to be like you, I'm going to follow in your footsteps" (personal interview, February 27, 2015). From my perspective, leaving the work in Panama would not be sufficient, the students had to apply the transformative experience into something tangible back home to build upon what they had learned.

Their expressed opinions to make progress and change on campus at UC Irvine could not occur without bringing back and implementing the skills learned and changed perspectives. Transforming their lived experience into a commitment to civic engagement is where the bulk of learning took place, "We are concerned with the development of the person as an accountable

individual and engaged participant in society – local, state, national, and global. Responsibility includes viewing oneself as a member of a shared social structure...virtues such as honesty, social integrity, fostering fair dealing and concern for how one's actions affect others" (Ehrlich, xxix). It was exciting to see that the bond created between the UCI participants through this international service experience gave them a drive to keep working together in the same mission at home.

Collective Action: Orange County Outreach

I was surprised by how motivated the UCI students were in taking action in Orange County. The experience sparked fire into their hearts and minds. Their reluctance to just leave the experience in Panama demonstrated to me their commitment to civic engagement. During our last group reflection, UCI undergraduate Elizabeth Tuttle had a realization that there were people in need not only in Panama but also in our own backyard,

There are studios in Santa Ana, and they're free because the students can't afford it, and like we don't ever go there, because we are like, oh, we go to UCI, we don't need it. But, like, we need it just as much as they do. And I think it's hard for us to want to integrate like that, because we have our dancer world, we have been trained for this many years, but they love it, but they never are exposed to other people who also love it who are from different backgrounds than they are. We have it in the US just like they have it here [in Panama] (September 18, 2014).

This initial experience in Panama sparked an interest in the students to become civically engaged through their art form and now desire to continue acting upon their civic responsibility. When having a discussion with the UCI participants about how to act upon their civic responsibility, the common theme that came up was sharing knowledge: "It's sharing the knowledge, it's our responsibility to care about the community and the people who are around

and part of that is sharing knowledge” (Participant Jazmine Curie, September 18, 2014); “I think what civic responsibility comes down to is sharing what you know, because the world is founded on what people originally knew and decided to share” (Participant Keira Whitaker, September 18, 2014).

Civic responsibility has often been connected to not only participating in the community through service but also contributing to the political actions taking place. Those two threads of service and political engagement make up the fabric of civic responsibility. I did not anticipate political discussion arising during our exchange, but to my surprise the students did begin to take interest in the politics of the work we were doing. Participant Janine Montag, third year UCI undergraduate, began to make connections on her own between civic responsibility and political responsibility aside from her role as a dancer:

I think another civic responsibility is that aside from being dancers we are humans who vote, who have a voice, who can get into the politics of it all. Why is it that these kids are in these orphanages? What is it that is happening in Panama, in other cities, in our homes, why is this happening and how can we raise awareness? One way is through the arts, through dance, that’s one way we can raise awareness, but also we need to let people know so it’s not just, here are those people, and we are these people. To keep it an ongoing conversation...so we can see a difference with how things are in other communities, not trying to change their culture, keep that alive because that’s what we love, not trying to step in in any way, but raising awareness that there is a problem of unbalanced class system. What can we do beyond the instance of dance? (September 18, 2014, group reflection).

Montag also took the leadership role of becoming president of the *Movement Exchange UCI* student club and is now putting some of these bigger thoughts into action. The life skills of flexibility, adaptability, organization, and collaboration have come through to the daily lives of the students leading this club; running the *Movement Exchange UCI* club and preparing for their second exchange in Panama has taken hard work and dedication. The participants have started

volunteering every week at the Save Our Youth center in Costa Mesa, CA teaching social dance forms to high school students and are teaching homeless youth in Santa Ana, CA through the Illuminations Foundation. The Save Our Youth Center is a non-profit organization providing a safe place for teens to develop interest in the arts and academics and prepare them to become contributing members of society (www.save-our-youth.org). The Illuminations Foundation is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to providing “targeted, interdisciplinary services for the most vulnerable homeless clients to break or prevent the cycle of homelessness” (www.ifhomeless.org).

There are areas where I feel the club could grow and develop in terms of having weekly reflections at their meetings, having continued discussions about civics, values, and politics in relation to dance, and continuing to gain more student participation. I plan to stay in contact with the *Movement Exchange UCI* club after I graduate in the form of emailing, and skypeing with the club committee members and checking in with the faculty mentors to make sure they are continuing the movement. I plan to stay in touch to also be a resource and continued leader to the UCI organization. As I move on in my career as a dance educator, I plan to continue working with *Movement Exchange* to create new clubs and exchanges wheresoever I teach. I can then connect these different clubs via technology to work together on similar or larger projects and exchanges in order to have dialogues between several groups. I am proud of the fact that UCI students are committed to going to Panama again next year; they have a plan to make it an annual project for the club. I believe it is important for *Movement Exchange* participants to continually return to Panama to be reminded of what started the passion and to keep researching the questions that the exchange stirred in their hearts and minds.



(Selling goods at “Celebrate UCI” to raise money for the second trip to Panama; UC Irvine; April 18, 2015)



(Question and Answer Session at Blair Brown's Thesis Presentation;
Spreading knowledge and awareness to the UCI community; April 3, 2015)

Conclusion

This research project examined how the opportunity for an international service learning exchange in dance created personal agency within an undergraduate population to act upon their civic responsibility as artists. From this study, I have observed that through service learning a sense of civic engagement is obtained through the embodiment of *communitas* and does lead to taking action in one's own community. The action of dancing with individuals from a different cultural, socio-economic, and linguistic background brought about a deeper understanding of culture and friendship. As stated by the editors in the book *Dancing Cultures*, "...culture is produced through activity...an activity, then, is also a site for culture..." (Kringelbach and Skinner, 12). Through dance UCI students shared pieces of the North American culture with those in Central America, thus shaping culture through artistic action. The cross-cultural relationship formed during this project continues today, through social media on Facebook and Instagram. Students at UCI and the National University of Panama are able to stay connected and continue a dialogue about dance.

I recognize now that the sharing of cultural practices is essential in building political-social understanding. When we can instill this understanding through embodying *communitas* at a young adult age in college, it can lead to more civic engagement activity later in life. Overall, the UCI students felt that here in North America we often take for granted our dance education and those individuals that are giving us an education. Thus, it is important to go outside one's comfort zone to have other experiences in dance in another country to gain a new appreciation not only for other cultures but also for how dance can be taught, learned and passed on to other generations.

I propose that more university dance departments take steps towards becoming more civically and socially minded in their curriculum development and opportunities offered. As I have witnessed through the exchange in Panama, international service-learning exchanges are life changing at the collegiate level. I consider that it is the job of an institution to not only educate facts and figures but also ethics and values. Those character building traits are learned through experience, and this study has shown the growth, leadership, and depth of character that can emerge out of such an opportunity being offered.

This thesis project is the beginning of a larger research agenda. Some concrete data arose from the project, but the exchange also left me with more questions than I started with. The connection between dance, experiential service learning, and *communitas* has potential to continue being explored. I have questions about the sustainability of the *Movement Exchange UCI* club that has been created by the undergraduate students. I am curious to see if it will still be going in five to ten years from now and how I might support the club from a distance. It would be an intriguing study to have the *Movement Exchange* program be an elective part of the curriculum as opposed to a student run organization so the faculty can engage alongside the students. This would give insight into whether there is more growth for the participating students when the program is connected to academic content. I am interested in the relationship between peacebuilding training and the arts and whether higher education can integrate the two disciplines to start working together.

This project demonstrates that there is dire need for cross-cultural exchange in higher education dance programs to broaden the perspectives of the undergraduate students, thus developing the whole person, one's character, and exposing possible diverse career paths to dance majors. We are in the midst of moving towards more global, technologically advanced

societies, and if the field of dance is going to keep up with these fast changes, then US trained dancers need to become a part of the global community during their college years. Peer engagement does create an atmosphere of *communitas*; connectedness without competition, and gives students the tools to begin building community wherever they may travel, work, or study in their life endeavors. Experience through service learning drives passion into the young adult and gives them a purpose for taking action. Creating opportunity for development of more universally minded citizens will not only aid in the progression of the field of dance, but also contribute socially conscious human beings into society.

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Appendix A

UC Irvine Movement Exchange, Panama September 13-20, 2014

Please email to Blair Brown and Cara Scrementi by March 30, 2014 at Midnight
brownbe@uci.edu
cscremen@uci.edu

APPLICATION

Name:

Major:

Year:

Email:

Phone Number:

1. Please tell us about your dance background, if any, or your interest in dance.
2. What you are studying at UCI? List any career goals you may have at this time. (1 paragraph)
3. Will you be able to commit to the 1 unit Independent Study course during Spring Quarter?
4. Why are you interested in traveling to Panama through Movement Exchange this summer? What draws you to the program? What do you hope to gain from the experience? What would you like to share with the people we encounter and work with in Panama? (1 paragraph)
5. Please describe how you plan to pay for the exchange and whether you will be able to make all the payment deadlines (ie, grants, online fundraising, parents, savings, summer job). (1 paragraph)
6. Please write the name of one UCI arts faculty who can speak on your behalf. You do not need a letter, just a name. We will personally speak with that faculty member. (Please be sure this faculty member is aware you are listing him/her as a reference for this project.)

APPENDIX B

Dance 197

Independent Study/Special Projects UC Irvine Movement Exchange to Panama 1 – 4 Units

Blair Brown, MFA brownbe@uci.edu 916-212-4777	Cara Scrementi, MFA cscremen@uci.edu 708-404-0905	Lisa Naugle PhD linaugle@uci.edu Class Mentor	Anna Pasternak anna@movementexchanges.org Movement Exchange Founder
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Course Objective:

This upper-division course is designed as a preparation for an international dance exchange that will take place in partnership with the non-profit organization, Movement Exchange, from September 13-20, 2014. While in Panama, students will be leading dance classes with at-risk youth in orphanages and teaching master classes at the University of Panama and the National Dance School of Panama. Students will also take dance classes from local professionals in the styles most prevalent in Panama. During the spring quarter students will work in small groups to create a curriculum for their classes and then build individual lesson plans that they will apply in practice in Panama. Students will also learn about funding opportunities and how to apply for grants and put together fundraising activities. Time will also be spent on learning about the geography and culture of Panama so students can learn how to engage in this cross-cultural exchange with respect. The main objective of the work done this quarter is to have the students feel very prepared and have the proper tools to be ready to engage in social justice work in a foreign country. **Blair Brown will be creating a documentary of the entire experience in Panama, including the preparation work so be prepared to be on camera! **

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course students will:

- BUILD lesson plans necessary to conduct their dance classes in Panama
- UNDERSTAND the fundamentals of Anne Green Gilbert's "Brain Dance" and how to apply it to creative movement lesson planning
- WORK collaboratively in small groups to build a general dance curriculum
- DEVELOP Spanish vocabulary appropriate for teaching the subject of dance
- HAVE knowledge on grants that are available through UCI and how to apply for them
- CREATE fundraising strategies as a group to cover costs of the trip
- APPLY for any necessary funds and/or conduct fundraising activities
- UNDERSTAND the geography of Panama in the context of where we will be working
- APPRECIATE the culture of Panama as well as have knowledge on the native Kuna and their customs and dance forms
- CREATE trustworthy friendships in the class so everyone feels like a close group before traveling internationally together

Course Requirements:

- ATTEND all scheduled classes
- BE on time
- MAINTAIN a sense of professionalism and respect in class
- BRING your creativity and enthusiasm with you
- MAKE all payment deadlines on time
- COMPLETE all lesson plans by the end of the quarter

Class Schedule Breakdown

MEETING 1

- Introduction
- Get to know you exercise
- Why Am I here? Journal activity
- Set Class Schedule
- Group Dinner

MEETING 2

- Introduce the geography of Panama
- Understand geographically where will be conducting our dance classes
- Discuss Panamanian cultural traditions
- Introduce the customs and dance of the native Kuna
- Talk about climate, health, and other necessary information relevant to the trip

MEETING 3

- What does at-risk mean?
- What is an orphanage and do we have them in America?
- Developmental differences in orphans
- Behavioral expectations
- Discussion of our own family background
- Discussion of any outreach teaching the group might have done
- Introduction of the Brain Dance and where it applies to teaching

MEETING 4

- Arrange students in teaching small groups
- What is curriculum? What is a lesson plan?
- Using the information provided about the Brain Dance, create a general curriculum overview for your groups dance classes in Panama according to your age group.
- What will your theme be? An idea? A movement concept?
- What key Spanish words to you need to know for your theme?

MEETING 5

- Review what the structure and layout of a lesson plan can look like
- Work time to put your theme and curriculum into a fleshed out lesson plan
- Introduce the possible master classes that will be taught at the University of Panama/National Dance School of Panama and who is interested in teaching an advanced level class

MEETING 6

- Trial teaching
- Each small group picks one part of their lesson to teach to the larger group
- Trial teaching of advanced classes to be taught at the university
- Discussion of what was effective or challenging

MEETING 7

- Group choreography session to create a Flash Mob dance!

MEETING 8

- Go over packing list
- Discuss airfare
- Check off who will bring iPods, computers, speakers, etc
- Make sure everyone has their own copies of their lesson plans ready to go
- Maybe skype with Anna?

APPENDIX C

Itinerary UC Irvine September 2014

Saturday, September 13

A late morning arrival in Panama City is followed by a tour of the ruins of Panama Viejo, the original location of Panama City that was sacked by Captain Morgan. We arrive in the historical district of (the second) Panama City for a dinner of introductions and preparations for a week of teaching, taking classes, and integrating into the cultural fabric of Panama. We will be staying at a luxury hostel (Magnolia Inn- please look in Handbook) in the colonial center, Casco Viejo, of Panama City filled with old French and Spanish colonial buildings and sights. Post dinner we will take a bit of a walking tour in order to get familiar with the surroundings, for we will be returning to this hotel later on in the week and many of the foundations are located nearby.

Sunday, September 14

Early to rise this morning for a trip to Colon, which is Panama's poorest province economically, yet rich in its Afro-Panamanian traditions. We will be traveling to Portobelo to visit one of the oldest forts in Central America. We are able to attend a Pasa Pasa and Zaracundé dance class at the Escuelita del Ritmo which is an organization that works to promote Afro-Panamanian arts and culture. Pasa Pasa is a dance that is originally from Jamaica, however, due to the large number of Afro-Caribbeans that traveled to Panama to build the canal at the turn of the century, many of the Caribbean islands' traditions can be found along the Caribbean coast of Panama. Zaracundé is an Afro-Panamanian dance originating in the province of Colon, Panama. We teach a quick class to the kids of the Escuelita del Ritmo before exploring the rest of the historic town (their one big attraction is the black Jesus- Google it!).

Teaching Group 1 will teach their lesson plan, all others will participate in the class and/or assist students.

From Portobelo we head to the Aldea Orphanage to eat a typical Panamanian lunch with the children in their respective houses and for an afternoon of dance classes. The classes here are taught outside on the grass and in their parking lot. It has worked best in the past to divide the groups up into boys and then girls (young and older) and do rotating stations. After classes we will be returning to Panama City for dinner.

Teaching Group 1 will be with the boys, Teaching Group 2 and 3 with the girls.

Monday, September 15

This morning we will be teaching a class at the University of Panama's Dance Department. It's a one and a half hour intermediate class, and can be any style of your liking. Teaching class is followed by lunch and an afternoon of teaching classes at the Danilo Perez Foundation which works with hundreds of at-risk boys and girls teaching music. We will be bringing a bit of dance to the mix! We will divide into three groups, and will most likely have a group working outside. Dinner on your own in the city is followed by our nightly reflections.

University Classes:

Beginning: Blair will teach a contact improvisation class. Ginny, Janine, Keira, Sara, Cara will participate.

Intermediate : Shirine and Natalie will teach a contemporary class. Brittany, Jazmine, Kaila, Liz, Simon, Jazley will participate.

Danilo Perez Orphanage: *Teaching Groups 1, 2, 3 will all teach their respective lessons at Danilo Perez.*

Blair will lead reflection at the hostel after dinner.

Tuesday, September 16

Rise and shine early this morning for a small hike to the top of Cerro Ancon for a breathtaking view of Panama City! Look out for toucans and other native Panamanian birds. Today's teaching of a class at the University is followed by another afternoon at the Danilo Perez Foundation. We can switch up groups today to make sure everyone worked with all the different age groups. You will have a bit of time before class to check out more of the historic district of Panama. Check out the newly renovated homes, and don't forget to try basil ice cream at the best parlor in town! Dinner tonight in Casco Viejo is on your own.

University Classes:

Beginning: Cara (assisted by Ginny) will teach a contemporary class. Shirine, Natalie, Janine, Keira, and Sara, will participate.

Intermediate: Blair will teach a contact improvisation class. Jazley, Jazmine, Kaila, Liz, Brittany, and Simon will participate.

Danilo Perez: *Teaching Groups 1, 2, 3 will work with same groups and build upon lessons from Monday.*

Blair will lead reflection at the hostel after dinner.

Wednesday, September 17

This morning we are taking an aerial dance class. Get ready to work on ribbon and sweat in the Panamanian heat! Teaching at the University of Panama is followed by a trip to the canal of Panama to see one of the most impressive engineering feats of the last century. Check out the museum and learn more about the Canal and how it affected the demographics and culture of Panama. Today is our last two hour class at the Danilo Perez Foundation. Dinner on your own in the city is followed by "apples and onions".

University Classes:

Beginning: Ginny, Janine, and Keira teach their etude inspired class (possible performance included at the end of class?) Shirine, Natalie, Kaila, Liz, and Blair will participate.

Intermediate: Kaila and Jazmine teach a contemporary jazz class. Jazley, Jazmine, Sara, Brittany, Simon, and Cara will participate.

Danilo Perez: *Teaching Groups 1, 2, 3 will teach for a third day with the same groups and continue building on material from the week.*

Blair will lead reflection.

Thursday, September 18

This morning we will be taking a “Flying Low” modern class with a local instructor in Casco Viejo. Wear long pants since there is a lot of floor work! The class is followed by teaching our last class 1.5 hour class at the University of Panama. Today we teach at the orphanage Aldea SOS, home to over 100 orphans. We will meet Move-Ex’s local teacher Jhonny who teaches throughout the year at Aldea PTY. Half of the group will stay at the orphanage teaching, and the other teaches advanced students at the National Dance School of Panama. You will have students between the ages of 11-18. These are advanced students that will catch onto most anything you throw at them. Dinner is on your own tonight. There should be some great live music around Casco Viejo, too!

University Classes:

Beginning: Shirine and Natalie will teach a contemporary class. Kaila, Liz, Jazmine, Blair will participate.

Intermediate: Ginny, Keira, and Janine will teach their Etude inspired class. Jazley, Sara, Brittany, Simon, and Cara will participate.

National Dance School: *Kaila and Jazmine teach their jazz class - Shirine, Brittany, Liz, Simon, and Janine also go and participate/assist.*

Aldea SOS: *Cara, Ginny, Natalie, Sara, Jazley, and Keira are teaching their lesson plans in pairs.*

Blair leads a reflection at the hostel after dinner.

Friday, September 19

We’ll be taking a Panamanian dance folklore class (indigenous, congo, tipico) at the University of Panama before we split the group again for our last teaching of the class at the Aldea SOS Orphanage and the National Dance School of Panama. We return to Casco Viejo for our final dinner, and a night out on the town! How are those salsa skills coming?

National Dance School: *Cara and Ginny teach the same contemporary class taught at the University - Natalie, Sara, Jazley, and Keira also attend and participate.*

Aldea SOS: *Kaila, Jazmine, Brittany, Shirine, Simon, Liz, and Janine teach their lessons in pairs.*

Blair will lead a final group reflection at lunchtime.

We will perform our flashmob in the evening.

Saturday, September 20

Take your last sips of Panamanian coffee for it’s off to the airport you go. Panama thanks you for your compassion, knowledge and love!

Those staying the extra travel days will get up EARLY to travel to Guna Yala (the San Blas islands) for two nights. We will return to Magnolia Inn on September 22, spend the night at the hostel and fly back home on September 23. For information on Guna Yala:

<http://www.gunayala.com/eng/index.php>

<http://panamatourismtravel.blogspot.com/2012/01/guna-yala.html>

http://www.visitpanama.com/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1513&Itemid=618&lang=en

More information to come about where we will stay/how much EXACTLY it will cost.

Others that are leaving on the 20th will have the morning to have breakfast and pack and then will travel to the airport together.

*Itinerary is subject to alterations. Time is much more flexible in the Caribbean. There may be rainstorms, there may be impromptu reggae en español shows, and you may never want to leave! Relax and enjoy the rhythm!

APPENDIX D

Saturday - Day 1

- ** During group dinner make sure to touch on conduct, cat-calling, buddy system, taxis, etc.
- ** Go around and everyone says their name, age, and one word to describe how they are feeling right now in the moment.

Sunday - Day 2

- ** Apples and Onions for the day

Monday - Day 3

- ** Apples and Onions
- ** How does teaching/dancing feel similar and/or different between Aldea SOS and the University? In what ways do you have to adjust as a teacher or dancer between the two locations?
- ** What comparisons can you make between university education in America and Panama, based off of this first impression?
- ** At Aldea SOS today, what parts of your lesson plans worked and which parts did you have trouble with? How will you revise/manipulate them for tomorrow?
- ** What past experiences have you had with dance education/teaching that you were able to draw on today?

Tuesday - Day 4

- ** In your journal - write a one word response to each of these words:

Panama:

Culture:

Architecture:

Weather:

Dance:

Mentor:

Express:

- ** Apples and Onions in one word.
- ** How are you taking in the culture of Panama? What feels similar or different from home, or other places you have traveled?
- ** What is the cultural heritage of your family and do you connect with it?
- ** Have you had any moments so far that leave a lasting impression?

Wednesday - Day 5

- ** In your journal, write your apple and onion for the day.
- ** What expectations do your family and/or society have for you and your career? Is it similar or different than your own personal expectations?
- ** How is your career choice or involvement in dance viewed by others in your life?
- ** How do you feel you are developing your artistry as a performer, choreographer, or teacher in this environment? Are you building artistry at all?

** What aspects of this experience play into other roles in your life, besides dance?

Thursday - Day 6

** Apples and Onions in one word.

** How would you define the term civic engagement/civic responsibility? How does it relate to our work here?

** From your experience this week, do you think that service in dance is important? Does it have a place in international work, why or why not?

** Can you explain why dance is vital for life?

** How and why can dance be used as a form of social justice?

** Where do you see the need for dance and the arts back home or at UC Irvine?

** What steps can you take at home to keep the work you are doing here alive?

Friday - Day 7

** What have you learned here on this exchange that you could not have learned back at UCI?

** Why is global education important to your development as an artist?

** What does hands on teaching experience teach you that can't be taught in the classroom?

** In what ways have your ideas about dance and a global dance community changed or not changed?

Appendix E: Student Testimonials

On the eve of our last night in Panama, the students handed me a collection of letters they had written to thank me for the experience. I did not read the letters until I had returned from Panama, but when I did read them, I realized how much this exchange had transformed their hearts and thoughts. Below are a few selections of the letters that the students personally wrote to me while finishing their stay in Panama.

“...because of Move-Ex and research, I know now what community means, how vital it is and have a newfound purpose in my life to share and bring the power of movement to everyone that I can. I’ve chosen to go back to Cali with joy and ultimately to live my life with joy and willingness to share and take ownership of life and circumstances” (Sara Schroerlucke)

“This has been the best thing I have ever done in my life. It has definitely changed my life for the better...This trip has truly made me realize why dance is so important not just to me but in general. It has opened my eyes to the possibilities within dance. Before this trip I was also greatly struggling with my own self confidence and I feel like even though it is going to be extremely difficult going home after having this experience I am definitely much more confident in myself and what I have to offer. I really don’t think I can thank you enough for this opportunity” (Shirine Rehmani)

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for providing the opportunity to work and experience Panama. I think you know on some level, based on what I’ve expressed, how important this experience has been. Without you, I wouldn’t have been able to prove to myself that I am capable of making my own dreams and goals come true” (Jazley Sendjaja)

“I don’t know if you remember, but combining art with outreach was, is, and has been a life goal of mine since at least age fifteen. You have made this whole trip possible. I can’t begin to thank you for this opportunity and making this life achievement so much

more than I ever dared to dream of it being. This experience has meant more to me than anything I have ever done in my entire life, and you made this possible for me...I really can't believe how much I have grown as a dancer, a student, and a potential teacher. You gave us all the opportunity of a lifetime. All of our lives have been changed in one way or another. Words truly can't express my gratitude for all your work, dedication, guidance, etc. But still, I say thank you with all my heart, knowledge, and soul" (Jazmine Curie)

"My life will never be the same after working with these kids and exchanging so much life, love, and culture here in Panama. I have honestly never been so impacted in such a short amount of time as I have been here with Movement Exchange, and I know my life will never be the same. Thank you for bringing us and documenting such an incredible experience and allowing us to share and be impacted by so many lives" (Natalie Matsuura)

"I truly owe this trip to you, if you hadn't told me I should come, and didn't give me the push I don't know if I would be here, starting my journey of global outreach. This program is incredible, and through sweat tears and exhaustion, I realize this is where I need to be" (Keira Whitaker)

APPENDIX F: MOVEMENT EXCHANGE UCI CLUB CONSTITUTION

Movement Exchange at UCI Constitution and Bylaws

ARTICLE I. ORGANIZATION NAME

The name of this organization shall be Movement Exchange at UCI.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

Movement Exchange at UCI fosters civic engagement, cross-cultural understanding, and creative expression through dance and service. We are a community of like-minded movers who are passionate about using dance as a vehicle for social change. As a club on campus, we hope to build relationships with organizations that work with at-risk youth both locally and internationally. We hope to educate at-risk youth about the importance of dance, as well as the arts in general. By providing classes of all dance styles to peers and youths within the community, we may then continue our arts service abroad. The Movement Exchange at UCI Club also creates an avenue for dancers to enter the global conversation on the arts. We hope to establish a peer-to-peer learning community where we can share our individual knowledge of movement with each other through discussions, classes and workshops. As a part of the Movement Exchange club, we will engage in reflection and discussion regarding our civic responsibilities as dance diplomats.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP:

Section 1. Membership Statement

Membership is limited to all students who are enrolled with University of California, Irvine. No hazing or discrimination will be used as a condition of membership in this organization. No university student may be denied membership on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other protected group status.

Section 2. Membership Eligibility

Members will be required to write, choreograph, and participate in all club activities, including attending meetings, and they must demonstrate the following:

A willingness to learn and teach other members of the club, children of all ages, and whoever is interested in dance and movement.

An eagerness to develop ideas and lesson plans to better educate the community through dance, both locally and abroad.

A dedication to dance diplomacy and a willingness to step out of your comfort zone in regards to different cultures and ways of life.

A passion for and enjoyment of dance.

An overall commitment to the mission of the club.

Section 3. Revocation of Membership

Membership may be revoked for violations of any of the provisions of the constitution, non-participation or misconduct of any kind. The member will be informed in writing of possible revocation at least 72 hours prior to the vote and will be allowed to address the organization in order to provide any defense prior to the vote. Membership will be revoked in a 2/3 majority vote of the executive officers. Revocation of membership will be valid for a full academic year.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. Eligibility

All officers must be enrolled at least part time at University of California, Irvine and maintain at least a 2.0 grade point average. Off

Section 2. Titles and Duties

The officers of this organization shall include President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Marketing Manager and Coordinator. No officer will be permitted to hold more than one officer position. All officers will retain voting rights.

President:

" Primary contact and liaison between group participants and the Movement Exchange organization.

" Manages recruitment and member applications.

" Hosts information sessions.

" Determines following year s elections of Leadership Board for continuity of program.

" Oversees all decisions and approves necessary actions.

Secretary:

" Assists members with grant writing and outlines grant proposals.

" Hosts letter writing parties (along with the Coordinator).

" Takes meeting minutes and keeps overall record of each meeting.

" Organizes trip itinerary and travel plans (to be approved by council).

" Collects information (full name, passport # and expiration, date of birth, email, emergency contact name and number, and participant s phone number).

" Uses Movement Exchange letter templates for participants to write family, friends, and sponsors for donation support.

Treasurer:

" Collects dues and organizes overall costs.

" Makes sure that volunteers have program contribution and airplane fees ready on time.

" Makes sure program contribution for each person has been paid (check, razoo.com, etc).

" Starts an account on razoo.com or similar website for a group fundraising campaign.

Marketing Manager and Coordinator:

" Schedules meetings and group activities.

" Holds letter writing parties with participants (along with Secretary).

" Creates and manages fundraising events.

" Manages marketing materials and campus exposure.

" Manages social media (facebook, instagram, twitter, etc.)

" Responsible for local outreach and in-community work.

Shared Responsibilities Between Officers

" Help to lead the creation of curriculum for teaching abroad and at home (setting goals for short-term satisfaction for at-risk youth such as fun and physical activity in addition to long-term goals such as self-esteem building, body awareness, team building, discipline, self expression).

" Lead the creation of guidelines for choreography and class organization while abroad.

" Organize music (on iPods and CDs) and boomboxes/iPod players to bring abroad.

ARTICLE V. ELECTIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Section 1. Eligibility

All active members who meet the requirements stated in Article III, Section 2 and Article IV, Section 1 are eligible to run for an officer position.

Section 2. Election Process

Officers volunteer for the positions, and are not nominated. There will be a formal application process in order to hold an officer position. All candidates applying for positions will be given the opportunity to address the current officers and discuss his/her qualifications in an interview. The current officers will have the ability to choose the council for the following year, with the president overseeing the final decisions.

Section 3. Terms of Office

An officer will hold the position for one calendar year.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICER VACANCIES

Section 1. Removal of Officers

Any officer may be removed from office if there is a 2/3 majority vote of members. The officer will be notified within 72 hours.

Section 2. Resignation

Officers may resign from their positions by notifying the executive officers in writing with at least two (2) weeks advance notice. They must return all documents pertaining to their position back to the President before their resignation.

Section 3. Filling Vacant Officer Positions

If an officer position must be filled following, the election process stated in Article V. will take place.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS

Section 1. General Meetings

Meetings with the entire group will be held once a month to ensure the progression of fundraising, community involvement, and to discuss lesson planning for the eventual trip to Panama. The number of meetings is subject to change according to the time of year, and the amount of planning, discussing, and volunteer work there is to be done.

Section 2. Officer Meetings

The council will also meet once a month as officers to plan group meetings and discuss club plans.

ARTICLE VIII. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

Section 1. Spending the Organization's Funds

Financial matters are overseen by the Treasurer, and include the following:

Money for gas to local activities or community volunteer work.

Payment to guest teachers and club luxuries- payment will be in the form of edible sustenance.

The Movement Exchange approximate cost of trip for student (high school and university)
\$1,350

It is the responsibility of each individual member to fund their exchange to Panama, however club members will not be denied club membership and participation in local activities if they are not financially able to go on the Movement Exchange trip to Panama.

The president, Treasurer and Faculty/Staff Advisor must approve any monetary transactions.

They will be the signers on the organization's account.

Section 2. Officer Transition

It is the responsibility of the account signers to exchange contact information and assist in the transition of officers. The Treasurer will be responsible for passing along all financial and account information.

Section 3. Dissolution of the Organization

Dissolution of the Organization: If the organization ceases to exist, the remaining funds in the account will be donated to the Movement Exchange organization.

Section 4. Individual Expenses

Airfare to and from Panama City (PTY)

Personal Expenses.

Four dinners.

Additional trip/attempt to facilitate exchange on Nalunega

ARTICLE IX. FACULTY/STAFF ADVISORS:

Section 1. Nomination and Role

The officers of the Movement Exchange Club will select the Advisor, who must be a UCI faculty or staff member. The advisor will be responsible for giving advice and will act as mentor for the club.

Section 2. Removal and Replacement of Advisor

An advisor will be notified of their removal at least one (1) week in advance. An advisor will be given the opportunity to speak in front of the officers about their removal and may be removed if the officers vote in a unanimous decision to remove the advisor. The advisor will be replaced within three (3) weeks of removal.

ARTICLE X. AMENDMENTS:

Amendments must be given to the President in writing. The amendment will be presented at the next meeting of the executive officers. All officers, including the president, secretary, treasurer, and marketing manager must be present in order for amendment to be read. A 75% majority of the officers must approve the amendment in order for it to pass.

ARTICLE XI. AFFILIATIONS:

The non-profit organization Movement Exchange

This organization is affiliated with the non-profit organization, Movement Exchange.