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### Publication Date

2021

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,  
IRVINE

Ballet Pedagogy in Higher Education: A Move Toward Gender Expansion, Inclusion, and Equity

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in Dance

by

Brittany N. Woo

Thesis Committee:  
Professor Molly Lynch, Chair  
Assistant Professor Kelli Sharp  
Associate Professor Tong Wang

2021



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis committee chair, Professor Molly Lynch, for your unwavering support, encouragement, and reassurance. Your positivity and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this research made this work possible. I am very appreciative of your willingness to give your time so generously.

I would like to thank my thesis committee members Dr. Kelli Sharp and Professor Tong Wang for your support and guidance. Dr. Sharp, thank you for the time you spent assisting me with the IRB process. I could not have accomplished it without your direction and positivity. Professor Wang, thank you for sharing the articles that introduced me to new gender-related terms. Your thoughtfulness and dedication in and out of the studio are invaluable.

Thank you to the students and teachers from this research study for taking the time to participate in the questionnaires and interviews. Your willingness to be honest and open is both appreciated and admired. Without each of you, this work would not exist.

Thank you to my wonderful cohort for providing me with continuous support, motivation, and laughter. Each of you has inspired me with your determination, grit, and talent.

I would like to thank my friends and family for their constant support throughout my academic and artistic pursuits. Thank you to my mom for supporting me artistically and emotionally throughout many years of ballet. Thank you to Conor Gómez for spending endless hours proofreading and listening to me talk through so many research ideas.

Thank you to the UCI Dance Department for giving me the opportunity and resources for this work. Thank you to the University of California, Irvine, UCI Graduate Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, Elizabeth Koehler Scholarship, and UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts Research and Travel Grant for making this research possible.

## **ABSTRACT**

Ballet Pedagogy in Higher Education: A Move Toward Gender Expansion, Inclusion, and Equity

by

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Master of Fine Arts in Dance

University of California, Irvine, 2021

Professor Molly Lynch, Chair

The rigidity of the gender binary in ballet is perpetuated by the training's continuous adherence to outdated gender norms. Albeit slowly, modern society is making progress towards gender equity and inclusion. Yet, ballet training remains stagnant in its gender expectations, and this affects students' mental wellness and mindsets. This study questions how gendered ballet training affects ballet students' mindsets and considers if current ballet curriculum and pedagogy fosters a fixed mindset in students. This mixed-methods study utilized participant interviews and questionnaires to understand the effects of gendered ballet training on ballet students and teachers in higher education dance programs. Gender expectations in ballet class are imposed by a curriculum and are perpetuated by both students and teachers. These expectations lead students to believe their success in ballet is predetermined, which is a sign of a fixed mindset. This paper encourages ballet practitioners to implement curricula that support student mental wellness and to shift pedagogies to be more inclusive of non-gender conforming and non-binary students. In order to continue to make strides towards diversity, expansion, and inclusion, ballet practitioners must continue to critically evaluate current ballet practices. This is how ballet as an art form will progress forward and remain relevant in the 21st century.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to answer the following research questions: 1) How does current ballet in higher education training affect ballet students' mindsets? 2) How can ballet training better support students' mental wellbeing? 3) How can ballet continue to evolve its gender ideology and expand into more gender inclusive practices? By questioning its current pedagogy and curriculum, ballet can begin to let go of its resistance to change and start moving towards more progressive practices that support equity, diversity, and inclusion in both ballet training and ballet as a profession.

With gender-conforming male and female being the only two genders recognized in ballet training and performance, ballet continues to uphold a strict gender binary. Although ballet arguably has evolved as a dance form since its origination, it does not currently reflect modern Western culture's movement towards gender expansion, inclusion, and equilibrium. In ballet training, gender expectations remain stagnant and strong, and these expectations impede ballet's ability to "resonate with 21<sup>st</sup> century concerns."<sup>1</sup> By using a hidden gendered curriculum, many ballet educators cultivate the development of a fixed mindset that is a product of internalized gender schemas integrated into students' pre-professional training. When students internalize the hidden curriculum's gender schemas, they will match their behavior with what they believe is appropriate and correct for their gender. This filtering of their behaviors can cause them to

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<sup>1</sup> Alterowitz, "Toward a Feminist Ballet Pedagogy," 8-17.

develop a fixed mindset that does not affect their potential but can limit their ambition and achievements.

Since most ballet teachers are former ballet students themselves, the sometimes distorted or outdated gender messages that were absorbed during their own training are incorporated into their teaching today. Consequently, the common ballet curriculum does not reflect the current social climate. Ballet performance appears to be striving for more inclusion and expansion, but disguised as “tradition,” ballet training’s gender expectations and norms cause the artform to oppose Western culture’s gradual movement towards more acceptance and its goal of gender inclusivity and expansion.<sup>2</sup>

By incorporating “social foundational issues,” like gender inclusivity and equality, into ballet pedagogy, ballet educators can acknowledge and incorporate the progressing nature of broader society.<sup>3</sup> By doing so, ballet training will develop and evolve alongside the rest of the modern society rather than in resistance of gender inclusivity and equality. When considering future pedagogical approaches for teaching ballet, it is important to consider which elements of ballet curriculum are no longer relevant and to question if “previous models are either flawed or not keeping pace with the changing needs of education and the world at large.”<sup>4</sup> Subsequently,

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<sup>2</sup> See Justin Peck’s “The Times Are Racing.”

<sup>3</sup> Barr and Risner, “Weaving Social Foundations Through Dance Pedagogy,” 137.

<sup>4</sup> Musil, “Perspectives on an Expansive Postsecondary Dance,” 111.

ballet training would shift and give value to voices and perspectives from all genders rather than just gender-conforming male and female.<sup>5</sup>

On stage, ballet appears to make small movements towards gender inclusion and more expansive practices, however, in training ballet is so firmly rooted in what has previously made it successful that it hinders itself from true advancement towards gender inclusivity and equilibrium.<sup>6</sup> Ballet training is regarded “as a closed and unified tradition” in Western society, and its status as such lends itself to a state of resistance.<sup>7</sup> In order to reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century gender ideology, ballet training must continue to evolve. This thesis acknowledges the evolution of ballet pedagogy, but advocates for further consideration of more gender inclusive practice in ballet training.

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<sup>5</sup> Musil, “Perspectives on an Expansive Postsecondary Dance,” 119.

<sup>6</sup> Alterowitz, “Toward a Feminist Ballet Pedagogy,” 11.

<sup>7</sup> Novack, “Ballet, Gender and Cultural Power,” 34–48.

## CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

Dance scholar, Ann Daly, argued that male-female equality is not possible in ballet, and rather, the progression of ballet should aim for equilibrium.<sup>8</sup> Equilibrium is the state of being balanced rather than equal. Biological differences between male and female bodies can make different bodies more suitable to certain movement vocabularies in ballet. Dancers with more muscle will be able to perform movement like lifts and weight bearing more easily than those with less muscle mass. Partially because of the physical differences between biological sexes, distinctions in ballet vocabulary and aesthetic emerged that differ for male and female ballet dancers. This makes equality in ballet not easy to define. Altering and updating ballet pedagogy may launch ballet towards gender equality by helping ballet dancers and students feel supported in their strive for success in ballet regardless of their gender identity. Ballet relies on a strict gender binary in performance and especially in training, and although this binary may be considered “traditional” onstage, the binary is not necessary in training, as it can hinder students’ belief in their abilities to perform movements outside of their gender’s prescribed movement aesthetic.

“Gender,” as defined by the dance scholar, Cynthia J. Novack, means the “sets of characteristics and practices attributed to a male or female person.”<sup>9</sup> Although they are often conflated, an individual’s gender differs from both their biological sex and their sexuality and

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<sup>8</sup> Daly, “Classical Ballet: A Discourse of Difference,” 57–66.

<sup>9</sup> Novack, “Ballet, Gender and Cultural Power,” 46.

sexual preferences. Especially in training, ballet preserves a strict gender binary, which contrasts with modern Western society which is beginning to acknowledge and accept a broader spectrum of gender. Since ballet retains a strict gender binary, a “natural difference” gender schema arises and is taught in ballet pedagogy.<sup>10</sup> This schema arises from the notion that males and females have innate differences. This schema is enacted by the strict gender expectations and norms in ballet training.

In the field of gender studies, the term “gender expansive” is used to describe “individuals that broaden commonly held definitions of *gender*, including its expression, associated identities, and/or other perceived gender norms in one or more aspects of their life.”<sup>11</sup> In this thesis, the term is used in a similar way, but its definition extends beyond a single individual. It is used to describe the expansion of ballet’s restrictive gender practices. Here, the term is meant to encapsulate the practice of broadening the current gender binary and consequently diminishing the limitations imposed by the binary in ballet training. By engaging in gender expansive practices in the studio, students would not be limited in the training they receive that has been assigned to them based on their gender. Teachers can engage in gender expansive training by diversifying the curriculum taught to ballet students so that students of all genders can practice any step that might be required in later performance.

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<sup>10</sup> Schilt, “Just One of The Guys?” 465-490.

<sup>11</sup> Goodrich et al. “Standards of Care in Assessment,” 203–211.

## The Feminization of Ballet

Ballet continues to be feminized and is often regarded as a female activity. The idea that ballet should remain a predominantly female field prevents gender equilibrium by shifting ballet's purpose as a mode of feminine expression and excluding masculine expression from association. In a study of young school children's perspectives on physical activities and sports, it was found that most children perceive ballet to be a "feminine sport" (ballet was included in the category of "sport").<sup>12</sup> Over 65 percent of those young children thought only girls participated in ballet and therefore classified it as "feminine." The more general activity of "dance" was considered a feminine sport by approximately 62 percent of the children. Perhaps because of the feminization of ballet as both an activity and a profession, the divide between male and female in ballet is apparent onstage and especially evident during training. Even school children recognize that there is a lack of legitimacy of ballet as an activity and profession for males. Consequently, males may feel a societal pressure that prevents them from flocking to ballet. However, for the males that do engage in ballet, the profession affords males more opportunities for positions of authority in the predominantly female profession. Providing males more opportunities for positions of authority could be an attempt to make ballet seem like a more legitimate career for the hegemonic male population.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Schmalz and Kerstetter, "Girlie Girls and Manly Men," 536–57.

<sup>13</sup> Kelly, "Dancing Up the Glass Escalator," 1–45.

As a predominantly female field, there are more female than male students that aspire to become professional ballet dancers. Sociologist Christine Williams studied men in predominantly female professions and found that when men joined a predominantly female profession, they tended to benefit from positive attention and guidance that was not equally given to the female population in the field.<sup>14</sup> Ballet was not one of the professions Williams studied, however, ballet also has more female than male pre-professional and professional dancers, and ballet companies often follow a similar model of favoring male professionals. Williams found that in interviews, the men disclosed a “prioritization of their training, hiring, and promotion over that of women to counter-balance societal pressures keeping men out of these professions.”<sup>15</sup>

The Dance Data Project is a resource that investigates the practices of national and international ballet companies through the lens of gender equality. It publishes an annual report on the distribution of choreographers presenting their work in the fifty largest ballet companies in the United States. The Dance Data Project specifically investigates the imbalances in different genders. The 2019-2020 seasons’ report revealed that “83 percent of full-length world premieres in the 2019-2020 seasons are choreographed by men,” and “72 percent of works in the 2019-2020 seasons are choreographed by men.” Dance Data Project has proved with quantitative data that there is a consistent imbalance in opportunities for females compared to males. The Dance

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<sup>14</sup> Williams, “The Glass Escalator: Hidden,” 255.

<sup>15</sup> Kelly, “Dancing Up the Glass Escalator,” 1.

Data Project reported that “72 percent of works in the 2019-2020 seasons (in the top 50 largest ballet companies in the United States) are choreographed by men,” and “62 percent of programs in the 2019-2020 seasons featured work choreographed exclusively by men.”<sup>16</sup>

Since the majority of school aged children regarded ballet as a feminine physical activity, it can be easily predicted that boys in ballet are a minority. Ratios as drastic as 7:1 of female to male students in higher education dance programs in the 1990’s might suggest a translation to high levels of females in positions of power in the ballet world.<sup>17</sup> However, conceivably because of their dearth and their initial position as a minority in ballet, once they begin ballet training, males face less competition for professional ballet jobs as dancers and for positions of power and authority, such as artistic directors and chief executive officers of ballet companies.<sup>18</sup> Although females overpopulate ballet, eventually the paradigm shifts because positions of power and authority are not given to females in the same ratio that they occupy the field of ballet. Consequently, later in their ballet career, the female population relocates to a minority position despite the abundance of females in the field.

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<sup>16</sup> Dance Data Project, “2019-2020 Season Overview,” 1-40.

<sup>17</sup> Van Dyke, “Gender and Success in the American Dance World,” 1–224.

<sup>18</sup> Fisher, “Make It Maverick,” 45–66.

## Gender Differences in Training

Although the vocabulary in pre-professional ballet training begins as gender-neutral (meaning every young pre-professional student is expected to execute fairly uniform ballet steps regardless of their gender), ballet pedagogy divides more advanced training according to students' genders, and this divide is typically decided by the teacher's interpretation or assumption of the students' genders. In advanced ballet training, ballet vocabulary and behavior differ between genders. In partnering classes, the boys are asked to support the girl, often lifting, spinning, and physically manipulating the girl partner. In the men's ballet class, the focus is on strength, power, and large movements. The male vocabulary includes space-occupying jumps and turns. In the women's ballet class, the focus is on quick footwork, pointe work, and soft and fluid port de bras. Students' assumed gender most often dictates the steps and vocabulary they are given in advanced training.

Scholar Judith Butler asserts that gender is a continuous performance that is not natural or passive in the body, but it is rather a "corporeal field of cultural play," that has strict punishments for challenging the expectations that correlate with specific genders in our culture.<sup>19</sup> The performance of gender in ballet class is a continuous, yet fixed presentation of gendered behaviors, and deviation from gender expectations in the ballet class can result in penalization, chastising, or punishment. The pedagogy idealizes delicate female students and macho male

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<sup>19</sup> Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution," 519.

students.<sup>20</sup> Females are trained to be light and delicate, and the physical elevation of the body through the use of pointe shoes aid in this ethereal aesthetic. Males are trained to dance with a “macho” quality, which has become a commonly used tactic to attract males to a predominantly female profession and to “counter effeminate stereotyping in the ballet world.”<sup>21</sup> By stereotyping female dancers as delicate and male dancers as macho, dancers’ individual identities are eliminated, and conformity is enforced in ballet. Therefore, dancers who identify different than gendered expectations can be excluded from being viewed as a “serious” ballet dancer. For example, the internationally famous “Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo” is an all-male drag ballet company that parodies well known classical ballets for comedic effects. The idea that cross-gender ballet training is something that should be viewed as comedy can diminish the perception that the ballet dancers on the stage are dedicated individuals. It also furthers the notion that in order to be taken seriously, ballet dancers need to be identical, idealized, and gender-conforming dancing bodies.<sup>22</sup>

Students studying ballet at pre-professional schools in the United Kingdom reported gender differences in the levels of obedience and discipline required by students.<sup>23</sup> Female pre-professional students are trained to most often launch into their professional dance career with a

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<sup>20</sup> Alterowitz, “Toward a Feminist Ballet Pedagogy.” and Fisher, “Make It Maverick.”

<sup>21</sup> Fisher, “Make It Maverick,” 46.

<sup>22</sup> Croft, “Feminist Dance Criticism and Ballet.” 198.

<sup>23</sup> Clements and Nordin-Bates, “Inspired or Inhibited? Choreographers’ Views,” 6.

ballet company by dancing roles in the corps de ballet. Since the intention for the corps de ballet is to appear to be moving in a single and unified body, self-government and expression of individuality are not regularly supported components to a comprehensive ballet education for female students.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, since they are a minority in ballet training, male students are afforded more opportunities to demonstrate individuality and autonomy. They are more often given featured and soloist roles both because of their scarcity and as a means of legitimizing the profession for hegemonic males.

Ballet choreographer's creativity is shaped by their gender and their subsequent opportunities during training. In research on how ballet choreographers' creativity is shaped by their prior ballet training, former students, who trained at pre-professional schools in the United Kingdom, referenced their gender when reflecting on their opportunities in ballet school.<sup>25</sup> According to one of the female students, their male peers stood out earlier in their training and eventual career, and they were given opportunities when they had "potential," and this happened "not so much with the girls."<sup>26</sup> "Standing out" can be experienced by being given featured roles and opportunities not afforded to all students. Because of the ratio of supply and demand for

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<sup>24</sup> Clements and Nordin-Bates, "Inspired or Inhibited? Choreographers' Views," 1-12.

<sup>25</sup> Clements and Nordin-Bates, "Inspired or Inhibited? Choreographers' Views," 1-12.

<sup>26</sup> Clements and Nordin-Bates, "Inspired or Inhibited? Choreographers' Views," 9.

male students compared to female students, the opportunity to stand out is not equal for male and female students.

There are clear gender differences in ballet vocabulary, but gender differences in the dance studio can be observed in students from an early age even when the ballet vocabulary is not gender specific. In an observation of school-aged children in a public-school dance program, boys were observed as being open to involving other students in presentations of their dance creations, while girls were observed as standing still more frequently and presenting their work “with apprehension.”<sup>27</sup> The gender schemas that are internalized from early ballet training can be detrimental to both female and male students later on in life.

### **Gender in Criticism of Performances**

In performances, ballet dancers are constantly navigating a static set of gender norms that are enforced in ballet and in broader society. The broad, modern society influences ballet’s gender norms in some ways, but ballet upholds stricter expectations than our society, and it does not reflect the recently evolving gender norms and expectations. When reviewing live ballet performances, the onus is on dance criticism to acknowledge “the larger normative codes that structure critical reception of dance” by applying a feminist lens to the criticism of ballet

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<sup>27</sup> Willis, “Factors that Affect Dance Programs,” 1-7.

performance.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, ballet criticism must recognize and take into consideration that gender is a performance rather than a stable identity. A failure to reproduce idealized gender norms can be viewed as a flawed performance, as evidenced by an assessment of ballet performance reviews that were conducted as part of dance scholar Clare Croft's research. In Croft's research, she considered how gender norms affect dance criticism. There are more professional male choreographers than professional female choreographers,<sup>29</sup> and in an extensive review of dance criticism on the specific female ballet dancer Wendy Whalen, Croft found that Whalen's success was often attributed to the (male) choreographer(s) or her male dance partner rather than her own merit.<sup>30</sup> In Croft's research, she noticed that some reviews diminished and reduced Whalen's role in the performance to that of a prop. In many reviews, Whalen's dancing was viewed as the mere vehicle that transported the talent of the male choreographer or partner. Dancers have noted that their training affects their career as a choreographer, and females are less likely to be granted opportunities to choreograph and stand out as creative individuals during ballet training.<sup>31</sup> The expectation for female students to be uniform and to not deviate from the gender norms in ballet affect how their performance as dancers is reviewed in dance criticism.

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<sup>28</sup> Croft, "Feminist Dance Criticism and Ballet," 197.

<sup>29</sup> Dance Data Project, "2019-2020 Season Overview," 1-40.

<sup>30</sup> Croft, "Feminist Dance Criticism and Ballet," 214.

<sup>31</sup> Clements and Nordin-Bates, "Inspired or Inhibited? Choreographers' Views," 1-12.

Similar to feminist pedagogy, feminist dance criticism seeks to challenge outdated, patriarchal strategies and instead, implement an approach that encourages equity and inclusion.<sup>32</sup> It is clear that a new mode of seeing and writing about ballet is necessary, and feminist dance criticism can serve as the vehicle for changing the way gender is evaluated in ballet.<sup>33</sup> By resisting a submission to the construction of gender norms, progression for ballet as a dance form and progress in the inclusion for dancers of any gender, is possible. Feminist dance criticism is one way the acceptance of a wider range of gender can be achieved. Croft asserts that “opening one’s mind to the idea that multiple kinds of bodies and people with a range of approaches to performing gender are suitable for female leads, and that they deserve to be viewed as subjects capable of desire, action, and agency within a ballet” is essential for the progression in ballet.<sup>34</sup>

### **Hidden Curriculum in Ballet**

Although onstage gender roles can often preserve what the audience expects and regularly normalizes in ballet performance, onstage gender roles are only a fragment in the complex area of intersectionality of gender and ballet. Ballet dancers respond to the gender messages they receive in their training, and these messages can be internalized and in effect,

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<sup>32</sup> Brown, "Theory or Practice – What Exactly is Feminist pedagogy?" 51-63.

<sup>33</sup> Croft, “Feminist Dance Criticism and Ballet,” 199.

<sup>34</sup> Croft, “Feminist Dance Criticism and Ballet,” 197.

influence their “psyches, behaviors and creative output.”<sup>35</sup> In the ballet studio, different expectations arise from teachers and audiences assuming students’ genders, but gender is rarely explicitly discussed. Perhaps because of this lack of conversation, gender is often discreetly taught as a hidden curriculum in the ballet studio.<sup>36</sup> The hidden curriculum in ballet training refers to “everything students are learning besides what teachers are explicitly teaching.”<sup>37</sup> The structures and practices of educational institutions are taught to the students through hidden curriculums that ultimately shape the students’ thinking. Students are rarely aware of the presence of the hidden curriculum. Dance education scholar, Susan Stinson, asserts that although dance teachers are not often deliberately attempting to damage their students with their curriculum, messages coming from a plethora of sources, both in and out of the studio, contribute to the students’ development of gender schemas that can be potentially polarizing, isolating, and damaging for students.<sup>38</sup>

The polarizing gender schemas taught through a hidden gender curriculum can be isolating for students who do not feel their gender aligns with the expectations of their teacher. This can lead to stress and anxiety for students and can affect their performance in class and onstage. A study on performance anxiety in professional ballet dancers suggested that

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<sup>35</sup> Oliver, Wendy, and Risner, “Dance and Gender: An Evidence-Based Approach,” 2.

<sup>36</sup> Stinson, “The Hidden Curriculum of Gender in Dance Education,” 52.

<sup>37</sup> Stinson, “The Hidden Curriculum of Gender in Dance Education,” 51.

<sup>38</sup> Stinson, “The Hidden Curriculum of Gender in Dance Education,” 52.

interventions following and prior to high levels of anxiety should focus on boosting dancers' "feelings of control over their dancing in general, as well as over their anxiety..."<sup>39</sup> Authoritarian teaching can convey detrimental hidden gendered curriculums by exploiting teachers' power, which can compromise the wellbeing of the students and lead to poor performance in class and onstage. This teaching method results in an erosion of a healthy state of mind, and as the choreographer, teacher, and author, Daniel Nagrin, asserts that it can cause "self-doubt that can remain with them for the rest of their life."<sup>40</sup> Students are susceptible to suffering if authoritarian teaching methods are exercised, and students' consequent lack of confidence can often lead to poor mindset.

Although the majority of teachers are not deliberately limiting students by teaching the hidden curriculum of gender in ballet training, most teachers do have the power to decide the curriculum of their classes. Messages related to gender expectations are perpetuated through "null curriculums." A null curriculum purposely neglects and discourages specific topics and ways of thinking, which can maintain gender disparity and disseminate restrictive gender ideology to students.<sup>41</sup> When a female ballet student sees that only female students are in the corps de ballet, this can engender the notion that female ballet dancers are the gender more suitable to dance in complete unison. The female corps de ballet often rehearses for a

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<sup>39</sup> Walker and Nordin-Bates, "Performance Anxiety Experiences," 133–45.

<sup>40</sup> Lakes, "The Messages behind the Methods," 5.

<sup>41</sup> Blumenfeld-Jones and Liang, "Dance Curriculum Research," 245–264.

significantly longer amount of time than rehearsing a solo variation. This furthers the gender disparity even into students' eventual professional careers. When a male student sees that only the female students are invited to start pointe work, he might infer that male students are not suitable for the dancing that entails rapid, precise footwork. The null curriculum is especially dangerous when specific student populations, such as non-gender conforming students, are made invisible. Numerous scholars have suggested changes in dance education and have noted the potential benefits of incorporating feminist, democratic, and progressive philosophies into ballet pedagogy.<sup>42</sup> By changing dance pedagogy to abstain from incorporating null and hidden gender curricula, increased dancer wellbeing could be further encouraged and valued, which can contribute to healthy, long-lasting professional ballet careers.

### **Mindset and Flow in Ballet Performance**

Success in ballet can be cultivated through purposeful engagement and continuous striving for progress. Pre-professional dancers who are striving for professional careers often dance up to six days per week for five or more hours per day. Students' continuous work towards achieving their goals can be viewed as discipline and determination, but the curricula they are trained in can arguably be holding them back from achieving their maximum success and

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<sup>42</sup> Alterowitz, "Toward a Feminist Ballet Pedagogy," Lakes, "The Messages Behind the Methods," and Zeller, "Reflective Practice in the Ballet Class."

utilizing their greatest potential. Carol Dweck, a psychology scholar, coined the terms “fixed mindset” and “growth mindset.” A fixed mindset occurs when a person believes their abilities, intelligence, and personality are static and pre-determined. They believe the degree of success they can achieve is pre-decided and out of their control. A growth mindset occurs when a person believes their abilities, intelligence, and personality can progress, evolve, and change. They do not believe their success is pre-determined by factors outside of their control, and they believe these qualities can be cultivated with resilient effort.<sup>43</sup> A person with a growth mindset continuously and actively works to increase their intelligence and skills. On the other hand, a person with a fixed mindset believes their intelligence and skills are static, and therefore, they do not put effort into improving and developing.<sup>44</sup> Some ballet educators encourage their students’ development of a fixed mindset by integrating specific gender expectations into ballet training and consequently furthering the hidden gendered curriculum. Students internalize these gender schemas and, as a result, they can develop a fixed mindset and believe that their success in ballet has been influenced (or pre-determined) by their gender.<sup>45</sup>

During performance, ballet requires heightened focus, concentration, and awareness. This is necessary for both the dancer’s technical performance as well as personal and professional fulfillment. “Flow,” a term defined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, occurs when the performer

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<sup>43</sup> Dweck, “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,” 4.

<sup>44</sup>Dweck, “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,” 245.

<sup>45</sup> Stinson, “The Hidden Curriculum of Gender in Dance Education,” 51.

reaches a psychological state when both their challenges and their perception of their skills are exceptionally high.<sup>46</sup> It might seem that ballet has the potential to induce experiences of flow for practitioners, but without a growth mindset, ballet dancers might not be able to experience this peak performance psychological state. In order to achieve the state of flow, the dancers must first believe they have the appropriate skill set to succeed when their level of challenge is high. “Social factors, such as the impact of teaching and coaching styles and learning environments” are prospective stimulants of the state of flow for dancers.<sup>47</sup> The power of the teacher extends beyond ballet technique; the teacher has the power to influence psychological states of mind and to boost their students’ maximum levels of success in and beyond ballet.

Flow is a state beyond the average experience of a challenge, and the result of flow are “outstanding levels of performance and memorable experiences.”<sup>48</sup> To increase the likelihood of experiencing flow during performance, it is suggested that students be given a choice in the activity they engage in order to expand their “autotelic experience.”<sup>49</sup> An autotelic experience occurs when an activity is purposeful and fulfilling. Ballet has the potential to become an

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<sup>46</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, “Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience.” 1-9.

<sup>47</sup> Jackson, “Flow and Mindfulness in Performance,” 78–100.

<sup>48</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, “Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience,” and “Beyond Boredom and Anxiety.”

<sup>49</sup> Karageorghis, Vlachopoulos, and Terry, “Latent Variable Modelling of the Relationship,” 230–248.

autotelic experience, but an unaccepting learning environment can limit students' autotelic experiences in ballet and reduce the likelihood of ballet dancers experiencing flow. This happens as a result of conditioning dancers to believe their perceived skills do not match with their level of challenge.<sup>50</sup> By leading a student to believe they are only capable of the amount of success that is predetermined by their gender, their perception of their skills will never match the challenges they could face. The gendered curriculum in ballet training does not prepare students for the challenge of dancing in a vocabulary outside of their assumed gender. Consequently, ballet's hidden gender curriculum is hindering dancers' experiences of flow and their perceptions of their own mental strength, perseverance, and resilience.

By preparing students for careers based on the assumption of their gender, they will not be able to rise to the challenge of dancing outside that gender. Ballet choreographer, Justin Peck, recently choreographed a gender-neutral pas de deux for the New York City Ballet. In this ballet, a male or female dancer could be cast to partner with another female dancer. If ballet training does not allow for more gender inclusivity and fluidity between vocabularies, a dancer's gender becomes a predeterminant of success in ballet. Ballet pedagogy encourages students to develop a fixed mindset by conditioning them to consider that their gender predetermines their abilities and success in ballet. After developing a fixed mindset, students will be much less likely to experience the state of flow, as their perceived skills will never match the high levels of challenge. Because flow offers the opportunity for memorable experiences and an exceptional

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<sup>50</sup> Jackson, "Flow and Mindfulness in Performance," 79.

peak in physical and artistic performance, it would aid dancers to experience flow in the studio and onstage. Unfortunately, a fixed mindset will prevent these high levels of achievement and enjoyment in ballet. Along with lower levels of performance, having a fixed mindset will also gradually erode their sense of self-efficacy and lessen their level of self-assurance which are both essential factors in mental wellness.

It has been previously argued that dancers in general have particularly low levels of confidence in comparison to other elite athletes.<sup>51</sup> Low levels of confidence in ballet dancers can stem from a training system that promotes criticism. This system fosters the divide between male and female and allows for no fluidity or transition between genders. Because of this rigidity, students develop a fixed mindset in which they believe they are not capable of dancing any role. They believe they are only capable of dancing the roles they are assigned to on the basis of someone else's assumption of their gender. These detrimental practices in ballet stem from ballet pedagogy, and by implementing changes to the way we talk about and navigate gender in ballet, the dance form can become more relevant in the present day while still maintaining its aesthetic traditions. Changes in pedagogy can translate into more successful and confident ballet dancers

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<sup>51</sup> Walker and Nordin-Bates, "Performance Anxiety Experiences of Professional Ballet Dancers," 133–45.

who then feel empowered and capable of pushing ballet to remain current by considering this century's evolving gender dialogue.

## **CHAPTER 2: METHODS**

### **Introduction to Methodology**

This research seeks to understand and answer the primary research question: how do ballet's gender expectations during training affect higher education dance students' mindsets? The researcher developed a methodology in order to understand the effects of gender expectations during ballet training on ballet dancers' mindsets. The research design aimed to reveal potentially problematic areas in ballet pedagogy that could be addressed in an academic discussion.

### **Methodological Approach**

This research fit under one of the exempt categories for the Institutional Review Board.<sup>52</sup> This study used primary data, meaning that original information (rather than pre-existing data) was gathered and analyzed. In order to not interfere with the participants' contribution, the researcher used a survey approach. This approach refers to the definition of survey research

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix G for IRB documents

which is “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions.”<sup>53</sup> There was no element of experimentation in this study, and during the interviews the participants responded freely. The information they shared during these interviews was analyzed after the data collection, as immediate analysis (showing the participants’ their mindset score) could potentially interfere with the honesty and comfort of the participants. The research used a mixed-methods approach by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data. The data collection methods were designed in a way that allowed the participant to respond in a qualitative manner. When analyzing the qualitative data, quantitative numbers were extracted.

### **Research Design**

Participants were either dance students (both undergraduate and graduate) or ballet faculty in higher education. The sample was recruited through an invitation to participate that was sent via email, Slack, and a dance department newsletter. The potential participants were asked to email the lead researcher if they were interested in participating. Participants were then asked to fill out a questionnaire that was distributed by email using a private link to a Google Form. The second part of data collection took form in individual interviews for both participant groups (students and teachers). Interviews were conducted via individual Zoom meetings which were recorded

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<sup>53</sup> Check, Joseph, and Russell K. Schutt. *Research methods in education*. Sage Publications, 2011.

with participants' permission. The recordings were stored directly on the researcher's computer, and the files were immediately transferred to a password-protected, encrypted hard drive. The Zoom platform transcribed the recordings, but they were manually reviewed to correct any mistakes made by the automatic transcription.

The online questionnaire responses were linked to an email address, but no names or other personal identifiers were recorded. Once completed, the questionnaire responses were recorded into an Excel spreadsheet that was then saved on the password-protected, encrypted hard drive with the interview recordings. The online questionnaire was administered and submitted in two parts for both participant groups.

The online questionnaire was divided into Part 1 and Part 2 for both the student and teacher participants. The student participants' Part 1 of the questionnaire was different from the teacher participants' Part 1 questionnaire. Part 2 of the questionnaire was the same for all participants, and it tested their mindsets. This quiz assessed their current mindset by asking them to answer a series of statements with "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree" as the answer options. The answers correlated to a numerical value that determined their mindset. Some statements in the quiz correlated with a growth mindset and some correlated with a fixed mindset, and were randomly selected, mixing the order of fixed mindset and growth mindset statements. The four possible results of the quiz were "strong growth mindset," "growth with some fixed ideas," "fixed with some growth ideas," and "strong fixed mindset." The results of the mindset quiz were not disclosed to the participants, since informing them that their personal mindset was being tested could potentially influence their answers in the questionnaire or interview. Instead, the mindset quiz results were evaluated only by the researcher.

## Student Participants

The undergraduate student participants were all students in the dance department at the University of California, Irvine. They ranged from first year students to graduating seniors. The graduate student participants were current and former graduate students at the University of California, Irvine in the Master of Fine Arts in Dance program. In Part 1 of the questionnaire,<sup>54</sup> the rigidity of the gender binary in ballet was surveyed by using true and false questions that were designed to see how gender expectations in ballet training have affected each participant. Part 1 of the questionnaire also surveyed the prevalence of detrimental feedback, the feelings on breaking the gender binary, and mindset markers in students. This part of the questionnaire used “very frequently,” “sometimes,” and “very infrequently,” as the possible answer choices. When developing the study design, using a six-point Likert scale was planned, but the possible answer choices were cut down to a three-point Likert scale in order to extract quantifiable data with more conclusive statistics.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See Appendix B for Student Questionnaire Part 1

<sup>55</sup> Likert, Renis. “A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes.” *Archives of Psychology* 22 (June 1932): 5–55.

The interview consisted of open-ended questions meant to determine the gender messages that might be received during ballet training.<sup>56</sup> Participants were asked to self-assess how the messages focusing on gender personally affected them. In order to evaluate if feedback students receive is more frequently remembered as positive, negative, or constructive, students were asked to recall one memorable piece of feedback or correction that was given to them by a teacher at some point in their training. This question was also intended to assess if feedback has a lasting effect on students by checking if the student was able to easily and quickly recall one specific instance from their many years of training.

### **Teacher Participants**

The interview questions for dance faculty were open-ended, and the interviews began by asking if the teacher taught gender specific combinations in ballet class. They were then asked if students' mental attributes (like work ethic and persistence) or physical attributes (like flexibility and turnout) were more important to have a professional career in ballet. The teachers were asked for examples of feedback or corrections they give their students during their classes, and they were specifically asked if they ever give corrections on the mental aspects of ballet training. Participants were asked to recall feedback from their training that had impacted their own teaching. They were also asked to recall feedback they received from a student they had taught

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<sup>56</sup> See Appendix F for Student Participant Interview Questions

that had impacted their teaching. The teachers were asked how they thought a student's gender influenced their success in ballet. Teachers were asked to explain how they thought their own training or career prepared them to teach their students that are a different gender than themselves. The participants were asked to share the most challenging and the most rewarding parts of teaching for them. Lastly, they were asked what they hoped their students took away from their ballet classes.

### **Methods of Analysis**

The researcher used both questionnaires and open-ended interview questions, so the study benefits from both qualitative and quantitative data. Using frequencies of words, the content of the interviews was analyzed. Word frequency was calculated within each participant group. The most commonly used words were highlighted to find comparisons between transcripts.

### **Purpose of Methodological Choices**

The results of this study gave insight into how students' mental wellness can be better supported in ballet training, regardless of their gender identity. Solely using questionnaires would not be sufficient for this study, as a more in-depth understanding of students' and teachers' perceptions was necessary. Consequently, interviews were utilized to gather more individualized insights from the participants. Using the results produced from these methods, pedagogical changes can be suggested with the intention of making ballet more inclusive and improving dancers' mental wellness.



## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

The data collected from the online questionnaires and the individual interviews informed the following discussion of the results. Conclusions from the findings will allow ballet pedagogy and curriculum changes to be developed with the goal of cultivating a growth mindset in ballet dancers and encouraging teachers to improve dancers' mental wellness. Of the 18 students who were invited to participate, 16 students completed the entire process of data collection (Part 1 Questionnaire, Part 2 Questionnaire - Mindset Quiz, and Interview). Of the 5 teachers invited to participate, 4 completed the entire process.

### **Mindset Results (Questionnaire Part 2)**

There were four possible results for the mindset questionnaire that both groups of participants completed. The result options were Strong Growth Mindset, Growth with some Fixed Ideas, Fixed with some Growth Ideas, and Strong Fixed Mindset. A participant's mindset result was found by scoring between 0-30.<sup>57</sup> Of the 17 student participants who were invited to complete the online mindset questionnaire, 16 submitted it. The results of the mindset questionnaire revealed that the majority of student participants had a strong growth mindset. Of the 16 students, 75 percent scored a Strong Growth Mindset, and 25 percent of the student

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<sup>57</sup> See Appendix A for the mindset numerical scale and sample completed questionnaire

participants scored a Growth with some Fixed Ideas Mindset. No students scored a fixed with Some Growth Ideas Mindset or a Strong Fixed Mindset. The average for the student participants was 23.3, with the lowest score being 18 and the highest score being 30. Of the 5 teachers who were invited to complete the online mindset questionnaire, 4 submitted it. In the teacher participants group, 75 percent scored a Strong Growth Mindset. A single teacher (25 percent of this participant group) scored a Growth with Some Fixed Ideas Mindset. No teachers scored a fixed with Some Growth Ideas Mindset or a Strong Fixed Mindset. The lowest score was 19, and the highest score for this group was 27.

### **Student Results (Questionnaire Part 1)<sup>58</sup>**

#### **a. Feedback Related Questions**

To survey students' perceptions of how their teacher's feedback affects their mental health, questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the Questionnaire Part 1 listed statements with varying potential feedback styles. Question 1: "My teacher's feedback criticizes me as a person" tested if students perceive their teachers' feedback as an attack on their personal character. Students that answered,

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<sup>58</sup> See Appendix B for the Student Questionnaire Part 1

“very frequently,” identify their teacher’s feedback as detrimental to the student’s mental wellbeing.

My teacher’s feedback criticizes me as a person (e.g. “You are lazy” or “You have no musicality”).  
17 responses

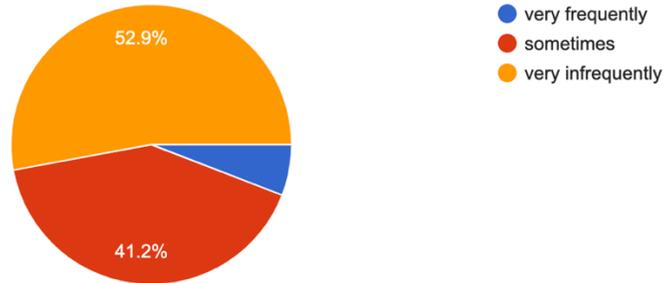


Figure 1. Question 1 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 2: “My teacher’s feedback in class values my emotional and mental wellbeing” tested if students perceive their teachers’ feedback style to value them as a person and not how well they can perform a ballet step. Students that answered, “very frequently,” categorize their teacher’s feedback as beneficial to the student’s mental wellbeing.

My teacher’s feedback in class values my emotional and mental wellbeing.  
17 responses

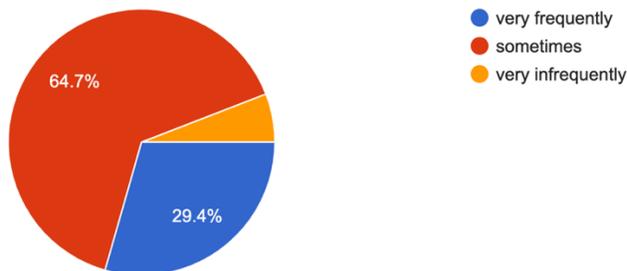


Figure 2. Question 2 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 3: “My teacher gives me feedback that is aimed at showing their dissatisfaction in me rather than improving my technique” tested if students feel their teacher’s feedback is tailored to improve their dancing. No students answered, “very frequently.” Students that answered, “sometimes,” think their teacher’s feedback is sometimes based on the student’s personal character rather than dance related feedback.

My teacher gives me feedback that is aimed at showing their dissatisfaction in me rather than improving my technique.

17 responses

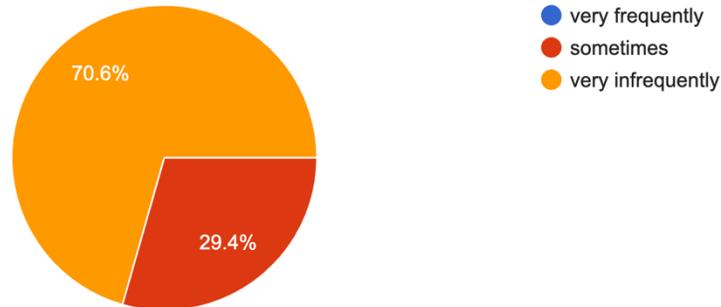


Figure 3. Question 3 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 4: “My teacher’s feedback in class is detrimental to my mental health” tested how students generally perceive their teacher’s feedback. No students answered, “very frequently.” Students that answered, “sometimes,” think their teacher’s feedback sometimes has a negative effect on their mental health.

My teacher's feedback in class is detrimental to my mental health.

17 responses

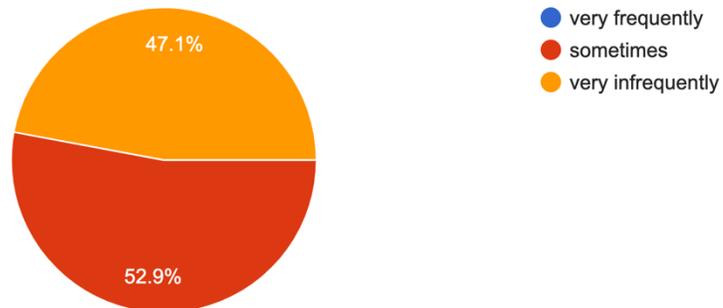


Figure 4. Question 4 from Student Questionnaire Part

Overall, there is a large range of how students perceive their teachers' feedback. Some view it as primarily detrimental to their mental wellbeing, and some perceive it to value their mental wellbeing.

### **b. Breaking the Gender Binary Questions**

To survey students' attitudes towards breaking the gender binary in ballet, questions 5, 6, and 8 in the Questionnaire Part 1 listed statements regarding their attitudes and desire for agency. Question 5: "I have discouraged myself from doing another gender's combinations in class" tested students' self-regulation of breaking the gender binary in ballet. Students that answered, "very frequently," demonstrated more self-judgment for breaking the gender binary.

I have discouraged myself from doing another gender's combinations in class.

17 responses

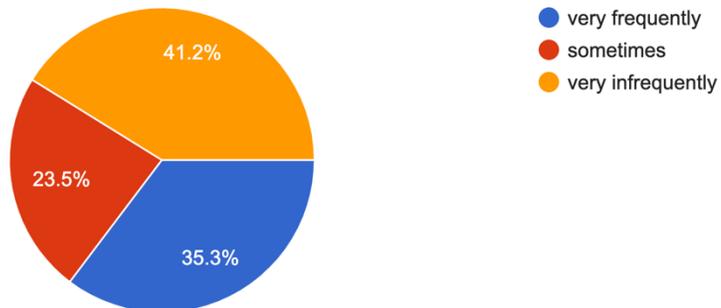


Figure 5. Question 5 from Student Questionnaire Part I

Question 6: "I have felt judged by others for doing another gender's combinations in class" tested feelings of judgment for breaking the gender binary in ballet class. Students that answered, "very infrequently," perceived a small to zero amount of judgment from others for breaking the gender binary, while students that answered "sometimes" have felt judgment at some point previously.

I have felt judged by others for doing another gender's combinations in class.

17 responses

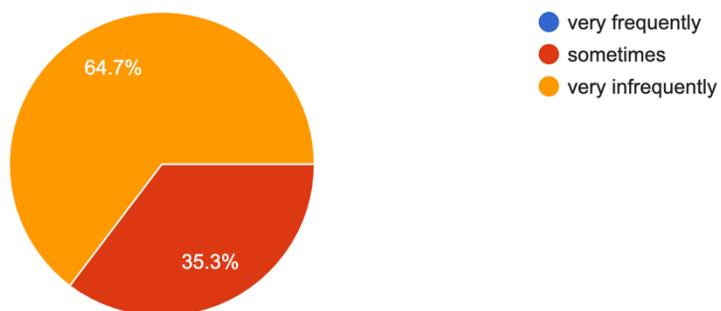


Figure 6. Question 6 from Student Questionnaire Part I

Question 8: “I want to have the choice to do another gender’s combinations in class” tested for a desire to break the gender binary in ballet. Students that answered, “very frequently,” showed desire to engage in more gender expansive training during class.

I want to have the choice to do another gender’s combinations in class.  
17 responses

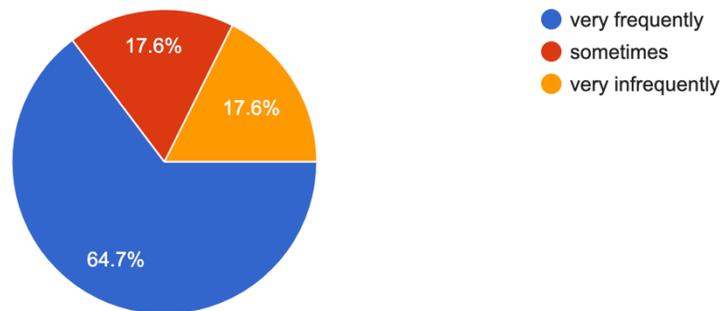


Figure 7. Question 8 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Overall, students showed a high level of desire to break the gender binary in ballet class, but barriers, such as self-regulation and judgment from others, might be the discouraging factors that prevent students from practicing another gender’s combinations in class.

### c. Mindset Related Questions

To survey students’ mindsets and determine if they showed signs of a fixed mindset, questions 7, 10, and 18 in the Student Questionnaire Part 1 listed different statements that correlated either with a growth or a fixed mindset. Question 18 examined mindset in a dance specific context. Question 7: “When someone tells me I can’t do something, I feel discouraged

from trying” tested a fixed mindset. Students that answered, “very frequently,” demonstrated an indication of a fixed mindset, since individuals with a fixed mindset often fear challenges and do not want their performance to appear effortful.

When someone tells me I can't do something, I feel discouraged from trying.  
17 responses

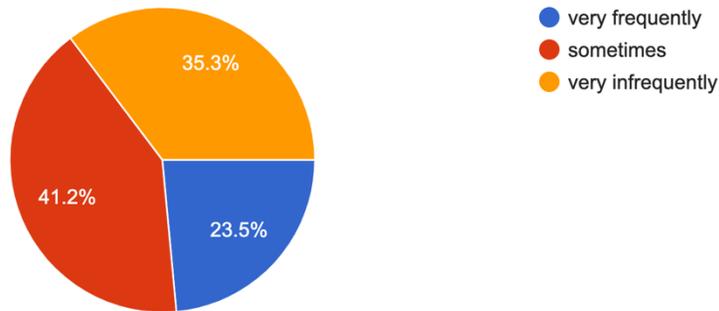


Figure 8. Question 7 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 10: “When someone tells me I can't do something, it makes me work harder to achieve it” tested a growth mindset. Students that answered, “very frequently,” demonstrated an indication of a growth mindset, since individuals with a growth mindset embrace feedback and criticism and view effort as the key to increasing their talents and intelligence.

When someone tells me I can't do something, it makes me work harder to achieve it.

17 responses

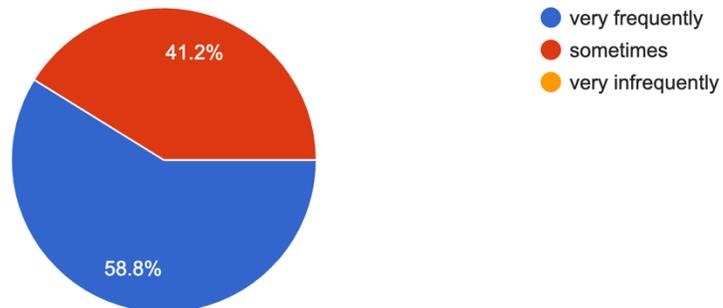


Figure 9. Question 10 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 18: “I think my success in ballet is predetermined by my gender” tested students’ mindset in a ballet specific context. Students that answered, “true,” demonstrated an indication of a fixed mindset. The keyword “predetermined,” is a sign of a fixed mindset, as individuals with a fixed mindset often believe their level of success and achievement is predetermined or ultimately out of their control.

I think my success in ballet is predetermined by my gender.

17 responses

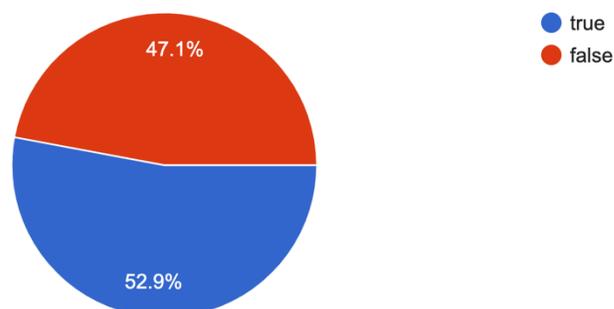


Figure 10. Question 18 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

In the mindset related questions category, many students showed signs of a fixed mindset. More students exhibited signs of a fixed mindset in the ballet specific question, and the majority of students demonstrated a fixed mindset in Question 18 (the ballet specific question).

#### d. Gender Expectations and Gender Binary Related Questions

To survey students' perceptions of gender in ballet, questions 9, 13, 14, and 15 in the Questionnaire Part 1 asked about gender expectations and the binary while performing different combinations in class. Question 9: "I think people expect me to dance a certain way because of my gender" tested the presence of gender expectations in ballet. Students that answered, "very frequently," perceived strong expectations based on their gender. Students that answered, "very infrequently" think their gender does not influence the way people expect them to dance.

I think people expect me to dance a certain way because of my gender.  
17 responses

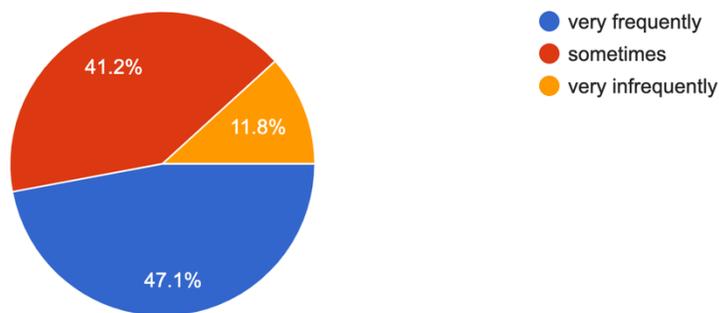


Figure 11. Question 9 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 13: “Gender expectations in ballet have affected me personally” tested the prevalence of gender expectations in ballet. Students that answered, “true,” consider themselves to be personally affected by these expectations. Students that answered “false” might not think they have been personally affected, but there is a possibility they have seen the effects on other people.

Gender expectations in ballet have affected me personally.  
17 responses

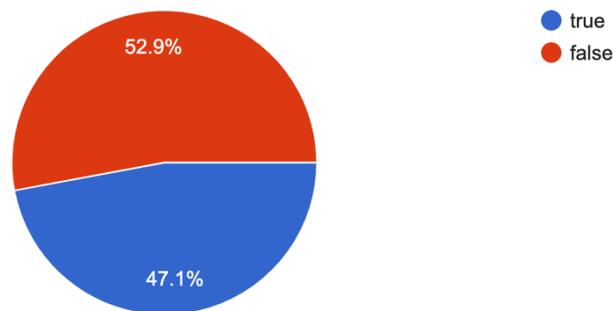


Figure 12. Question 13 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 14: “My teacher lets me choose which gender’s combinations to do in class” tested the presence of a gender binary in ballet training. The students that answered, “false,” evidence a stronger gender binary in ballet. Answering “false” means that their teacher might separate combinations based on gender, but the students are automatically grouped, and there are no choices to switch groups.

My teacher lets me choose which gender's combinations to do in class.

17 responses

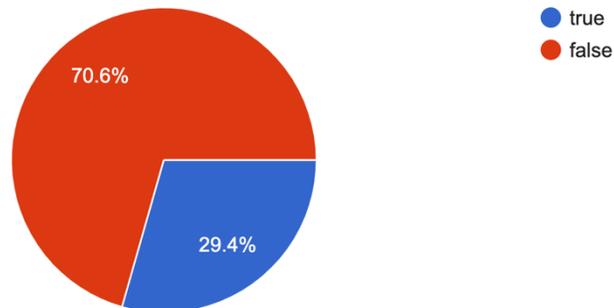


Figure 13. Question 14 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 15: “My teacher makes everyone do both genders’ combinations in class” tested the availability for students to perform another group’s combinations. The teacher of the students that answered, “false,” does not make all students do both combination options, and it is likely the students only get to practice one of the separate combinations.

My teacher makes everyone do both genders’ combinations in class.

17 responses

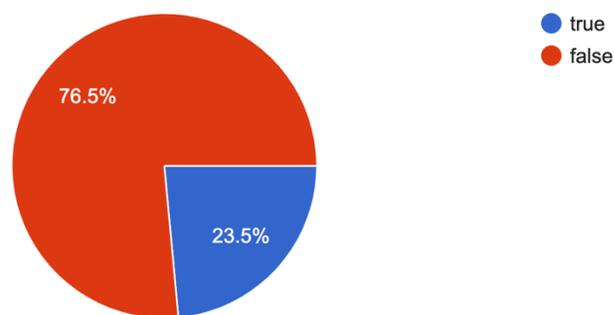


Figure 14. Question 15 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Nearly half of all student participants sensed gender expectations in ballet. The students' reports of the practices in the studio show that teachers rarely ask students of different genders to perform the same vocabulary of ballet movements in classes. Generally, students perceived high levels of a gender binary in ballet.

### e. Additional Gender Related Questions

To survey how students perceive gender related attitudes and in-studio practices, questions 12, 16, and 17 asked about corrections, pronouns, and experiences differing by gender. Question 11: "I have been given a correction that references my gender explicitly or implicitly" tested the presence of a gender binary in ballet training. Students that answered, "true," perceived a strong gender binary in ballet. The student's gender could have been factually known or assumed by the teacher when they were given a correction that referenced their gender.

I have been given a correction that references my gender explicitly or implicitly.  
17 responses

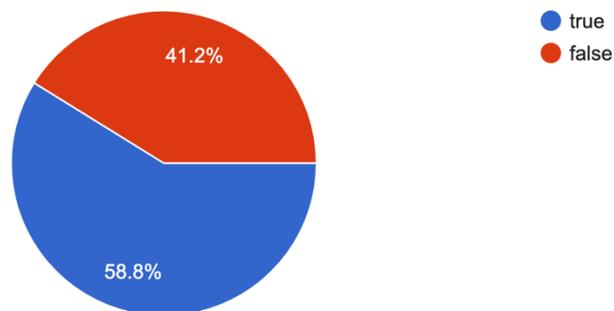
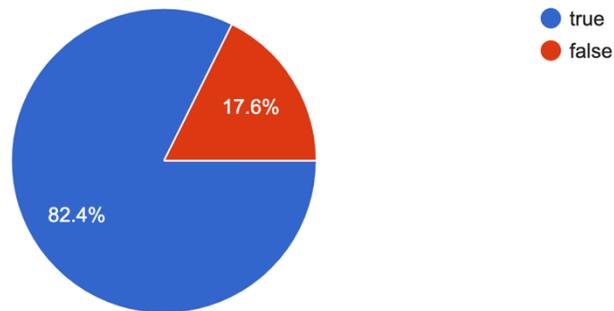


Figure 15. Question 11 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 12: “I feel comfortable talking to my teachers about what pronouns I use” tested students’ comfort levels when talking about their gender identity with their teacher. Students that answered, “true,” feel comfortable, while the other students do not. Answering “true” could also mean students perceived a more gender inclusive training environment, while answering “false” could mean they perceive a strong binary.

I feel comfortable talking to my teachers about what pronouns I use.  
17 responses



*Figure 16. Question 12 from Student Questionnaire Part 1*

Question 16: “I think it would be beneficial to do both genders combinations in class” was used as a comparison to an interviewed question that asked if training in non-gender specific combinations would be beneficial in training. In the online questionnaire, students that answered, ‘true,’ thought it would be beneficial to perform another gender’s combinations during their ballet training. This was later compared to the interview answers. In the interviews, all students said they thought it would be beneficial to do both combinations, but it is important to note, there were 17 questionnaire participants, and of those only 15 participants completed the interview.

I think it would be beneficial to do both genders' combinations in class.

17 responses

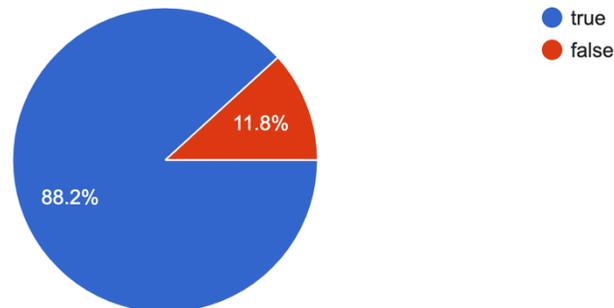


Figure 17. Question 16 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

Question 17: “I think my gender influences my success in ballet” looked at students’ attitudes towards gender differences in ballet. Students that answered, “true,” perceived a stronger gender binary in ballet, and they think their gender influenced their degree of success in training or a potential career. This can be contrasted with believing their success in ballet is “predetermined” (Question 18 which indicated a fixed mindset). Question 17 does not necessarily mean the participant thinks their success was out of their control, but it does mean they think their gender had an influence on it.

I think my gender influences my success in ballet.

17 responses

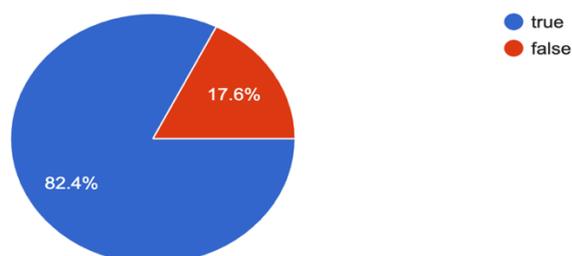


Figure 18. Question 17 from Student Questionnaire Part 1

## Teacher Results (Questionnaire Part 1)<sup>59</sup>

### a. Dance-Specific Mindset Related Questions

All the questions (6 total) in the Teacher Questionnaire Part 1 related to mindset. Question 1: “A student’s physical markers (i.e., natural flexibility, turnout, etc.) are more valuable than their mental markers (i.e., concentration, focus, etc.) in ballet” was similar to a question asked in the interviews. All of the teachers answered “false.” This indicated that the teacher participants all value mental strength over physical advantages or strengths.

A student’s physical markers (i.e. natural flexibility, turnout, etc.) are more valuable than their mental markers (i.e. concentration, focus, etc.) in ballet.

5 responses

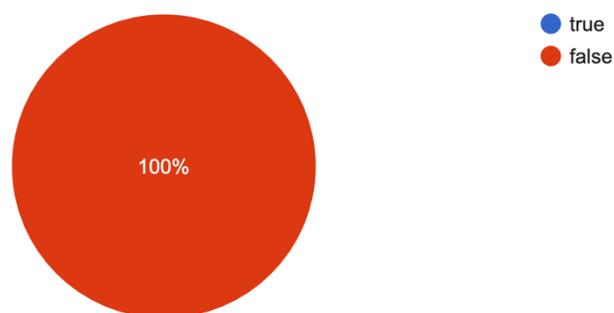


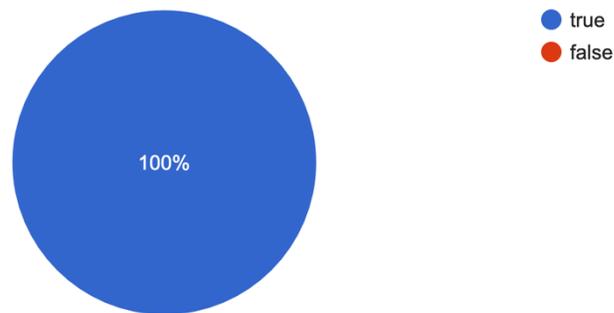
Figure 19. Question 1 from Teacher Questionnaire Part 1

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<sup>59</sup> See Appendix C for the Teacher Questionnaire Part 1

Question 2 stated, “I believe my students’ talent and intelligence can be developed.” All of the teachers answered “true.” This indicated a growth mindset where the teachers believe their students’ talent can be cultivated and their traits are not static and unchangeable.

I believe my students’ talent and intelligence can be developed.  
5 responses



*Figure 20. Question 2 from Teacher Questionnaire Part 1*

Question 3 stated, “I believe mistakes are a valuable part of learning ballet.” All of the teachers answered “true.” This indicated a growth mindset, because the focus of their classes is on learning and practicing rather than only valuing the outcome or products of their teaching. This also shows that perfection is not expected in their classes, and they view mistakes as part of the path to mastery rather than something to be embarrassed by.

I believe mistakes are a valuable part of learning ballet.

5 responses

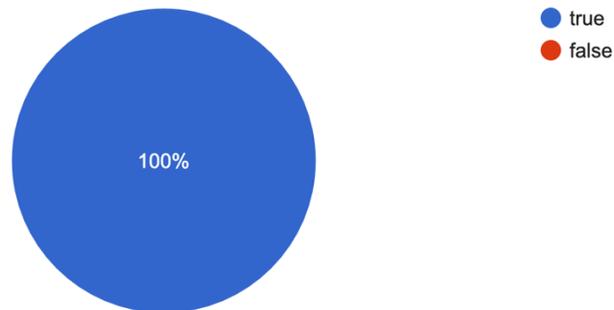


Figure 21. Question 3 from Teacher Questionnaire Part 1

Question 4 stated, "I think my students feel threatened by another student's success." 60 percent of the teachers answered "false," and 40 percent answered "true." Being threatened or intimidated by others' success is an indication of a fixed mindset. The teacher participants are divided in this question; 2 of the 5 think their students show a sign of a fixed mindset, and the remaining 3 participants think their students have more of a growth mindset.

I think my students feel threatened by another student's success.

5 responses

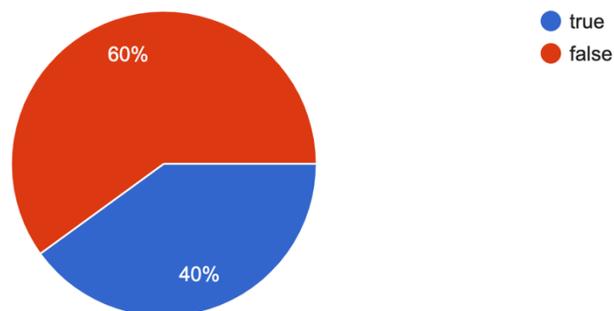


Figure 22. Question 4 from Teacher Questionnaire Part 1

Question 5 stated, “I think my students view another student’s success as inspirational.” All of the teachers answered “true.” The 100 percent unanimously “true” answer conflicts with the previous question 4, because now all 5 teacher participants think their students show a sign of a growth mindset: being inspired by another student’s success.

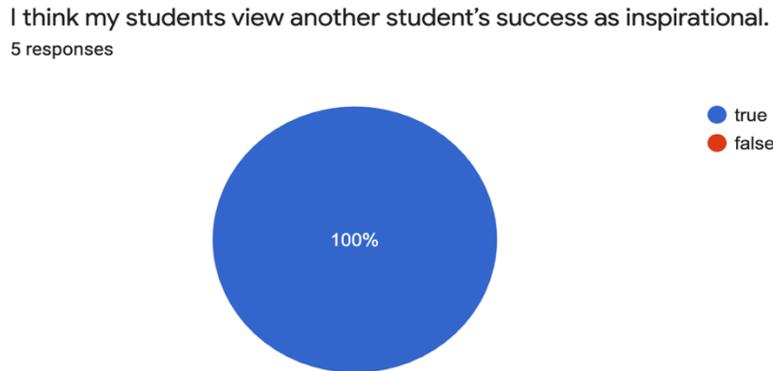


Figure 23. Question 5 from Teacher Questionnaire Part 1

Question 6 stated, “I think my students embrace new challenges.” All of the teachers answered “true.” This indicated that the teachers think their students show another sign of a growth mindset: embracing challenges as a part of learning.

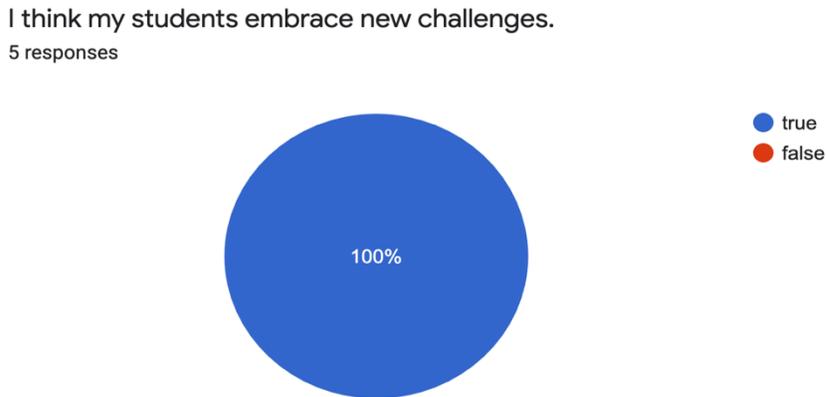


Figure 24. Question 6 from Teacher Questionnaire Part 1

## **Interview Findings**

### **a. Students' Common Themes**

Several themes emerged from the student interviews, and the most frequently used words and phrases were analyzed to identify common themes. Keywords for each of the themes can be found in Appendix D. The themes that were identified are:

- Female Dancer Competition: females faced increased competition for opportunities
- Gendered Body Expectations: distinct body expectations for students of different genders
- Female Gender Expectations: qualities used for describing femininity in ballet
- Male Gender Expectations: qualities for describing masculinity in ballet
- Male Guilt: feelings of guilt for the male students being afforded more opportunities
- Fixed Mindset Indications: describing or indicating a fixed mindset
- Individuality: describing the varying standards of individuality for different students

### **b. Teachers' Common Themes**

Several themes emerged from the teacher interviews, and frequently used words and phrases were analyzed to identify common themes. The themes that were identified are:

- Gendered Combinations: choosing to separate combinations by student genders or not
- Gender Differences in Behavior: females are more engaged during class
- Value of Mental Resilience: mental strengths are more valuable than physical strengths
- Learning How to Teach Ballet: how current teachers became teachers

## **Discovering a Dance-Specific Fixed Mindset**

Originally, it was hypothesized that students would exhibit signs of a fixed mindset because of the gender expectations projected on them in ballet training. Placing limitations on a student's training because of their gender, such as limiting them to the "male" steps, aesthetic, or roles, was thought to possibly foster a fixed mindset in students. The research done with the mindset questionnaire proved this hypothesis to be incorrect, as the student participants all scored a strong growth mindset or a growth with some fixed ideas mindset in the questionnaire. In fact, the majority of students scored a strong growth mindset, and no students scored a strong fixed mindset. However, several participants did exhibit signs of a fixed mindset when asked questions that pertained specifically to ballet. Consequently, the hypothesis that proposed that students would exhibit a fixed mindset was proved true, but only to a certain extent. Although most participants score a Strong Growth Mindset, and no participants scored a Strong Fixed Mindset, several participants certainly exposed fixed mindset indications. In a general, mindset quiz, students exhibited growth mindsets, but in a ballet-specific context, their mindsets shifted, sometimes very drastically, to more fixed mindsets. For example, one question asked student participants to answer true or false to the statement, "I think my success in ballet is predetermined by my gender." The majority of students agreed, and this showed that most of the students believed their achievements were ultimately out of their control, which strongly indicated a fixed mindset.

## **CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS of the EMERGING THEMES**

### **STUDENT THEMES**

#### **a. Increased Competition for Female Dancers**

An increase in competition for female ballet dancers was noted in the majority of the student interviews. Of the fifteen student interviews, eleven participants mentioned the hyper competitive environment for female students. Both teacher and student participants noted an imbalance in the number of males to females in the ballet field, and since ballet is predominantly female, the competition for a professional job is increased for female dancers. In the fifteen interviews, ten participants noted specific body expectations for ballet dancers, and words such as “leaner, smaller, and slim” were associated with female expectations. Even though the female dancers are now being sometimes asked by teachers and choreographers to perform more athletic and physically strenuous movement, there is still clearly a pressure on female dancers to be thin. Although some professional ballet companies are moving towards a more neutral (non-gendered) vocabulary in their repertory, there is still an imbalance in the body standard for dancers of different genders.

#### **b. Gendered Body Expectations**

There are still physical expectations that differ for ballet students depending on their gender. Words such as, “leaner,” “smaller,” “body,” “slim,” “physical,” and “look,” were mentioned by student participants during interviews. Of the fifteen student participants, ten of them mentioned at least one of these keywords. The majority of students who mentioned these body type

standards also emphasized the difference in physical expectations for the female dancer compared to the male dancer. Students noted that females must be “smaller” and have a “leaner” physique, and they also noted that the spectrum for acceptable female body types is smaller than the spectrum for males. With several participants (students and teachers) referencing male dancers as a “commodity” in higher education dance programs in the United States, it is no surprise that varying from the ideal physical standard is more acceptable for males. If male students continue to be viewed as a rare commodity in ballet, they are afforded more acceptance of deviations from the ideal dancer than females. A wider range of accepted body types is one example of the ways male students might have more opportunities to pursue a professional ballet career.

### **c. Male Gender Expectations**

Certain words, such as “powerful” and “jump” were frequently associated with the male vocabulary and standard. Of the student participants, nine mentioned at least one of the keywords listed in Appendix D. One female student recalled a vivid memory that showed the expectations for female students compared to male students. This participant, a female student, said “Sometimes I'm a very powerful dancer. I like the big leaps and jumps, and then sometimes she (meaning her teacher) would say, ‘oh, this is too much; you are not a boy,’ She actually said that sometimes.” Another female student, Participant 16, noted explicit gender messages during her training.

I remember... having an evaluation and my ballet teacher telling me that I danced like a boy. And I was like, “What do you mean?” ... But what she meant was and what she explained was that I kind of throw myself and dance with a lot of energy and I kind of like throw myself into things, and it was kind of like a backhanded compliment. You

know, like ‘you jump really high and really strong but basically you need to pull it back and refine a little bit more.’ And so, what she said was like you dance like a boy. You just kind of throw yourself into things.

Out of the fifteen student interviews, two female students offered examples of these explicit gender messages, where “dancing like a boy” was negative and even deserved correction or “refinement.” This type of explicit discouragement from engaging in “masculine” steps contrasts with the recent demand for ballet repertory that requires female dancers to perform “powerful” steps like big jumps and supporting partnering steps. However, female students are actively being discouraged from training in this movement vocabulary, as evidenced by memories recalled by the two participants who were corrected in an attempt to fix their practice of “dancing like a boy.”

#### **d. Female Gender Expectations**

Certain words, such as “delicate, soft, airy, and dainty,” were frequently associated with the female vocabulary and aesthetic. In the fifteen student interviews, nine mentioned one or more of the keywords: delicate, fairy, dainty, soft, graceful, airy, lifted, or feminine that are listed under the theme of female gender expectations (found in Appendix D). Interestingly, the words associated with the female expectations were less related to a physical condition or corporeal execution (as they were in the male expectations category). Instead, the words were more concerned with the illusive “female attitude” or essence.<sup>60</sup> The words used to describe how

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<sup>60</sup> See Erwin Straus’s argument of the *feminine attitude* in “Phenomenological Psychology.”

females are expected to dance were adjectives that were difficult to corporeally characterize. These words did not correlate with any physical step or vocabulary in ballet. While the male gender expectations were often linked to a physical step like a large jump or turn, that same connection to a physical step was absent in the female gender expectations.

#### **e. Guilt for Male Dancers**

The majority of student participants identified themselves as female. Although there were very few non-female identifying participants, one topic that emerged from a male identifying participant was how male dancers can experience guilt from receiving roles in ballets that they do not feel they deserve based on their merit. Participant 15 summed up their feelings of guilt by saying:

I do feel guilty because I do not... [pause]. I know that I'm not qualified for that role, but I was selected because there were no other guys. There's no one else to take that role because of the gender that they need to be in that role...because at the end of the day, it comes down to the character of what the story is telling and if they do want that a male figure and it's not many male figures that you are the first one in line, basically.

The inequities of making casting choices based on a student's gender, or what a student's assumed gender is, can be problematic. It can be detrimental not only for the students not cast in a role due to their gender, but it is also potentially damaging to the student who is cast based on their gender, because it can cause feelings of guilt and unworthiness.

#### **f. Fixed Mindset Indications**

In the interviews, four students mentioned words that can be associated with a fixed mindset. A couple of the students viewed the shape of their body as something that could prevent them

from having a ballet career. Instead of viewing their body as something that can be shaped and changed with the physical practice of ballet, they viewed their body shape as a permanent limitation. One student named her physical traits “physical limitations.” The student participants put a heavy emphasis on the importance of their body types, which differs significantly from all the teacher participants who stated that mental strengths are more important than any physical traits for a successful ballet career. Many students also viewed their body as something of a static shape, again indicating a fixed mindset where they believe their talents (which includes the body in ballet) are static and predetermined.

## **TEACHER THEMES**

### **a. Gendered Combinations**

The five teachers who were interviewed had various similarities and differences in their answers to the interview questions.<sup>61</sup> Each participant was asked if they give different combinations separated by gender in the ballet classes they teach. Out of five teachers, three teachers said no, they give the same combinations to all students with very few distinctions in ballet vocabulary based on students’ genders. One of the five teachers said they give separate combinations based on students’ genders, and the fifth teacher said they give separate

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<sup>61</sup> The questions the teacher participants were asked can be found in Appendix E.

combinations but give students the agency to choose which combinations they would like to perform in class. Both the teachers who said they gave separate combinations said that classical ballet repertory was the reason for their decision to separate the combinations. However, some of the teachers also noted the advancements that ballet repertoire is making. One teacher said, “Men are partnering men. Women are partnering women. You know there's all kinds of different things going on.” There is a conflict between the gender binary training that might better equip students to dance classical ballets (like *Swan Lake* or *Sleeping Beauty*) and the gender expansive training that might better equip students to have the physical skills needed for neo-classical or contemporary ballet repertoire. Diversifying the training would prepare the women to be the supporting partner that lifts other people instead of exclusively being the partner who is lifted, and consequently they could develop more upper body strength. It could also prepare the men to have higher extensions and more flexibility.

#### **b. Gender Differences in Behavior**

Some of the teachers noted gender differences in behavior during their ballet classes. Teacher participant 18 mentioned that the female students in their ballet classes act differently than the male students. This participant stated, “because in reality, the ladies tend to, you know, be more engaged. That’s not all cases, you know, but that doesn't bother me. I just want to work with dancers who focus, who really want it.” Participant 18 noticed the behavioral differences in different students, which can be unpacked further. Social conditioning and social norms for females, which is often exacerbated in the ballet field, could influence the way the students act in and out of ballet class. The hyper-competitive nature of ballet for females, which was mentioned

by the majority of student participants, could also influence the higher standard of focus, concentration, and engagement during training for female students.

### **c. Mental Resilience**

All five of the teachers said they thought mental attributes, such as a good work ethic or perseverance, were of the utmost importance for a student to have a professional ballet career. They all ranked mental attributes as more valuable than physical attributes in order for a student to have a professional ballet career. One of the teachers said, “your body is able to change much more than we believe it is,” meaning that a student’s physical attributes, such as turnout and flexibility, can change and develop over time. Mental strength is needed much earlier than physical strength in training, because concentration and determination is necessary to have physical progress in terms of strength, flexibility, and coordination. Developing mental resilience from the start of students’ training will enable them to accomplish great feats physically. If they begin cultivating a growth mindset sooner in their training, they will expand beyond their initial physical capabilities. A student with a fixed mindset will be more likely to remain stagnant in their physical abilities due to a fear of challenges and mistakes. Including mental ballet training, as well as physical ballet training, would give students the tools that they need to develop the mental attributes that all the teachers thought was more important and valuable than any physical skill in ballet.

### **d. Learning How to Teach Ballet to Different Students**

Most of the teachers said their training did not prepare them to teach students with different genders. Some of the teachers said their careers (rather than their training) prepared them to

teach ballet to different genders. One teacher said, “I didn't really train anywhere to be a teacher.” As seen in the cycle of authoritarian teaching methods, teaching styles can be mindlessly adopted by former students that are imitating their mentors’ authoritarianism in their own teaching. Similarly, gender expectations can also be passed down without any serious contemplation of whether those gender expectations are still relevant and necessary. Without continuous professional development, it can be difficult to evolve as a modern-day teacher. This professional development can be sought out by the teacher as an individual, but higher education institutions can also aid in giving their teachers the opportunity to expand their pedagogical knowledge. Higher education institutions can do this in a number of ways; they can offer faculty members grants for seeking outside professional development courses. They could offer courses in the themes of the psychology of learning, gender equity and inclusion, feminism in education, and mindfulness.

Teacher participant 18 stated that “students constantly teach us how to be better teachers.” They expanded on that to say that their students help them become a better teacher, not only through written evaluations and feedback, but also by asking the teachers questions during classes. This type of feedback from students was meant in a more corporeal sense, as they were speaking about changing their approach and verbal cues to help a student who was not understanding and asking follow-up questions about a physical correction. However, this can also be applied to the way ballet teachers look at gender. The students, who are usually at least a generation younger than the teacher, can show teachers practices that align with current gender ideology. For example, if the majority of students are asking each other’s pronouns, this might be an appropriate and current practice that teachers could implement. By observing their students, teachers can gain knowledge of current practices revolving around gender inclusion.

## **CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS**

### **Encouraging Breaking the Binary**

The majority of the student participants (64.7 percent) indicated having a desire to engage in more gender expansive training. Yet, breaking the gender binary and performing another gender's combinations in class was noted as a potential source for judgment from themselves and others. Breaking boundaries is considered positive in leadership roles in ballet. Successful choreographers are noted as being innovative or expansive. With breaking boundaries and binaries being considered a risky move in ballet class, students will not be able to have the opportunity to practice the skills that choreographers are most often acclaimed for. There could be some debate about the most ideal time to introduce students to the opportunity to diversify their ballet training by choosing to cross-train in another gender's vocabulary. With continuous discouragement from themselves, their peers, and their teachers, when is the correct time to practice breaking boundaries, binaries, and glass ceilings? There is not an arguably "perfect" time to begin implementing agency for students in the ballet studio, but with notable choreographers looking for intelligent dancers, now is the ideal time to start providing ballet students with the opportunities to have agency in their own training and career trajectories. Teaching a gender neutral or gender expansive curriculum can happen early in training especially since young children are at a physically similar developmental stage until puberty starts during adolescence.

As with many leadership roles, in the ballet field, breaking boundaries is considered positive, and it is a move numerous professional ballet companies are making. Artistic leadership in

several large ballet companies, like the American Ballet Theatre, Boston Ballet, and English national Ballet are pioneering female choreographer initiatives and have started diversifying casting to be more gender expansive.<sup>62</sup> It makes sense that students aspiring to hold positions of leadership in ballet should have the choice to make the decision to diversify their own training to be more expansive. Allowing students to make choices about which genders' combinations they practice during ballet class would be a step towards enabling them to work in these types of progressive artistic leadership roles.

The easiest way to foster an innovative environment that encourages out of the box thinking is to avoid assigning students to a gender's combinations based on what the teacher assumed their gender is. Gender is able to change, transition, and fluctuate, and by avoiding the practice of assuming gender, teachers are able to make the ballet studio more gender inclusive environment. Additionally, engaging in cross gender training allows students to gain first-hand knowledge of how another gender's vocabulary in ballet operates. This encourages and allows students to become informed choreographers that have a more complete, full understanding of all ballet vocabulary. This is useful for the realistic possibility of being asked to create a choreographic work for a multi-gender cast or company. There are very few professional ballet companies that

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<sup>62</sup> See <https://www.abt.org/community/abt-rise/abt-womens-movement/>, <https://www.bostonballet.org/Home/Support/choreograpHER-initiative>, and <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/08/arts/dance/the-first-man-dancing-in-a-female-corps-de-ballet.html>

only have dancers of a uniform gender identity. Being able to choreograph from a more expansive, informed perspective would be beneficial in expanding ballet repertoire. This shift in perspective can occur in both the physical steps that create the repertoire and also in the themes and topics explored through movement.

### **Asking Student Pronouns**

Addressing students with a non-gender specific pronoun, such as “they/them,” is a good practice when the teacher does not know a student’s correct pronouns. When creating the interview questions for students, the original line of thought was that teachers should ask for a student’s preferred pronouns. Over the course of writing this thesis, that idea shifted; the first shift was replacing “preferred pronouns” with “correct pronouns.” This updated word substitution when asking a student’s pronouns tries to make sure that the student knows their gender identity is not a mere preference but rather, it is the correct and appropriate way to address them. Since implementing that word substitution, another shift about the concept of asking pronouns occurred. Perhaps teachers should not be asking pronouns, especially in front of an entire studio of people. The reasoning behind this is that gender can be fluid, and it can change. While correct pronouns might be concrete and never change for some students, it might change or be in transition for others. Asking correct pronouns in front of a whole class could potentially cause an immense amount of pressure to answer immediately and concretely. Instead, teachers could ask for correct pronouns in a more private setting or extend an invitation for students to publicly share their pronouns. Instead, the teacher could ask students what they prefer

to be called, whether that be their birth name, nickname, or some other name. Then simply using the student's preferred way to be addressed will be the most straightforward and accurate approach. This can ease some of the pressure students might have to "know," precisely, who they are in one specific moment or who they might become during the rest of the academic term.

### **Pedagogical Suggestions for Feedback**

During the interviews, students were frequently able to recall negative feedback previously given to them. This suggests that negative feedback is more memorable to students than positive feedback, and the way that teachers frame feedback has an enormous effect on students. Students were able to share very specific, vivid recollections of the negative words their teachers used, but few expanded on how that affected them long term. Participant 8 shared a comment their teacher made about their weight after the student could not fit into a costume. Participant 16 shared about a time their teacher said, "this is trash," and sent the student home after they performed their ballet variation during a rehearsal. Participant 14 recalled a teacher threatening to pull them from a dance during a dress rehearsal (presumably right before the opening of the show) because they did not perform well enough. Participants were able to recall all these distressing memories with ease, and many of them shared the memory with a small laugh, essentially brushing aside the shock factor of some of these comments that were made to impressionable students in the midst of seeking coaching and help improving their ballet abilities. Hopefully, the intention of the teachers from the memories was not to be as critical and harsh as the students recalled them. Perhaps the teachers were intending to use a shock factor to

jump start the student into applying themselves and giving them an extra spark of external motivation. It is noteworthy that not many of the negative memories shared by the students were from their time training in a higher education dance program, but these authoritarian methods are still being used in ballet training. Although these memories were not from higher education dance training, it is concerning that some students younger than the young adults in college are receiving these types of comments. Although it appears that this intensely critical feedback is not as common or maybe as memorable in college training, it is imperative that teachers in higher education consider what effect their comments might have on their students. It is also noteworthy that one limitation of this study was that the student participants were aware that their current teachers in this dance program would be able to read this thesis. This could have potentially limited student transparency and discouraged them from sharing negative memories from their experiences in this particular higher education dance program.

The most shocking comments that students shared were not constructive, and they were focused on things that were out of control of the students at that moment. There was not a way for the student who could not fit into the costume to “apply” that feedback and fix it at that moment. Comments and actions like sending the student home early or threatening to pull them from a show last minute are not constructive, and the student is not given feedback they can implement to improve their performance. In fact, these actions actively inhibit the student from improving, as a lack of opportunity to perform gives the students less of a chance to practice.

Several of the teachers that were interviewed for this study made comments about more significant benefits of practicing ballet than being able to physically perform ballet steps. Some teachers hoped their students would come away from their class for a love and joy of movement,

and another teacher hoped their students could use their ballet training as a “tool of expression.” None of the teachers mentioned a perfected technical performance in class as the goal of their class. They all mentioned skills besides technique that they hoped their students would take away from the classes they taught.

### **Is this the Aesthetic or Is It Gendered?**

Teachers should avoid gendering a student when giving verbal feedback, especially when the student’s gender identity is not known for a fact. Even if their gender performance seems clearly gender conforming, their identity should not be assumed. Classical ballet still has a very specific aesthetic, and gender roles are embedded into the classical repertoire. The physical and artistic corrections given by the teachers can adhere to the aesthetic without gendering a student. Some students had memories of seeing or hearing male students being explicitly told to be more “manly” or “masculine,” and females frequently recalled hearing words like “delicate” or “graceful” being used synonymously with “feminine” dancing. Words like this often have gendered connotations, and they can trigger gender stereotypes and expectations. Instead, teachers can suggest a more corporeal approach to giving corrections that pertain to achieving the specific ballet aesthetic. For example, instead of saying “try it again, this time with a more manly, confident approach” (which insinuates that masculinity involves confidence, and femininity perhaps does not), a teacher could say, “try it again and this time, keep your chin up, and occupy the whole stage with your movement.” The words used in the second example of

feedback could generate the same physical correction, but it is framed in a way that does not gender the physical posture or movement.

### **Curriculum Suggestions**

It would be advantageous for higher education dance programs to use a curriculum that enhances and trains the students' mindsets. Although many of the student participants in this study had positive attitudes towards their current dance program, it is not guaranteed that all dance environments these students will be in will always be mentally nurturing, thus creating an overall positive experience. In the instance of a negative or detrimental environment, it would be beneficial for the students to have a sound understanding of how to thrive mentally even in difficult or challenging environments. The field of ballet can be competitive, and students could thrive if they were equipped with the tools needed to continue to increase their mental resilience and cultivate their growth mindset. A higher education dance program curriculum that includes a mental training class would be beneficial for the students to develop the same caliber of mental strength as physical strength. There is no doubt that ballet is rigorous physically, but it also takes significant mental strength and resilience to have a successful and healthy career. By providing students with the training to cultivate a growth mindset, students will be better prepared for the mental rigor that ballet demands.

The curriculum that higher education dance programs use should implement a mental training course. This type of course could help students develop the skills to be able to handle the high levels of stress that are often entailed in pre-professional or professional ballet. Topics

could include stress management, sustaining memory, managing the inner critic, and the importance of developing grit in highly competitive professions. Some graduate school programs, such as the University of California, Irvine School of Law and the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law, both offer mindfulness and peak performance classes that teach students in those intellectually rigorous programs how to use mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques to set themselves up for successful, fulfilling, and healthy careers. The University of California, Los Angeles offers an elective undergraduate course called “Life Skills,” which teaches students how to navigate a potentially stressful field (which ballet often is) and teaches how to maintain and improve their mental strength in order to manage stressful situations. Similar to these types of courses, dance programs should implement a mental training course as part of the required curriculum. This type of mental training would enable the students to maintain their mental wellness and improve the chances of students being more equipped to pursue a career in the competitive field of ballet.

### **Limitations**

This study has some possible imitations. The first limitation is that the individually conducted interviews offered very personal, specific answers and consequently, this data cannot be generalized beyond the participant group. This weakness was outweighed by the depth of insight that the interviews offered. The second limitation is that this study had a relatively small sample size. These are the two major limitations of this study that could be addressed in future research that expands beyond this sample group.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

There are steps that can be taken to improve ballet pedagogy in terms of gender inclusivity. However, the onus is not solely on ballet teachers to change the current, restrictive gender practices in ballet. The higher education institutions should also share the responsibility of progressing ballet towards diversity, equity, and inclusion. Institutions can provide the ballet teachers at the school with professional development courses and support them seeking professional development outside the instruction's offerings as well.

In order to better equip ballet students with the tools they need to have successful, healthy careers, higher education dance programs need to diversify the physical training to be more gender inclusive and expansive. Teachers can encourage students to train in the entire ballet vocabulary, rather than limiting them to one set of steps based on their gender. Requiring every student to perform every version of the combinations in class would help eliminate the feelings of judgment that some students reported feeling when they tried to practice combinations outside of their prescribed gender's vocabulary.

Since modern-day repertoire is reflecting progressive partnering, blurred gender roles, and gender-neutral choreography, students should be trained for the now very real possibility that they will be asked to perform in this new way during their career. One way to implement this is adding contact improvisation or gender-neutral partnering classes to dance programs' curricula. These classes would encourage students to build both physical and mental strength. Physical strength could be increased for students because they will learn to activate and engage new muscles in order to dance with different partners. Current professional ballet dancers need to be

able to support and be supported, so implementing contact improvisation and teaching basic partnering skills for all students would benefit students' physical training. Mentally, this would also enable them to develop a growth mindset by helping them believe they are not destined to be exclusively the partner in the air if they are female and exclusively the partner lifting if they are male. Gender neutral partnering classes would help eliminate the fixed mindset that many of the students in this study exhibited. These classes could help debunk the idea that a student's gender predetermines their career.

A mental training component should be implemented into the dance programs' curriculum. This will enable students to develop and train a growth mindset, where they no longer believe their success in ballet is predetermined (as many of the student participants in this study reported). The students need to be viewed as individuals with distinct identities that may or may not align with ballet's current gender rigidity. As times change and evolve, ballet training should reflect the present. On stage, ballet continues to make movement towards diversity, equity, and inclusion, but ballet training would benefit from pedagogical and curriculum updates that are relevant in the current day.

More research in this area is necessary to measure the effects of implementing mental training courses into the required curriculum in schools. Further research after implementation of the suggestions outlined in this thesis would play an important role in ensuring the ballet curriculum in higher education dance programs supports all students in their training and ballet goals. Current gender ideology is constantly in flux and practices in the studio will inevitably progress over time. Because society's ideas about gender are fluid and continuously expanding, what is currently viewed as "gender expansive" might become obsolete in the future. As ballet

training continues to evolve, ballet practitioners of all identities must strive not for static perfection, as this in itself would inflict a fixed mindset in students, but instead, we must continue to critically evaluate our ballet practice and make updates to ensure that we are always striving for gender diversity, expansion, and inclusion. This is how ballet will progress forward and stay relevant as an athletic practice, a means of expression, and a thriving art form in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## APPENDIX A

### Blank Mindset Questionnaire (Student and Teacher Questionnaire Part 2)<sup>63</sup>

#### MINDSET QUIZ

1. Circle the number for each question which best describes you
2. Total and record your score when you have completed each of the 10 questions
3. Using the SCORE chart, record your mindset

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much	0	1	2	3
No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit	3	2	1	0
Only a few people will be truly good at sports, you have to be born with the ability	0	1	2	3
The harder you work at something, the better you will be	3	2	1	0
I often get angry when I get feedback about my performance	0	1	2	3
I appreciate when people, parents, coaches or teachers give me feedback about my performance	3	2	1	0
Truly smart people do not need to try hard	0	1	2	3
You can always change how intelligent you are	3	2	1	0
You are a certain kind of person and there is not much that can be done to really change that	0	1	2	3
An important reason why I do my school work is that I enjoy learning new things	3	2	1	0

#### SCORE CHART

- 22-30** = Strong Growth Mindset  
**17-21** = Growth with some Fixed ideas  
**11-16** = Fixed with some growth ideas  
**0-10** = Strong fixed mindset

**MY SCORE:**

**MY MINDSET:**

Adapted from:  
Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House Inc.

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<sup>63</sup> Participants completed the questionnaire online without knowledge of the numerical score chart. Statements on the online questionnaire were not valued numerically.

## Sample Completed Mindset Questionnaire

### SAMPLE PARTICIPANT ANSWERS

#### MINDSET QUIZ

1. Circle the number for each question which best describes you
2. Total and record your score when you have completed each of the 10 questions
3. Using the SCORE chart, record your mindset

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can't change very much	0	1	2	3
No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit	3	2	1	0
Only a few people will be truly good at sports, you have to be born with the ability	0	1	2	3
The harder you work at something, the better you will be	3	2	1	0
I often get angry when I get feedback about my performance	0	1	2	3
I appreciate when people, parents, coaches or teachers give me feedback about my performance	3	2	1	0
Truly smart people do not need to try hard	0	1	2	3
You can always change how intelligent you are	3	2	1	0
You are a certain kind of person and there is not much that can be done to really change that	0	1	2	3
An important reason why I do my school work is that I enjoy learning new things	3	2	1	0

#### SCORE CHART

- 22-30** = Strong Growth Mindset  
**17-21** = Growth with some Fixed ideas  
**11-16** = Fixed with some growth ideas  
**0-10** = Strong fixed mindset

MY SCORE: **27** — This was found by adding the numbers from the participant's answers.

MY MINDSET: **Strong Growth Mindset**

Adapted from:  
Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House Inc.

## APPENDIX B

### Part 1 Questionnaire for UCI Students

*Think of a teacher you have had or currently have. Answer all the questions about this single teacher (not a combination of your many teachers).*

<u>1: very frequently</u>	<u>2: sometimes</u>	<u>3: very infrequently</u>
---------------------------	---------------------	-----------------------------

\_\_\_ My teacher's feedback criticizes me as a person (e.g., "You are lazy" or "You have no musicality").

\_\_\_ My teacher's feedback in class values my emotional and mental wellbeing.

\_\_\_ My teacher gives me feedback that is aimed at showing their dissatisfaction in me rather than improving my technique.

\_\_\_ My teacher's feedback in class is detrimental to my mental health.

\_\_\_ I have discouraged myself from doing the other gender's combinations in class.

\_\_\_ I have felt judged by others for doing the other gender's combination in class.

\_\_\_ When someone tells me I can't do something, I feel discouraged from trying.

\_\_\_ I want to have the choice to do the other gender's combinations in class.

\_\_\_ I think people expect me to dance a certain way because of my gender.

\_\_\_ When someone tells me I can't do something, it makes me work harder to achieve it.

#### Survey Questions: True/False

\_\_\_ I have been given a correction that references my gender either explicitly or implicitly.

\_\_\_ I feel comfortable talking to my teachers about what pronouns I use.

\_\_\_ Gender expectations in ballet have affected me personally.

\_\_\_ My teacher lets me choose which gender's combinations to do in class.

\_\_\_ My teacher makes everyone do both genders' combinations in class.

\_\_\_ I think it would be beneficial to do both the male and female combinations in class.

\_\_\_ I think my gender influences my success in ballet.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Teacher Questionnaire Part 1**

*Answer the following true or false questions in regard to your current students.*

1. A student's physical markers (i.e., natural flexibility, turnout, etc.) are more valuable than their mental markers (i.e., concentration, focus, etc.) in ballet.
2. I believe my students' talent and intelligence can be developed.
3. I believe mistakes are a valuable part of learning ballet.
4. I think my students feel threatened by another student's success.
5. I think my students view another student's success as inspirational.
6. I think my students embrace new challenges.

## APPENDIX D

### Student Interview Themes and Keywords

Theme	Keywords
Female Dancer Competition	competition, competing, competitive, harder, discrepancy, easier, dominated
Gendered Body Expectations	leaner, smaller, body, slim, physical, look
Female Gender Expectations	delicate, fairy, dainty, soft, graceful, airy, lifted, feminine
Male Gender Expectations	jump, height, strong, powerful, masculine
Male Guilt	guilt, opportunities
Fixed Mindset	change, height, matters, limits, limitations
Individuality	same, identical, corps de ballet, similar

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Interview Questions for Ballet Teachers**

1. Do you give separate combinations for male and female students in your class?
2. Why do you think it is/is not valuable to teach both?
3. Do you think physical attributes like turnout and feet or mental attributes like work ethic and persistence are more important to have a professional ballet career? Why?
4. What kind of things do you give your students feedback on?
5. Do you ever give feedback on mental attributes? Or usually just physical corrections?
6. What is some feedback/a correction you got from a teacher in your ballet training that has stuck with you for a long time? How do you think that impacted your teaching?
7. What is some feedback you got from a student that you have taught that has stuck with you for a long time? How do you think that impacted your teaching?
8. How do you think a student's gender influences their success in ballet?
9. How did your training prepare you to teach your students that identify as a different gender than you?
10. What is the most challenging part of teaching for you?
11. What is the most rewarding part of teaching for you?
12. What do you hope your students take away from your ballet class?

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Interview Questions for UCI Dance Majors**

1. Since this is a study concerning gender in ballet, if you are comfortable sharing, what is the gender you identify with?
2. What messages about gender did you receive during your training?
3. How do you think those messages affected your outlook on ballet?
4. Do you have the choice to do both genders' combinations in ballet class? Do you think that having that option would be beneficial in your training?
5. Do teachers/choreographers ask your preferred pronouns? How do you feel about that?
6. Have you ever received feedback from a teacher that references gender?
7. What is some feedback or a correction you got from a teacher in ballet that has stuck with you for a long time?
8. How do you think your gender influences your success in ballet?
9. What is your dream career in dance?
10. If any, what hurdles do you think could prevent you from having that career?

# APPENDIX G

## Institutional Review Board Exempt Form

	<p>Institutional Review Board Human Research Protections</p> <p>Exempt Self-Determination Tool</p> <p><b>UPDATED!</b> Version June 2020</p>
<p>UC Irvine IRB review is required for <i>most</i> activities that constitute <a href="#">engagement in human subjects research</a>, as federally defined.</p> <p>At UCI, researchers are permitted to self-determination their exempt research without confirmation from the IRB. This tool is intended to help you determine and document whether the human subject research qualifies for exempt self-determination or requires UCI IRB Review.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT!</b> Should the study sponsor require evidence of IRB review for a self-determination of exempt research, please provide the sponsor <a href="#">this letter</a>.</p> <p><b>INSTRUCTIONS:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To get started, review Parts A &amp; B to determine if the research is eligible for exempt self-determination.</li><li>2. If the research is eligible for exempt self-determination, maintain a copy of the completed Exempt Self-Determination Tool and any supporting documentation in your records. <b>IMPORTANT!</b> Do NOT submit the Exempt Self-Determination Tool to the IRB.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Sign the Lead Researcher (LR) Assurance statement at the end of the Exempt Self-Determination Tool. Obtain the Faculty Sponsor’s signature as appropriate.</li></ol></li><li>3. <b>If UCI IRB Review <i>is</i> required</b>, please submit a <a href="#">New IRB Application</a> for exempt, expedited, or full committee review. For more information, please review: <a href="#">How To Submit Electronic IRB Applications for Review</a>.</li></ol> <p>If you have questions about completing the Exempt Self-Determination Tool or about the IRB process in general, contact the <a href="#">Human Research Protections staff</a>.</p>	
<p><b>IMPORTANT REMINDER!</b> In accordance with the <a href="#">Vice Chancellor for Research’s shutdown message</a>, non-critical research has been halted. However, non-critical research that can be performed from home may continue. The research shutdown remains in effect consistent with California’s <a href="#">Executive Order N-33-20</a>.</p> <p>Refer to the Office of Research webpage on <a href="#">Research Continuity</a> for more details.</p>	
<p><b>PART A: VERIFY SELF-DETERMINATION ELIGIBILITY</b></p> <p>The activity is eligible for exempt self-determination <i>IF</i> all of the statements below are true.</p> <p><b>IMPORTANT!</b> If one or more statement below are not true then the research is not eligible for exempt self-determination and <b>IRB review is required</b>.</p>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>A. The research IS human subject research.</b></p> <p>Please review the <a href="#">Non-Human Subject Research Determination form</a>. If your activity is non-human subject research, please complete the form and maintain it for your records. If your activity does not qualify as non-human subject research, please check the box to the left and proceed to the next check box.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Graduate students dissertation research involving humans is considered human subject research – please check the box to the left.</i></p>

- B. I am NOT a UCI undergraduate researcher.**  
All UCI undergraduate research involving human subjects that meets the criteria for exempt review must submit for exempt confirmation through the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program ([UROP](#)).
- C. The research is NOT supported by the Department of Justice (DOJ).**  
Research that is funded/supported by the Department of Justice (DOJ) is not eligible for exemption either by Self-Determination or through submission to the IRB. Submit a [New IRB Application](#) for [expedited](#) / [full committee review](#). For more information, please review: [How To Submit Electronic IRB Applications for Review](#).
- D. The research does NOT include any of the following.**
  1. The use or disclosure of UCI protected health information (PHI)<sup>1</sup>
    - a. *Use* is any sharing, employment, application, utilization, examination, or analysis within the entity
    - b. *Disclosure* is any release, transfer, provision of access to, or divulging outside of entity
  2. A targeted recruitment of children
  3. A targeted recruitment of adults (age 18 or older) who may not be legally/mentally/cognitively competent to consent
  4. A targeted recruitment of [prisoners](#) (may include parolees)
  5. A targeted recruitment of American Indian/Alaska Native tribes
  6. A targeted recruitment of undocumented people
  7. International Research
  8. A request for UCI to serve as IRB of Record for non-UCI individuals engaged in human subjects research.  
Note: To initiate a request for UCI to serve in this capacity, the LR must have a dual affiliation with the non-UCI entity and IRB review is required to formalize the reliance process.
  9. A study team member has a [Disclosable Financial Interest](#)

**IMPORTANT!** IRB approval is required to enroll any of the above listed subject populations. Should the study team inadvertently encounter a potential subject that belongs to an excluded population above, this individual may **NOT** be enrolled in the study.

**PART B: VERIFY EXEMPT CATEGORIES ELIGIBLE FOR SELF-DETERMINATION**

1. Please review the following Exempt categories that are eligible for self-determination.
2. Check the category(ies) that apply to the research.

**IMPORTANT!** If one or more category below are not applicable then the research is not eligible for exempt self-determination and **IRB review is required.**

<sup>1</sup> When PHI is communicated inside of a covered entity, this is called a *use* of the information. When PHI is communicated to another person or organization that is not part of the covered entity, this is called a *disclosure*. HIPAA allows both use and disclosure of PHI for research purposes, but such uses and disclosures have to follow HIPAA guidance and have to be part of a research plan that is reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Category 1: Education (the following criteria must be met)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Research, conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings and specifically involves normal educational practices that are <b>NOT</b> likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education instructional strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
Category 2: Interactions (the following criteria must be met)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research that includes only interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) <sup>2</sup></p> <p><b>One of the following criteria must be met:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects <b>CANNOT</b> readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2ii) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would <b>NOT</b> reasonably* place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation</p> <p><i>*Reasonably defined as with fair and sound judgment; a standard used by an ordinary, rational person under similar circumstances.</i></p>
Category 3i: Behavioral Interventions ( <i>All of the following criteria must be met</i> )	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The research involves behavioral interventions in conjunction with the collection of information from an <b>adult subject</b> through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The behavioral interventions are brief in duration, harmless, painless, not physically invasive, not likely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on the subjects, and the investigator has no reason to think the subjects will find the interventions offensive or embarrassing.</p> <p>Provided all such criteria are met, examples of such benign behavioral interventions would include having the subjects play an online game, having them solve puzzles under various noise conditions, or having them decide how to allocate a nominal amount of received cash between themselves and someone else.</p>

<sup>2</sup> [Subpart D applicable only when involving educational tests or the observation of public behavior when the investigator\(s\) do NOT participate in the activities being observed.](#)

	<p><b>One of the following criteria must be met:</b></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3iA) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects <b>CANNOT</b> readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>OR</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3iB) Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would <b>NOT</b> reasonably* place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation</p> <p><i>*Reasonably defined as with fair and sound judgment; a standard used by an ordinary, rational person under similar circumstances.</i></p>
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**SECTION 1: STUDY INFORMATION**

<b>1. Study Title:</b>
The Effects of Ballet's Gender Expectations on Dancers' Mindsets
<b>2. Identify the funding source. <i>Check all that apply:</i></b>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Grant/Subaward <b>OR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Contract/Subcontract <i>(provide details below)</i></p> <p>Prime Awardee(s):</p> <p>Sponsor Name(s):</p> <p>SPA Proposal or Award #(s):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Check here to confirm a copy of the human subjects portion of the grant is available and kept on file</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Department or campus funds (includes department support, unrestricted funds, start-up funds, personal funds, campus program awards, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Non-cash support from manufacturer/sponsor (e.g., free drug, device, research materials)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Subject/subject's insurance/third party payer</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student project that will incur no costs.</p>

**SECTION 2: STUDY TEAM**

- Complete the table below.
- List the Lead Researcher (LR), Co-Researchers (CR), and Research Personnel (RP) who will be engaged in human subject research.
  - Co-Researchers are faculty, staff, students and other academic appointees who the LR considers to be key personnel for conducting the research study. These individuals work closely with the LR to design, conduct, and/or report on the research.
  - Personnel who are not interacting with participants for research purposes and/or who do not have access to identifiable private information (e.g., statisticians) are not engaged in human-subjects research and therefore should not be listed below.
  - IMPORTANT!** Do not list non-UCI researchers below. To initiate a request for UCI to serve as the IRB of Record for non-UCI researchers, the LR must have a dual affiliation with the non-UCI entity and IRB review is required to formalize the reliance process.
- If there is a Faculty Sponsor (FS), they must be listed below, as they must be identified to provide oversight and guidance to the LR. If there is collection of identifiable information, the Faculty Sponsor should be designated as having access to the identifiable information.

Role	Name, Title & Degrees	Department & UCI Affiliation - Faculty, Staff, Graduate or Undergraduate Student	Recruit	Informed Consent Process	Interact with Participant	Access Participant Identifiable Information	Analyze Participant Identifiable Information
LR	Brittany Woo	<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Grad Student <input type="checkbox"/> Undergrad <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other UCI:	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
FS	Molly Lynch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCI: <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
To add more study team members, click into this space, then click the new + button on the right							
5. If applicable, specify which members of the above study team will be responsible for interacting with non-English speaking participants.							
N/A							

**SECTION 3: WHAT IS YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION?**

- State the hypothesis or primary objective of the research. Include a rationale for conducting the study. **[Maximum length = 250 WORDS]**

"The Effects of Ballet's Gender Expectations on Dancers' Mindsets" is my Master of Fine Arts thesis topic. In this research, I am asking UCI dance majors, UCI professors, and non-UCI established dancers and choreographers to explain and describe their ballet training and career. I will be asking questions related to gender expectations in ballet. The purpose of the research is to investigate the effects of gender expectations in ballet pedagogy on dancers' mindsets and to suggest pedagogical changes to remedy a "fixed mindset" in dancers. This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts in Dance degree requirements.

**2. COVID-19: Does this research include a focus on SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?**

**NO**

**YES:** Please consider whether [Ancillary Committees for COVID-19 Research](#) apply.

**SECTION 4: SUBJECT POPULATION**

Complete the table below. Specify the maximum number of individual-level information to be accessed/analyzed within each cohort and in total across all cohorts.

Category/Group (e.g., students in School or Course, consumers on website, people being observed at location)	Age Range (e.g., adults 18 and over)	Maximum Number of Subjects
Professional Dancers	24-40	6
Professional Choreographers	30-70	6
UCI Dance Majors	18-23	20
Ballet Teachers	35-60	6
		<b>Total: 38</b>

**SECTION 5: RECRUITMENT METHODS**

1. Indicate which recruitment methods will be utilized. Check all that apply:

**IMPORTANT!** Advertisements must adhere to UCI [Recruitment Guidelines](#). Various templates are available on the HRP webpage [Application and Forms](#) (see sub-section HRP and then Recruitment Templates).

- This study involves no direct contact with participants (i.e., passive observation of public behavior or secondary use of information). **Skip to SECTION 6.**
- Online Advertisements – Including Social Media       Radio / Television Advertisement
- Newspaper Advertisement       Flyers
- Letters or Emails       Phone Call
- Other (specify): [Electronic Email Flyer](#)

2. Describe when, where, by whom and how potential participants will be approached.
3. If posting on your Facebook page or other social media sites, please explain.
4. If you will recruit by e-mail, phone, etc., explain how the researcher will obtain the participants' contact information.

From 10/2020-03/2021 I will approach subjects for recruitment by email and flyer. Email address for subjects will be obtained through public websites listing the subjects' contact information. A letter of recruitment will be emailed to each subject. For UCI undergraduate students, a flyer will be posted in the Dance building at UCI, and an electronic version of the flyer will be included in a department-wide email sent to undergraduate dance majors. Subjects will have access to the research team's contact information from the flyer, but the lead researcher will not have access to subjects' contact information until the subjects contact the lead researcher indicating their interest in participating. Subjects will also be recruited by social media on "Slack." A general recruitment message will be posted on the UCI Dance Majors Slack page.

## **SECTION 6: PARTICIPANT COMPENSATION**

Will participants be compensated?

**IMPORTANT!** Compensation should be offered on a prorated basis when the research involves multiple sessions. Additional considerations are required when using lotteries, raffles, and drawings, see UCI [Lottery Guidance](#). For additional information about researcher's/department's responsibilities and current Accounting procedures, see [UCI Policy Sec. 701-03](#).

Participants will not be compensated. **Skip to SECTION 7.**

Participants will be compensated, **address the following:**

Amount of Payment:

Method:  Cash  Check  Extra credit  Gift card:  Other:

Schedule:  After each study visit  At the end of study  Other :

## **SECTION 7: INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS**

1. Identify the specific steps for obtaining consent.

**IMPORTANT!** For additional information, see [Guidance for Consenting Process](#). Templates are available on the HRP webpage [Application and Forms](#) (see sub-section HRP, Consent Forms).

- No consent process will take place (i.e., no contact with participants) **Skip to SECTION 8.**
- Oral / Implied informed consent will be obtained – No signature is required (e.g., completion of a survey electronically)

**IMPORTANT!**

- Customize the Study Information Sheet template.
- If obtaining consent online, participants should:
  - View the Consent/Study Info Sheet prior to participation
  - Be prompted to verify they meet the eligibility criteria, and
  - Indicate their willingness to participate in the research (e.g., click “Yes”).

- Written (signed) informed consent will be obtained – A signature is required. UNCOMMON
- IMPORTANT!** Customize the Informed Consent Document template.

**2. Will this study include Non-English Speaking Participants?**

- Only individuals who can read and speak English are eligible for this study.
- The English version of the consent materials will be translated for non-English speaking participants. An interpreter will be involved in the consenting process.

**3. If study team members will approach their own students or employees:**

- a. Explain what precautions will be taken to minimize potential undue influence or coercion.
- b. Explain how compromised objectivity will be avoided.
- c. When prospective medical students, residents or fellows are included, it is expected that a statement be added to the Study Information Sheet indicating that their agreement to participate will have no impact on their current or future positions/ opportunities at UCI. This is particularly relevant if the Lead Researcher is also in a position to make hiring or appointment determinations. The following is a suggested text that may be used:

*“Refusing to participate will not impact current or future residency or fellowship opportunities or your ability to progress at UCI.”*

**IMPORTANT!** UCI expects that appropriate provisions are in place to engage with this potentially vulnerable population. [See HRPP Policy \(#40\)](#) for more information on this topic. In addition, visit the [HRPP webpage](#) on this topic.

- The study team will not approach their own students or employees.
- The study team will approach their own students or employees:
- a. Specify how undue influence or coercion will be minimized. **Check all that apply:**
    - The student's experimental results, performance, or any confidential information will not be given to whomever is grading the student, except for stating whether the student participated or not. If this is not feasible, then the student's experimental results, performance, or any confidential information will not be accessed until after grades have been posted.
    - The student's participation must not be required for course credit to be given. Instructors who wish to involve students in simulations of human experimentation and course-assigned data

collection for educational purposes only (as opposed to research purposes) may require such participation as part of the class requirements.

Other; specify:

b. Specify how compromised objectivity will be avoided:

**4. Will this study include access to (both UCI and non-UCI) student records?**

**IMPORTANT!** Researchers interested in accessing UCI Student Records for research purposes are directed to the [UCI Registrar website](#) on Confidentiality of Students Records. The disclosure of information from student records is governed in large measure by the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, by the State of California Education Code, and by University policy and procedures implementing these laws. Generally, documentation of informed consent is required to access private student information.

The study team will not access student records

The study team will access student records and evidence of FERPA<sup>3</sup> compliance has been / will be obtained (and on file) from the local school/district site or the UCI Registrar prior to the initiation of research.

**5. Will this study involve Deception or Incomplete Disclosure?**

**IMPORTANT!** Per [Federal regulations](#), the use of deception or incomplete disclosure may only be exempt (and considered for a Self Determination of Exemption at UCI) if the (prospective) subject authorizes the deception through a prospective agreement to participate in research in circumstances in which the subject is informed that he or she will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature or purposes of the research. If advanced disclosure is not possible, submit an [Application](#) to the IRB for Expedited review.

There is no deception or incomplete disclosure involved.

There is deception or incomplete disclosure and consent materials will include an initial disclosure to prospective subjects that he or she will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature or purposes of the research and a subsequent [debriefing](#) upon conclusion of the research.

**SECTION 8: RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

1. Specify where the research procedures will take place (e.g. Irvine High School, Starbucks, UCI Douglas Hospital – Cardiac Care Unit, UCI Main Campus – Hewitt Hall, etc).

2. If research will be conducted at non-UCI locations, confirm whether Letters of Permission or other documentation are required. See [Guidance for Letter\(s\) of Permission and Template Letter of Permission](#).

Location(s) of research procedures: [The research procedures will take place on the internet via video call interviews, online questionnaires, and email interviews.](#)

***Check here to confirm Letter(s) of Permission has been / will be obtained for non-UCI private locations and kept on file.***

<sup>3</sup> 34 CRF 99: [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) applies to this research.

**3. List the data collection procedures in chronological order using the table format below.**

Procedure and/or the Data Collection Instrument	Is the Procedure/ Instrument already being completed as part of a program evaluation or an educational activity?	Is the Procedure/ Instrument a standardized measure?	List the frequency and the time _____ required for participants to complete the Procedure/ Instrument	Describe the setting where data collection will take place	Confidentiality: Are participant identifiers (IDs) recorded during data collection?
<p><b>EXAMPLE:</b> ABC Satisfaction Survey via Amazon Turk</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Survey will be completed 3x during the academic year. Takes no more than 20 mins. to complete</p>	<p>Amazon Mechanical Turk</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No IDs <input type="checkbox"/> Code with link to IDs <input type="checkbox"/> Yes IDs
<p>Fixed vs. Growth Mindset Survey</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Survey will be completed 1X during the study. Survey takes no more than 15 mins to complete.</p>	<p>Online data collection</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> No IDs <input type="checkbox"/> Code with link to IDs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes IDs
<p>Oral Interview</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Interview will be completed 1X during the study. Interview takes no more than 45 mins to complete.</p>	<p>Conducted online</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> No IDs <input type="checkbox"/> Code with link to IDs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes IDs
<p>Dance Major Questionnaire</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<p>Questionnaire will be completed 1X during the study. Questionnaire takes no more than 20 mins to complete.</p>	<p>Online data collection</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> No IDs <input type="checkbox"/> Code with link to IDs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes IDs

To add more procedures/data collection instruments, click into this space, then click the new + button 

**4. Will any of the study procedures include collecting photographs, audio recordings and/or video recordings?**

- No photos, audio or video recordings will be taken.
- Photos, audio or video recordings will be taken. Text regarding the photos or recordings will be included in the consent document and specific permission to record identifiers will be obtained from participants.
- Check all that apply:**
- Facial image will be in video or photo
- Participants' names will be collected or recorded in either video, photo or audio recording
- Collecting photographs, as well as audio and video recordings will be optional for the participant
- Other:

**SECTION 9: CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH INFORMATION**

**1. How will how information be stored and secured? *Check all that apply:***

Questions regarding best practices for data security and/or privacy may be addressed to UCI Information Security and Privacy at [security@uci.edu](mailto:security@uci.edu).

- Information will be maintained electronically. Information will be password protected and maintained in an encrypted format. *Researchers may access UCI-contracted data sharing and storage tools through UCI OIT.*
- Information will be maintained in hard copy. Information will be stored in a locked area that is not accessible to non-study team members.
- Other; specify:

**2. Will any participant identifiers be retained in the research records (i.e., for recruitment, consent, analysis, and/or compensation)? *Check all that apply:***

- No participant identifiers will be retained.
- Participant identifiers will be retained as selected below:
- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Names   | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone or fax number | <input type="checkbox"/> Web URLs           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email Address   | <input type="checkbox"/> Postal address      | <input type="checkbox"/> IP address numbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facial Photos/Images <input type="checkbox"/> Other unique identifier (specify): |  |   |

**3. Will a code be used to link participant identifiers with the research information?**

<input type="checkbox"/> No participant identifiers will be retained. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participant identifiers will be retained; <b>check <u>one</u> of the following:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> A code will be used. Participant identifiers will be <b>kept separately</b> from the information, linked by the code. <input type="checkbox"/> A code will not be used. Participant identifiers will be <b>kept separately</b> from the information. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A code will <b>not</b> be used. Participant identifiers will be <b>kept directly</b> with the information.
<b>4. Specify how long ALL participant identifiers will be retained. This includes the identifiers stored in paper format, stored electronically, video/audio recordings, photographs, etc.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> No participant identifiers will be retained <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Participant identifiers will be retained as selected below: <input type="checkbox"/> Destroyed after recruitment/consent process <input type="checkbox"/> Destroyed after data collection <input type="checkbox"/> Destroyed after compensation <input type="checkbox"/> Destroyed after data analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Destroyed after publication/presentation or end of study <input type="checkbox"/> Maintained indefinitely for undefined future research
<b>5. Will identifiable information be disclosed in publications and/or presentations?</b>
No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Identifiable information will be shared. Text regarding the disclosure will be included in the consent document specific permission to disclose identifiers will be discussed with participants. <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Check here to confirm that <u>Release Form</u> will be obtained from each participant and kept on file</b>
<b>6. Will information be shared with other researchers outside of the study team (i.e., UCI / non-UCI researchers) for purposes <u>within the scope of the current study</u>?</b>
<b>IMPORTANT!</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When transferring data to a non-profit, please contact Grace J. Park at <a href="mailto:parkqi@uci.edu">parkqi@uci.edu</a>.</li> <li>• When transferring data to a for-profit, please contact the <a href="#">Industry Contract Officer</a> at UCI Beall Applied Innovation assigned to your department.</li> <li>• When transferring tangible research material to an organization, please contact UCI Beall Applied Innovation at <a href="mailto:MaterialTransfer@uci.edu">MaterialTransfer@uci.edu</a>.</li> </ul>

No

Yes: Text regarding the information sharing will be included in the consent document and specific permission to share information will be discussed with participants.

**Check one of the following:**

Only de-identified information will be shared (i.e. research subjects cannot be identified by other researcher)

**Check here to confirm that study team will remove ALL of the identifiers listed in Section 9.2 above prior to distribution.**

Identifiable information will be shared

Name of other researcher/entity:

List of **all** identifiers to be shared:

Provide justification for why it is necessary to share identifiers:

**Check here to confirm that all appropriate data use agreements will be finalized before sharing.**

**7. Will information be shared, used again, or stored for undefined future research purposes beyond the scope of the current study?**

No

Yes: Text regarding the information sharing will be included in the consent document and specific permission to share information will be discussed with participants.

**Check one of the following:**

No subject identifiers will be retained by the study team beyond initial collection (i.e. information cannot be linked to an individual). Requests for de-identified information will be managed by the UCI study team.

**Check here to confirm that all appropriate data use and/or materials transfer agreements will be finalized before sharing.**

De-identified information will be retained and managed in an established non-UCI biorepository (i.e. not managed by the UCI study team). Specify the non-UCI biorepository: [Type Here](#)

**Check here to confirm that all appropriate data use and/or materials transfer agreements will be finalized before sharing.**

Other; specify:

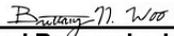
**8. Indicate how long research information and/or biospecimens will be retained.**

**IMPORTANT!** In accordance with [UCOP policy](#), information/biospecimens must be retained for 10 years after the end of the calendar year in which the research is completed, unless otherwise specified in the award agreement.

**Choose the longest retention period applicable:**

- There is no contract or award associated with this research. Information/biospecimens will be retained for **10 years** after the end of the calendar year in which the research is completed.
- The contract or award associated with this research requires that information/biospecimens be retained for the following period; specify time frame:
- The study is conducted under an IND or an IDE investigation, information/biospecimens will be retained for two years after an approved marketing application. If approval is not received, the information/biospecimens will be kept for 2 years after the investigation is discontinued and the FDA is notified per [FDA sponsor requirements](#).
- This research includes the potential for future undefined research using information/biospecimens which will be stored and **maintained indefinitely**.
- Other; specify timeframe and provide rationale: [The research information will be retained for 1 year following data collection and analysis. This timeframe ensures adequate time for the research to be published and printed in June 2021.](#)

**SECTION 2: LEAD RESEARCHER ASSURANCE**

<b>The Lead Researcher (and Faculty Sponsor – if applicable) assure the following.</b>	
<p>As Primary Lead Researcher and Faculty Sponsor, we have ultimate responsibility for the performance of this study, the protection of the rights and welfare of the human subjects, and applicable UCI policies, as well as state statutes for research involving human subjects.</p> <p><b>We hereby assure or acknowledge the following:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The information provided in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge.</li> <li>2. All named individuals on this project have read the procedures outlined in the protocol, are aware of and have reviewed relevant HRPP Policies and Procedures and understand their role on the study.</li> <li>3. All named individuals on this project have completed the required electronic educational research tutorials and have been made aware of the "Common Rule" (45 CFR Part 46) and acknowledge the importance of the Belmont Principles - Respect for Persons, Beneficence and Justice in conducting research involving human participants. Also UCI has signed the Federalwide Assurance (FWA) that is available for review on the Human Research Protections (HRP) website.</li> <li>4. Minor changes to the research that do not increase risk to participants, or significantly alter the study aims or procedures, such as the addition or removal of students researchers, do not require additional self-confirmation of exemption or approval from the IRB. Major changes that increase risk or constitute substantive revisions to the research including procedural changes will require a new self-confirmation of exemption or approval from the IRB.</li> <li>5. When conducting research at a non-UCI location outside of California (but within the United States), Lead Researchers must comply with the requirements and policies of the location and State laws regarding human research procedures.</li> <li>6. When collaborating with another entity (e.g., another UC, CHOC, CSUF, or a local school district), the collaborators who are engaged in human research activities are responsible for securing their own (non-UCI) IRB exemption/approval.</li> <li>7. The Exempt Self-Determination, consent documents including recruitment materials and data collection materials will be maintained by the Lead Researcher or Faculty Sponsor for 10 years beyond the completion of the research. If you will cease your affiliation with UCI during this 10 year period and intend to transfer your identifiable data to a new institution, please notify your Faculty Sponsor and Department to determine whether this is permissible.</li> <li>8. This research study is subject to routine monitoring by the Human Research Protections (HRP) unit of the Office of Research. Through the Education Quality and Improvement Program (EQUIP) program, HRP staff conduct periodic quality improvement monitoring and educational outreach.</li> </ol>	
<b>Please sign below, indicating that you agree with the above.</b>	
 <hr/> <b>Lead Researcher's Signature</b>	<hr/> 11/05/2020 <hr/> <b>Date</b>
 <hr/> <b>Faculty Sponsor's Signature (if applicable)</b>	<hr/> 11/2/2020 <hr/> <b>Date</b>