

UC Irvine

UC Irvine Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Creating a Dance Course: Navigating the Transition into Higher Education for Freshmen

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/59r4j157>

Author

Eversoll, Allison

Publication Date

2019

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Creating a Dance Course:
Navigating the Transition into Higher Education for Freshmen

THESIS

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in Dance

by

Allison Haley Eversoll

Thesis Committee:
Professor Molly Lynch, Chair
Professor Diane Diefenderfer
Professor Dr. Lisa Naugle

2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT OF THESIS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1:	
Literature Review	3
Student Responsibility	4
Identity	7
Wellness: Relationship Between Body and Mind	9
Community vs. Autonomy	12
Summary	14
CHAPTER 2:	
Methods and Procedures	15
Interviews	15
Results	16
CHAPTER 3:	
Choreographic Process	18
Rehearsal Set-Up	18
Choreographic Exercises	19
Interviews	21
CHAPTER 4:	
Freshmen Seminar Outline	22
Orientation	23
Quarter One	24
Quarter Two	26
Quarter Three	28
CHAPTER 5:	
Conclusion	30
REFERENCES	34
APPENDIX A:	
Interview Questions	36
APPENDIX B:	
Freshmen Seminar Outline	38

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my thesis chair Professor Molly Lynch. Professor Lynch has always had an open door for me to come into and talk through this research without any hesitations. She has allowed this research and paper to be my own but has given nudges along the way to keep me on the right track. I would also like to thank my thesis committee Dr. Lisa Naugle and Professor Diane Diefenderfer for their support along the way.

I would like to thank the dancers in my choreographic process who provided a great space to create and explore many new ideas and exercises. The dancers kept an open mind to their journey and in the end came out with more confidence.

Thank you to my family, who have always shown the love and support as I pursued a career that may not always be ideal to some but is a career, they have always stood behind me on. Especially my mother, who is a dance teacher, pushed me to be the best I could be as a dancer but also as a strong independent woman.

Thank you to my cohort, who have been my rock in this MFA journey. They have all been incredibly gracious, smart, humble, hardworking, and caring in helping not just myself but all of us to get to this last step.

Finally thank you to my fiancé, who has been supportive since day one, and has always understood the time commitment and energy that was needed over these last couple of years to pursue my education even further.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Creating a Dance Course:
Navigating the Transition into Higher Education for Freshmen
By

Allison Haley Eversoll

Master of Fine Arts in Dance

University of California, Irvine, 2019

Professor Molly Lynch, Chair

Dancers enter into their first year of higher education with different levels of knowledge, both within their area of study and as well as understanding who they are as a person. The transition between high school and higher education will never be the same for each student, which leads to the question of whether the resources that are available are sufficient to help a diverse population of students navigate their first-year experiences within a dance program? What exactly do students need as they enter into their first year of higher education and how can their interests be molded into a career path that makes sense for every dance student?

Some Freshmen Seminars are being utilized in higher education dance departments, however not every seminar may focus on these four crucial topics: student responsibility, wellness both mentally and physically, community vs autonomy, and identity.

This thesis paper takes these four themes and develops them through two different processes; a choreographic component and an outline that can be developed into a Freshmen Seminar.

INTRODUCTION

Dance as a profession is not only physically demanding but requires mental well-being and focus. Dancers put their bodies through a great deal of work and also need their minds to be alert to be successful in a dance career. In a student's first year experience in higher education, they have more to worry about than just needing to focus on their major. Besides familiarizing themselves with the inner workings of their department, students may be dealing with being away from home for the first time and or financially being independent from their parents. These two aspects happen for most students; however, their focus goes directly to their chosen major.

A student's excitement and enthusiasm towards a new experience can last a while, but what do they do when they need to figure out tuition for a quarter, or where do they go when they feel homesick? Feelings on these matters may be hard for a freshman to talk about openly, if they do not feel comfortable yet in their new environment. What do teachers need to offer and what should a department provide to help create a smooth transition for incoming students?

Every student has a different journey. Each student will have varied interests in their field, opinions about how things are being run, and come from diverse backgrounds. Not one person will have the same path in their chosen career, but a dance department can bring the students together to work through the one thing that unites them all and that is being a freshman.

Every student coming into higher education will likely experience the first year differently. In what ways might a freshmen seminar help students transition to university life? My research questions are: What are freshmen students missing in the first year? Are there opportunities the students may be missing out on because they do not have the information and resources yet? What can help the students become even more successful in their careers during their four years as a student? What can be provided to help freshmen navigate those first-year

questions and nerves better? What are the seniors lacking as they go into their final year as a college student, and were they prepared for success?

Of course, all of these questions depend on what university the student is attending, what opportunities the university has available, and also the interest of the students. Teachers can only prepare the students so much, but ultimately the students pick and choose their own career path. Having a class where students are together throughout their first year in college can help alleviate the stress that comes from being freshmen.

Many higher education dance programs have a senior seminar to prepare students for graduation and the tools to pursue their career. I would propose that freshmen should receive some of that same information, so they are able to work on their craft as new students. Obtaining this information earlier in their education will help freshmen utilize the opportunities available to them on campus that best suit their needs towards a career path. A Freshmen Seminar can be a class that helps students by answering questions about the curriculum and requirements for their major but can also be a place for new students to make a core group of friends and find that support early. Besides focusing on who they are as a dancer in their technique classes, every student goes through searching and finding out who they are as a person. Some may have a strong foundation of who they are coming into a program, but higher education is a huge pivotal point in the student's life as they are growing into adulthood.

Throughout the process of developing a Freshmen Seminar, the topic of identity and community vs autonomy kept reappearing. This led me to explore choreographically how these two themes could be represented through movement and not just within the lesson plan of a Freshmen Seminar.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past thirty years first year experience classes have increased throughout institutions by 20 percent. According to the National Resource Center from the University of South Carolina in their 2017 poll over 500 campuses had reported offering at least one first year experience program. Jennifer L. Crissman Ishler, who is an Associate Professor at Penn State and teaches Human Development and Family Studies states that “The freshmen year has long been known to be a critical time in the lives of students. It is a time of transition and adjustment to the social and academic demands of college, a time when the likelihood of dropout and the possibility of transformative learning is greatest.” (Ishler, Jennifer L. Crissman 2003, 71-83) Freshmen Seminars vary from one institution to the next, but they all have one common goal in mind and that is to give students the foundation to stand on during their first-year-experience.

While it is true that these programs have done much to change the way some freshmen experience their first year of college, it is also true that freshmen year programs have not yet fully addressed the important educational questions that confront faculty: namely, how can academic programs meet the educational needs of first-year students and more actively engage them in the educational process? (Tinto, Vincent, and Goodsell, Anne 1994, 7-28)

Objectives from the first-year experience poll from the University of South Carolina included, “academic success strategies, academic planning, knowledge of institution or campus resources and services, and writing skills.” (Young 2017). Many of these objectives were broad and did not focus on individual areas of study. Narrowing down the search specifically to dance I found a few schools that incorporated a Freshmen Seminar within their dance department. I was able to interview three professors who are currently teaching a seminar for freshmen students within their dance department. Four common themes emerged: student responsibility, identity, mental and physical health, and community vs autonomy.

Student Responsibility

A student's education can be looked at from multiple perspectives: the teacher, student, community, department, the university, political, climate, culture, legal, family, financial, etc. For the purpose of this study I wanted to focus on the teacher and student perspective. Looking at the teacher perspective, the responsibility for a professor is to focus on how the material is presented to the students so they engage, learn and think critically. From the student perspective, the responsibility for them is understanding how to retain the knowledge and skills and to use them to move their education forward. Student learning outcomes are explained by the teacher and the student needs to analyze the information, so they can understand the goals of the course and the expected outcomes. Often times students may need to do this on their own because even though the teacher's overall goal is to help all the students succeed, individual corrections and attention may be difficult to achieve every class period by the teacher.

Carol Dweck's book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, talks about the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. The student with a fixed mindset may not understand their responsibility in comparison to someone with a growth mindset.

Believing that your qualities are carved in stone- the fixed mindset- creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. If you have only a certain amount of intelligence, a certain personality, and a certain moral character-- well then, you'd better prove that you have a healthy dose of them. It simply wouldn't do to look or feel deficient in these most basic characteristics. [...]There's another mindset in which these traits are not simply a hand you're dealt and have to live with. The growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts. Although people may differ in every which way -- in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests or temperaments -- everyone can change and grow through application and experience. (Dweck 2008)

Carol Dweck continues to explain ways a student can adopt a new view towards their education and personal events. For example, when the student is viewing a grade or outcome that did not produce the results the student expected, a student could include the words "not yet" to achieve a growth mindset. Often times an end result is viewed as something that is final, but

with a growth mindset the student thinks they have “not yet” reached their end goal. This eliminates a sense of failure and focuses on the process, not the product. The student will not think that their goal is unattainable but it leaves the possibility for the student to continue a process and keep discovering new thoughts.

Student responsibility can hold a lot of weight and is often paired with the idea that they are needing to be perfect. “Perfectionism encompasses some traits that are regarded as laudable when considered in isolation. For example, the setting of high standards and being highly driven can be considered elements of perfectionism.” (Nordin- Bates 2011, 58-76) A teacher may say encouraging words to their students, but the translation is evident through the student's movements and responses. This is where the need to be perfect can affect the student’s ability to commit to their passion. “Perfectionism can cause students to become so devoted to their own image and others perceptions of that image that they lose out on the rich, subjective experience that dance can entail.” (Prichard 2017, 77-81) Dance is more than a single person's thoughts, it is a combination of stories, voices, feelings, defeats, accomplishments and sorrows. Allowing the need for perfection to creep into the mind can be detrimental to a student. “Perfectionism also leads to a discrepancy between a person’s actual self and his or her ideal self, and this incongruity results in negative thoughts and emotions, including reduced self- esteem, nonproductive and self-critical ruminations and procrastination.” (Eusanio, Thompson, and Jaque 2014, 106-14)

Having a perfectionist outlook about dance can result in not engaging in deliberate practice. “Avoiding blunders, missteps, and dance phrases that make us feel less than confident can - ironically and tragically prevent us from operating at the edges of our ability, making us merely adequate rather than truly exceptional.” (Ericsson 2006, 683-704) As students in higher education, they are reaching a point where they need to find comfort in failing forward. How can

a dancer know their limits if they are afraid to push off their axis, both in a movement sense, but also in their foundation of thinking? By taking risks, that are smart and healthy, when a student “fails,” it is not a step back but rather a step forward in a direction that is helping the student grow. The term failing forward is something students should think about every day. Robyn Prichard, an active international performer, choreographer, and professor at the University of Akron, talks about purposely failing in class and to try to eliminate the perfection attitude. If the dancer stops worrying about doing the movement right then “failure becomes integrated as just another part of your training rather than a comment on who you are as a person or your level of achievement. When in doubt, fail harder.” (Prichard 2017, 77-81)

There are many resources for students to utilize within the student’s department and the entire university. The University of California, Irvine Dance Department in particular, has a specific librarian they can meet with to help them research dance related topics. Most schools have counseling centers, a recreation center, school organizations and events that are usually free or discounted at a student rate. One of the primary resources are the student’s access to the professors.

While current state and national agendas focus on testing and hard data, many teachers acknowledge that teaching developing adolescents requires more than a mastery of content knowledge and pedagogy. Teaching is a messy job because it requires dealing with individuals and groups of young people who are struggling to develop their identity while facing personal challenges and other outside stresses. Teachers who make efforts to reach out to students and interact with them on a human level appear to make significant academic inroads while finding deep personal rewards. (Bernstein- Yamashiro 2013)

While each professor is different and will have their own way of interacting with the students, all professors are using their own experiences and knowledge to help guide the students. The professors want the students to succeed and so building those relationships and communicating is an important aspect for the students to remember. The student teacher relationship is important in the education process and also in personal development.

Curriculum is a medium through which intellectual curiosity and personal development can be shared; the relationship between student and teacher provides a foundation on which deeply satisfying learning and socioemotional development can be built. In this learning relationship, student and teacher work together to create shared understandings in an atmosphere of learning and growth. (Bernstein- Yamashiro 2013)

Student Responsibility may be new for some incoming students and not always prevalent in their thinking. However, a certain level of ownership needs to be present for a student to succeed in their career.

People who do not have ownership over their experiences or life often feel out of control. Their fear and frustration often result in not taking responsibility for their actions and blaming others for their situation. This type of behavior limits a person's ability to grow and learn from his or her success and failures. Ownership offers the power to make a difference in your life. When you, as a student, have ownership of your school experience, you are better able to control the outcome of your academic success. (Stone 2014)

Identity

The question of what a student would like to pursue as a career happens at an early stage in their life. Usually in their junior year in high school, they need to think about what college they would like to attend and what they plan on studying. At that age, they are still developing as an adolescent. “Adolescence is a developmental phase of tremendous physical, cognitive, and social-emotional growth. It is often thought of as a time of reworking of previous stages of development with the emergence of the individual’s identity. Sometimes in these years, the adolescent is expected to answer the existential question, Who am I?” (Robson 2001, 109-114) If they are still answering who they are as a person, how are they supposed to know who they are as a dancer, and better yet, what college is the best fit for their artistry?

Many dancers at a young age only identify as being a dancer. That is what they have grown up doing and invested in since a young age, so how do they differentiate between a person and dancer? “To be human entails existing in a world of symbolization and meaning that is

essentially tied to the material, the physical, the kinetic, the spatial, the temporal. Dance captures all of these ideas.” (Block and Kissell 2001, 5-15) This particular quote states that the artist is both human and a dancer. Dr. Brian Thomas, who is a United Kingdom Psychologist that has worked with dancers for over twenty-five years, talks about this coexisting idea of artist and person through a dancer’s framework and the three components; the technician, the person, and the artist.

The Artist is an amalgamation of The Technician and The Person. The Technician provides the physical Competence necessary for dancers to perform successfully and The Person contributes the psychological Confidence necessary for dancers to maximize their potential. Peak performance requires both competence and confidence. When individuals have an accurate and objective understanding of their competence levels and the confidence to perform to these levels under pressure, we open the door to the final building block of our framework: Creativity. Creativity the domain of The Artist is the fusion of genuine competence with justified confidence. (Thomas 2017)

If a freshman is asked to describe who they are, the word dancer would be used.

Philosopher R. G. Collingwood called dance “the mother of language- preverbal, and our first means of expression.” (Collingwood R.G, 1938) It makes sense that a student may only describe who they are by using the single word dancer since dance is how they express themselves. The person walking around campus in comparison to the dancer on stage can sometimes be two different people. Rosemary Lee, a choreographer, director, and performer, talks about what excites her the most when observing dancers.

It’s simplicity, humility and a sense that you are seeing the person without other complications. Dance can be both profoundly exposing and revealing: it comes close to reflecting truly what it is to be alive and reminds the dancer and the watcher of that life force. In these moments I feel I see transparency in a performer-- it is as if you get a clear glimpse of humanity. (Amans 2008)

When an dancer is performing on stage or in a classroom, their personality is evident. They bring forth that creative side Dr. Brian Thomas was explaining.

Referring back to the existential question by Robson discussed earlier, adolescents are being asked to know at a young age, “Who am I.” If they are needing to know who they are as a

person by the time they go into their first year of college, then building upon this knowledge and growing as a person should be a part of a dance program. “Professional dance is currently caught between the demands of standards and technique and an uncomfortable awareness of the damaging effects of the neglect of the person in traditional training.” (Buckroyd 2001, 27-40) This is assuming that every dancer does know who they are and even if they do, they are still maturing, and their mindset can change as they enter into adulthood. “So how can professional training change and adapt to enable adolescents to achieve the vital emotional growth necessary to their becoming mature adults without sacrificing the development of their specific physical and artistic talent?” (Buckroyd 2000)

Wellness: Relationship Between Body and Mind

When it comes to a student’s wellness and what that means for their body and mind, the responsibility of maintaining a healthy career should not rely solely on the dancer. Although a great deal will be left up to the student, the role of the teacher and how they support a student’s healthy mindset is just as crucial.

While reading *Psychology for Dancers* by Dr. Brian Thomas, I was introduced to Eric Berne’s “Transactional Analysis Framework.” Thomas discusses this topic in an effort to provide a better understanding of the psychological challenges everyone faces in their lives.

In the nineteen sixties an American psychologist named Eric Berne developed an approach to understanding personality, communication and behavior which he called Transactional Analysis (TA). His approach focused on commonalities in our experiences and development as we move from childhood to maturity. This framework was useful to help analyze thoughts, feelings and behaviors and for understanding the sorts of psychological conflicts a

person may experience. Giles Barrow, who is a Behavior Consultant, explains in a short paragraph what Transactional Analysis is.

Eric Berne noticed that at any given moment, individuals behave, think and feel in consistent patterns – an egostate – and that three such patterns can be discerned. For example, there are times where the individual replays the thinking, feeling and behavior copied from the grown-ups who were in charge and cared for them in the past. Berne called this pattern the Parent egostate. Berne noticed that at other times, individuals replay the thinking, feeling and behavior that they experienced internally when they were in childhood and this is referred to as the Child egostate. Finally, Berne described how on occasion, the individual responds to the here and now reality with thinking, feeling and through their behavior, and this is referred to as the Adult egostate. (Barrow 2015, 169-179)

There are three egostates in the framework of Bernes work, but they do get broken down even further into four separate transactions: Critical Parent, Nurturing Parent, Adapted Child, and Free Child. “Berne went on to explain that when individuals engage with one another they communicate using transactions. A transaction is a unit of communication and comprises both a stimulus (‘Do you want a cup of tea?’) and a response (‘No thanks, I’m not thirsty’).” (Barrow 2015, 169-179)

Going back to Dr. Brian Thomas, he takes these transaction states that Berne had created and examines how we approach teaching within a classroom. Thomas predicts through Transactional Analysis that when a certain individual is in an egostate they assume people around them will adapt and be in a similar egostate that compliments their own. So if the classroom setting is approached by the teacher in a Controlling Parent ambience then the result “will almost inevitably exert pressure on dancers and students alike to adopt an Adapted Child psychological response.” (Thomas 2017) Thomas summarizes what he believes teachers would like to see in their students. “What we do want, and need are dancers with justified self-confidence and flair, creative individuals who can bring nuanced individuality to even the most

stereotyped and over-performed roles, dancers who are prepared to take measured risks and breathe new life into the discipline.” (Thomas 2017)

In TA terms Thomas suggests the desire to combine an egostate with a transaction to give balance to a student’s behavior, such as a Free Child who also has a strong rational Adult egostate. From the teacher’s perspective, having a general knowledge of these types of egostates, including their own, could help create an environment in their classroom that can nurture and support all the individuals.

Although Eric Berne did create an approach to understanding people’s behavior, there are other psychological issues that can occur in a dancer’s career, that were not addressed under the Transactional Analysis. Diana Schnitt, who at the time of writing her article was a professor in the Dance Department at Connecticut College, wrote an overview of psychological issues in dancers where her topics of discussion included: performance anxiety, coping with injuries, and career transition to name a few. The content of dance classes is planned through the lens of the teacher which can result in various student outcomes and lesson plans, however, the focus tends to be more towards technique, history, and writing, which leaves little room to discuss the dancer's mind and physical well-being. So what approach should be taken in the classroom, so we do not produce, according to Brian Thomas, “Obedient individuals, who can follow orders but who may have had their natural independence suppressed to such an extent that they no longer trust their intuitions or have the courage to express their individuality?” (Thomas 2017) Although this explanation is a rhetorical statement from Thomas, it does bring up a good point of needing to understand the dancer outside of their “skills” and focus on both their physical and mental health.

“Most dancers describe an intense devotion to being in control of their bodies. However, many dancers live in a world largely controlled by others, especially teachers, and

choreographers for the students and audiences for the professionals.” (Schnitt 1990, 32-34) If the dancer feels they have the control, but we are immersing them in a controlled environment, then the coursework should reflect on how to navigate the students through differentiating between internal and external control factors.

People who are prototypical externals do not perceive a reliable contingency between their behaviors and their outcomes. These individuals generally believe that the rewards and punishments they incur vary with capricious, unstable forces such as luck or with the behaviors of powerful others. People who are prototypical internals perceive a reliable contingency between their behaviors and their outcomes. They believe for the most part that the rewards and punishments they experience vary as a function of their own actions. Thus, people described as having an external locus of control believe to a large extent that fate, luck, other people, or social structures determine reinforcements; individuals described as having an internal locus of control believe that effort or ability determines reinforcements. (Estrada, Lisi, Errol Dupoux, and Clara Wolman. 2006, 43-54)

These control factors can end up harming a dancer if they are unaware that this is how they think about grades given to them in class, if they perform poorly at an audition, or if they are not chosen for a specific role they had desired. If a student has knowledge of how they view the situations during college as well as career, it could be beneficial to their mentality and growth.

Community vs. Autonomy

In the first years of college, dancers reach the end of adolescence and start to separate from their parents as they begin adulthood. “The tasks of adolescence are generally agreed to include a degree of separation from significant adults and the establishment of oneself as a more autonomous person, the creation of peer-group relations and the development of sexual identity and awareness,” (Buckroyd 2001, 27-40).

As students find their new freedom from their parents, it is crucial that a dance program in higher education can help guide their choices. A teacher's philosophy should focus on the "necessity of allowing students to find a way of making the instruction their own and of taking responsibility for their own learning." (Buckroyd 2001, 27-40)

In order to avoid the serious consequences of failure to develop autonomy, dance schools need to refocus their attention on the welfare of the individual student and their psychosocial development. This needs to be done at least as much for the sake of the art form as for the sake of the individual. An art form which does not encourage individuality and creativity will die. (Buckroyd 2001, 27-40)

So, what is autonomy exactly? Autonomy can be defined as "action that is chosen; action for which one is responsible." (Deci & Ryan 1987, 1024-1037) Supporting autonomy refers to the idea that an "Individual in a position of authority (e.g., an instructor) takes the other's (e.g., a student's) perspective, acknowledges the other's feelings, and provides the other with pertinent information and opportunities for choice, while minimizing the use of pressures and demands." (Black & Deci, 2000, 740-56)

On top of the core curriculum a teacher gives to the students, they also provide personal and instructional supports meant to facilitate the developing sense of student autonomy. Autonomy support can be manifested in the classroom in at least 3 distinct ways: organizational autonomy support (e.g., allowing students some decision-making role in terms of classroom management issues), procedural autonomy support (e.g., offering students choices about the use of different media to present ideas), and cognitive autonomy support (e.g., affording opportunities for students to evaluate work from a self-referent standard). (Stefanou, Perencevich, Dicintio, Matthew, and Turner, 2004, 97-110)

One-way students can learn and hone skills towards autonomy is through independent studies. Individualized instruction are opportunities that "afford you the chance to follow through on your dance interests; work closely with a faculty member or professional organization; and practice leadership, collaboration, initiation, follow-through, advocacy, and creative and critical thinking skills." (Schupp 2015)

After conducting the interviews, I learned that students value working on their own but also understand the importance of a community and learning as group. When students have the opportunity to work in groups, it builds a connection between students and their peers who can be future professional colleagues and collaborators. Working in a group will

Mature your leadership, stewardship, collaboration, negotiation, and initiation skills in tandem with your dance knowledge in a fully integrated fashion with working with your peers. In this way, collaborating with your peers through making and performing work, teaching each other and becoming involved in extracurricular activities provides a framework for bridging your campus dance education to your merging dance aspirations. (Schupp 2015)

Learning to collaborate with one's peers is crucial but experiencing connections outside of the dance community is important. "If students consort only with other dance students, their exposure to other ways of life and other influences will be too restricted." (Buckroyd 2001, 27-40)

Summary

Each of the four themes discussed, can be viewed as a sole topic, but it would be a stronger and more comprehensive program if they were integrated together into a lesson plan. Based on the literature there is limited research on this topic and further investigation could be done so as to implement a course. The themes found in the literature: student responsibility, identity, mental and physical wellness, and community vs autonomy lay a foundation to create a Freshmen Seminar that can help a student navigate their first-year experience.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

INTRODUCTION

Based on the findings of my literature review I noticed the information being presented throughout the books and articles was not always in relationship to dance. The overall data being collected were about students in a broad sense without any subject in school being attached to the data that had been obtained. Due to this lack of specific information, I chose to go about my process in two different ways. The first focusing on interviews of both students and professors within the field of dance and how these interviews relate to the literature I reviewed. The second process is the choreographic portion and different exercises I incorporated in the rehearsal period that related to the themes found in the literature review.

Interviews

Interview questions were developed into different groupings: professors who have been involved in teaching or observing a Freshmen Seminar class within higher education, students that have graduated from a university that did or did not have a seminar class required, and then finally the dancers who were involved in my choreographic thesis. Each group of interviewees' had their own set of questions, which can be seen in Appendix A.

There was a shortage of dance programs in universities that incorporated a Freshmen Seminar in their curriculum. I researched higher education dance programs with a Freshmen Seminar and found that many programs only consisted of Senior Seminars. The professors I was able to set up an interview with were predominantly from Dance Departments in high ranking programs. I interviewed four faculty members at universities including Karen Jensen, Brigham Young University Department of Dance, where she was in her second year of teaching a

Freshmen Seminar; Susan Petry, a professor in the Department of Dance at Ohio State University, who was a couple of weeks into her first year of teaching a Freshmen Seminar; Susan Stinson, University of North Carolina, Greensboro Department of Dance, who had previously taught a Freshmen Seminar; and Karen Schupp, Arizona State University, School of Film, Dance and Theatre, who has been teaching a Freshmen Seminar class for a couple of years, in addition to writing several articles about the transition into higher education as well as a book guiding a first-year student through their campus.

The student interviews I conducted came from three groups. First from a student from Ohio State University who wrote a blog/website that was created for her seminar class. Two students from the University of California, Irvine where a Freshmen Seminar currently does not exist. One of them is a recent grad and the other is a current student, both of them having been involved in the Community Student Advising Committee (CSAC). The third group were cast members from my choreographic thesis and I interviewed them after having eight rehearsals together.

Results

The interviews and literature review kept presenting a common theme and that was what did a sense of community and what does that really look and feel like for a first-year student. As freshmen come into higher education, although they may be entering school with high school friends, the process at first can sometimes be overwhelming and lonely. Building a community within the first year is a crucial part to help bridge the gap between high school and higher education.

I also found many similar comments from students that focused on the dancer as a person as well as their technical abilities. The one topic that was consistent in all of the interviews I conducted, both with students and professors, was being able to acknowledge the student's previous experience and allow the dancers to build upon their dance background.

Some other examples of questions that seemed consistent among the professors, were how do you foster responsibility in students that will help them stay on course? How do you get students to engage in the classroom about a brand-new topic they may have never studied or embodied in the dance studio before? What does it mean to be present in class and to let go of the mirror?

When interviewing the students, I received a broad range of feedback, however these two responses stood out the most to me. "I enjoyed this particular class because it allowed me to create a group of friends during the first quarter." "I wish I had an idea of how I was progressing in the classroom throughout the quarter rather than at the end when it is too late to make a difference." Students finding a group of friends in the first quarter really made an impact on their first year. Students are fostering a responsibility for their education, but think their effort alone is not enough to make it through higher education.

As I continued my research and choreography, I began to create a lesson plan for a Freshmen Seminar and brought these ideas to my cast to get their opinions as well. Rather than focusing on what I thought the students needed, I wanted to create a lesson plan for a Freshmen Seminar with the collaboration and viewpoint of the students. During rehearsals I continued to create community exercises for the dancers to explore to help foster a friendly, inviting, safe, fun, and challenging environment. Half of the cast were freshmen and my goal was to build a foundation for them within their first year that they could continue to develop, question, change, and reimagine as they progress throughout their years in school.

CHAPTER 3

CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Between the four main themes: student responsibility, identity, wellness between the mind and body, and community vs autonomy, I focused the choreographic process towards identity and community. Although I feel all four themes could make an impact in the choreographic process, focusing on two themes was more manageable in the time allotted. The themes of identity and community felt as if there was a strong connection to dance. Dancers have the ability to express themselves through movement and often times are dancing in large groups. In the beginning of the choreographic process I explored different exercises to help utilize and discuss the themes that have been presented.

Rehearsal Set-Up

For the choreographic component I met with my dancers twice a week, for two hours each rehearsal, over a span of twelve weeks. Collaboration exercises, which I will go into detail below, were utilized in the rehearsals to help build and develop the final performance. To begin the rehearsal process, I began with three pieces of music and then collaborated with a musicology graduate student to bridge these songs together.

I started with smaller groups instead of working as a whole in the first month to establish a connection with the dancers. Even though I had worked with some of the dancers in other choreographic settings, I was planning on creating this piece in a different way. Since I wanted to explore new ways of choreographing, I felt it was necessary to start in smaller groups.

Due to having a larger cast I had short rehearsals to accommodate the dancer's busy schedules. In order to streamline the use of time, I sent an email in preparation to help guide the

dancers to a mindset needed for rehearsal. The email included an explanation of what exercise I was planning on giving the dancers. I wanted the dancers to feel ready to explore new ways of collaborating and working. In my previous experience as both a dancer and choreographer, the first hour of exploring a new way of moving is usually an exploration both of the body and mind. It can take time and trust between the dancers and choreographer to become comfortable with a new working environment.

Choreographic Exercises

I did not want to give choreography for the dancers to retain but wanted the creative process to be more collaborative. These exercises were created with the mindset of connection between the dancer and themselves and also with each other.

One of the first exercises I did was email a group prior to rehearsal to let them think of two or three words that described them as a person. Encouraging the dancers to not use dance terminology and to solely focus on who they are as people. When the dancers arrived at rehearsal, they shared with the group the words they used to describe themselves. Then I asked the dancers to create gestures that best represented the words they chose. I invited them to think of the movement in terms of gestures rather than needing to “dance” the phrase and words that described them. I had hoped this would allow the dancers to make a connection with how they identified as a person and then slowly bring in their creativity to express how they identified as a dancer.

After creating their solo phrase, the group of students collaborated with another student to build a phrase together. They used their gestures and intertwined both phrases into a longer combination. I didn't want the dancers to change their original choreography, but rather cut and paste small portions of their solos to create a combination that would represent each of them in

the end. I wanted them to feel what they created was valuable, and even when being involved in a community setting, their voices still remained strong and their choreography helped enhance the collaboration. A small portion of the exercise was also listening to their fellow collaborators and seeing how the movement felt on individuals. I asked if the dancers felt a connection with new movement, and if they thought their identity was still evident.

The next exercise is a common choreographic tool used in improvisation classes. The set-up consisted of three dancers that sat facing away from the mirror and three dancers were standing behind them ready for instruction to dance. The dancers facing away were told to give a description of movement to the dancers behind them, without looking at them and without demonstrating what they were asking for. This was meant to be a simple descriptive exercise for those not dancing and an interpretation exercise for those who were dancing. I incorporated this exercise into the rehearsal process twice. I had one group of three dancers work on this exercise with me and then the first three dancers repeated it again with an additional three dancers. The second time around, I only gave a brief explanation of the exercise providing an opportunity for the first three to take the responsibility for teacher and, in turn, all six dancers would create this section together.

When the exercise was repeated the dancers, descriptions were less movement driven and more abstract. Each dancer that was facing away had an opportunity to describe an action. For example, one dancer sitting down said to move like, “the texture of your favorite food.” The dancers standing had to interpret what that meant for them. I asked them to embrace what thoughts came to mind first. Each group did four rounds, pausing in between to review. After they completed all the rounds, the dancers facing away turned around and observed what their descriptions were interpreted as. The groups switched roles and repeated this exercise again. The purpose of this was to help show how in a community setting everyone still plays a role. By

creating separately and listening to one description, the result showed that it could be interpreted in many different ways. I also did not change any of the movement that the students created. I did not want the dancers to think the finished movement was wrong or bad but allowed the dancers to see how they could come to different conclusions in a community setting.

Another exercise was named the flocking section, based off the way birds fly in their groups and is a common exercise in both dancing and acting classes. The dancers began by following whoever was dancing in the front of the flock. The leader could change depending on the orientation of their movement. I informed the dancers that they could break away from the main group to make a new flock or create a solo. The purpose of the exercise was to help the dancers gain confidence to break free from the community and be an individual. The exercise provided a safe place for the dancers to be the leader, which not all dancers wanted. The best part about this exercise was seeing when solo moments began and slowly turned into a new flock. The soloist may not have noticed someone else was starting to follow them but then realized they had become the leader and embraced it.

Interviews

After establishing a connection with my cast in the first month, I set up individual interviews. I discussed the rehearsal process and had them review my outline for a Freshmen Seminar, which is shown in Appendix B. I asked them to give feedback on the topics and the timeline of the seminar and provide additional comments about the course. It was important to receive feedback from students who were in the middle or just beginning their higher education.

CHAPTER 4

FRESHMEN SEMINAR OUTLINE

The first year for a freshman involves a lot of information and sets up the students for the next four years of their education. If a Freshmen Seminar is implemented within the curriculum, what exactly would the class entail? What are freshmen not receiving in their higher education currently that they could benefit from in the future? A dance major curriculum will include classes that focus on an individual topic more in depth. For example, you will often find a class specifically for choreography or pedagogy, but these classes are usually taught in the upper division courses. It may be beneficial for the students to have an introduction to some curriculum topics, so they are able to research a specific area of study. I think freshmen may miss opportunities because they were unaware of how to utilize the resources to their fullest potential.

There will be different ways to view what a Freshmen Seminar should include and will vary depending on the demographic of the school, resources provided by the campus and staff that are able to teach the course. My outline below is not meant as a solution to making the first-year experience perfect, but rather a starting place for freshmen to begin their higher education journey. From this Freshman Seminar outline, students will be able to walk away with a better sense of who they are both as person and dancer. They will engage in exercises to understand their own personalities, behaviors and communication skills. A portion of this seminar will include knowledge of resources available to them on campus, how to take care of themselves if an injury occurs and where to go if they are in need of mental support. Students will also put together a portfolio that will include a website, resume, and video reel.

Orientation

The first quarter for a freshman tends to be a lot of information given to them at the beginning, which may not be retained very well. One reason is not due to the students lack of interest but because of the volume of information the student is expected of the students to remember. There are orientations for the entire freshmen class presented by the university as well as school and department focused information sessions. The majority of students can be grouped into three different categories: students who are attending college with their friends, students who are in the same state as their parents but not attending with friends and students who moved out of state/country and know no one. No matter what group a student falls into, every student will have first day nerves. If a student is going to school with friends, they may be more interested in catching up with their friends, rather than focusing on what is being presented. If the student is attending out of state or may not know anybody, they may be focused on meeting new people and trying to fit in.

The university orientations consist of information about campus resources for the students, a quick introduction to the president of the school, and a brief insight as to what the next four years should look like. The university orientations do not reach each student individually and will often result with little or no time for open discussions and questions. The school orientation can be similar to the university in its general scope. Each department will focus on their area of expertise. All of the professors may come into a room and quickly say their name, a review of the facilities, policies may be addressed, and upcoming auditions are announced. Again, this is a generalization of what a department orientation may include and that is assuming if the department has one.

Quarter One

What should a Freshmen Seminar consist of in the first couple of weeks? Dependent upon the student's coursework, they may or may not have every faculty member in their first year. A department's curriculum progresses over a four-year period and faculty teach specific courses. Therefore, students may not study under a professor until later in their time at the university. This should not stop the students from getting to know the professor in their first year. Having set times for the professors to come into a Freshmen Seminar and talk about their background, interests, and upcoming projects can allow the students to be introduced to them on a more personal level. Student's interests may or may not initially align with what a professor teaches but as the students develop and grow, they may find common interests.

The idea of bringing the resources to the students is the main theme within their first quarter. Besides getting to know their professors and department it is good to know where the library is and how to research dance. It is beneficial to set up a class time in the library to know the location of the dance section and how to navigate the library's website.

Over the span of the first few weeks students are figuring out the campus, their own workload, time management skills, and making connections with new people. Especially in a quarter system, time is short and students may feel overwhelmed. For many students understanding how they fit into the university may be hard particularly if they do not know who they are as a person and a dancer. This leads us to the next part of the outline for the first quarter, how a student identifies as a person and how they identify as a dancer and are those two points really separate from each other?

How a student identifies as a dancer and a person can be explored through an exercise that has the student describe themselves with one word utilizing general terms and not dance concepts. As previously mentioned, Dr. Brian Thomas discusses, the building blocks for success

as a dancer, learning about their personality, motivation, goal setting, and the transactional analysis method. These topics, could be approached with different exercises for the students all with the common goal for them to know who they are as they begin their higher education journey.

The first quarter can either seem very overwhelming or not as busy depending on the type of schedule the dancers had in high school. A competition dancer may be use to school during the day then going straight into rehearsal up until 9 o'clock at night. Another student could have attended a performance high school where they train all day and only have rehearsals in the afternoon. Time management will vary per person, but it could be something as simple as having a calendar required for the class for the students to organize their schedules.

Going into higher education a student may need to adjust their schedule to be able to maintain a job if necessary, finish their homework in a timely manner, complete projects, rehearse for upcoming shows, study for general education classes, and also have time to take care of themselves. As students continue their studies their schedules fill up quickly making it hard to manage time in a quick and efficient manner. It is important for the student to be keeping track of important dates. Whether they keep an electronic calendar or a written one, it is up to the student to know what works best for them. Knowing how to manage time is crucial as the student takes on more responsibility. While managing ones time it is also important to communicate with others if they are running late or needing to reschedule.

The final topic is injury prevention and understanding what a healthy lifestyle includes. Injuries, which are unfortunately common, can have a quick recovery period if the student knows how to take care of themselves from the start of an injury to even after the injury feels better. Dancers tend to have a very strong work ethic and when an injury occurs, they may not seek the proper help immediately. However, dancers should not wait for an injury to happen to make sure

they are living a healthy lifestyle. Knowing how to treat an injury is a valuable tool, however dancing is physically demanding, and sometimes a dance class is not enough to build strength. In class endurance happens in short bursts but when it comes to performances, the dances are often longer than 20 minutes. Cross-training properly can help develop stamina and strength. A dancer should be able to know exercises they can complete at home to keep up with ankle strength or whatever they need to remain healthy.

A healthy lifestyle is also about understanding what a healthy diet consists of and what each individual needs. Learning what is a proper and well-balanced meal plan for the week is essential. Due to dancers exercising, they burn more energy than most people and will need to understand how to get the proper nutrients.

Injury prevention and nutrition should be part of the dance curriculum, so the students learn about their own body and what they need to maintain good health. The students should have a general understanding of different exercises to help build strength, what foods are best for them to sustain energy and know how to recover from long hours of rehearsals.

Quarter Two

As a student transitions into the second quarter they are continuing to process new information and beginning to plan a career path. During the second quarter the freshmen should develop their goals both academically and artistically.

Students in their first year are focused on the transition into higher education, but they also need to be planning for their career. What exactly do these students want to achieve over the next four years? Many freshmen may answer with the more obvious answer, they just want to dance. Of course, dancers all want that, however, what exactly do they want to do with dance. Do they want to dance in the commercial industry or a dance company? Do they want to teach

dance at a studio, or travel to schools and teach master classes? Do they want to manage a dance company? Some, if not all students, may not be aware of all the possibilities dance has to offer. Even if they do know in more detail what their career goals are, do students know what will be required of them to sustain their career?

A project for the students could be to state their top three career choices and research them. For example, if a student wanted to be a dancer in a company, they should ask the following questions; what are the benefits of being in a company, what training is required of the dancer, what is a typical schedule like for company members, what is the pay for the dancers, and can you support yourself with this one job? These questions may seem a bit stressful or discouraging, however, it is better to research what is required and start training while in college. By sharing these goals to their fellow peers they can develop a bond with students that have common interests. Students may also discover new career options by listening to their classmate's research. This project can help the student layout their goals more clearly and understand what is required to be successful in their chosen career.

The second part of the course can be geared towards pedagogy. Based off of my interviews, I found that most dancers begin teaching in their local dance studios while in high school and higher education. If a student has not had training in pedagogy, they will mimic ideas and concepts from their previous teachers. Unfortunately, not all dance studio training is equal, and some teachers may have a different emphasis in their pedagogy. For example, the goals for a competition-based studio will be different than a recreational studio or conservatory. Even if a student is wanting to focus on a performance career, as a company member they may be asked to teach a master class.

Whether they want to teach in a dance studio, higher education, or with a company it is beneficial for students to be able to assess the pros and cons of certain teaching methods and know how to implement a lesson plan that will provide growth for the learners. Therefore, having an introduction class for pedagogy can help students study how knowledge and skills are exchanged in different classroom settings.

An exercise to introduce pedagogy could be to create a lesson plan for one class period. After the lesson plan is created the students would teach one or two of the exercises to their classmates. This will allow the students to break down movement from beginning to end and understand the fundamentals. It is also an excellent way for the students to be at the front of the classroom and understand the perspective from a teacher's point of view. The lesson plan the students create should focus on the flow of the class and all the material needed to achieve the student learning outcomes.

Quarter Three

The final quarter of the year helps lay the foundation for the students to focus on their career goals. Whether the student wants to perform, teach, or be involved with arts management networking and marketing will be beneficial. Creating a website will pull together the materials that they will need when they graduate from the program. A website represents what their accomplishments including a resume, videos of their work as a performer and choreographer, and their headshots and dance shots. Although the students in their first year may not have much to put on their website, it will set up the platform for the future. It will also give the students an extra nudge to collaborate on projects and research summer internships and intensives, so they can add the experience to their resume.

Part of marketing and networking is also having a dance reel that a student can quickly access if they need to submit for an audition online. Students should be able to understand how to create videos on iMovie or other platforms that they have access to. The dance reel should be looked at as a way to market themselves and being able to demonstrate through video what sets them apart from the rest of the dancers auditioning.

In addition to researching and networking it is the student's responsibility to know what auditions are approaching. Summer intensive auditions happen in late October through January. If a student missed the audition the first time, they should learn it is never a lost opportunity but becomes a chance for the student to plan for the following year. Making a list of auditions is useful, but also attending as many auditions as possible is just as important. For some companies they want to see familiar faces returning for auditions because it shows commitment. Attending auditions is another form of networking because you meet other dancers in the industry and build a support system outside of school.

During the final quarter the teacher should reiterate to the students to take advantage of upcoming opportunities, provide guidance towards a plan for the next three years of their education, and most importantly let the students know it is ok if their goals change. Student's goals may fluctuate from year to year but this Freshmen Seminar will help the students feel confident in navigating the rest of their higher education.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Looking back to the beginning of this research I focused on the Freshmen Seminar and the choreographic process as two separate components for my thesis. Identity and community vs autonomy were the two major themes that connected these two sections, however as time progressed it was apparent that the other two themes; student responsibility and wellness were still very evident, even if they were not specifically discussed.

The dancers made a commitment to the project from day one which then made it their responsibility to communicate schedules, arrive on time for rehearsal, plan their schedule to include another activity, and communicate to me (the choreographer) any situations that came up along the way. We never talked about responsibility, but it was always part of the rehearsals. The same was true for wellness both physically and mentally. We did not have discussions about being a part of another dance project and what the dancers would need to do to keep themselves healthy. Both of these topics although not the main focus still played a crucial role for each of these dancers, whether it was a subconscious thought or in the forefront of their minds.

The individual interviews that I had during the choreographic process showed that many of these dancers do value what they are being taught but also do have thoughts, questions and concerns about what is being given to them. They question certain outcomes and want to know the reasons behind them, but they also accept certain items because they feel it is the way it will always be. They are strong individuals but are still in the process of learning how to navigate all of the different issues they face in higher education, not just in movement but also within themselves as a person.

The choreographic process focused on new ideas for me as the choreographer. Many sections were created from the exercises I described, and a lot of the movement was created

together with the dancers. In previous projects I have created movement ahead of time and come into the rehearsal space with choreography already prepared. Allowing myself to be ok with coming into the rehearsal period with only ideas helped develop my own connection with the movement that was being created in the moment. I think that if I came in with everything pre-set the themes of identity and community would not have been honest.

After the thesis show I received some reflection papers from the dancers. The students wrote about being pushed outside of their comfort zone especially with improvisation. This process was the first time a couple of freshmen had encountered improvisation and creating their own choreography. A few of the dancers mentioned the exercises incorporated throughout the rehearsal process, although foreign at first, helped push them out of their comfort zone.

One challenge that I wasn't anticipating at the beginning was the possibility of a discussion, both group and individual, leading into conversations that could be a bit too sensitive. There were moments that I felt hesitant to ask further questions because I was afraid it could lead into an area that I was not equipped to handle. It was difficult at times to make sure I was finding the balance between being supportive and listening to the students concerns and personal situations and making sure that it was not getting pushed toward a therapy session. I do think I created a safe space for the dancers to talk about topics they wished to discuss, and I did let the dancers know that if a certain question was asked, they were not obligated to answer it.

Through the dancer's own written reflections, I got a sense that digging deeper into who they were as a person was important. Finding the connection between who they were not just as a dancer but the relationship they felt as they were dancing meant a lot to them. The question of why they dance surfaced naturally throughout the process which was a pleasant surprise. The intention of having them know who they were as a dancer at the beginning was to have them find their voice in higher education and to help them build a path toward their career. However, after

this project I realize building the connection between the person and dance is just as important. If they love what they are doing, then maybe who they are while dancing can be expressed easier.

During the choreographic process I created an outline for the Freshmen Seminar and shared it with the dancers. I received feedback from the dancers which helped shape the seminar, however the focus as a group was more about the choreography and the themes explored in the rehearsals. The choreography was completed over the span of one quarter and so I wonder if the choreographic component should be incorporated into a Freshmen Seminar? I feel that the choreographic process was a success in discussing the two main themes and resulted in many positive reflections from the dancers. Identity and community are not simple topics, that only having a discussion may not resonate with the students as much as embodying the themes physically. These two themes are a big part of our everyday lives. I think the choreographic component was a success because the dancers were able to express what identity meant to them and feel what it was like to be in a community.

The choreographic section influenced the outline of the Freshmen Seminar after the performance was complete and I was able to hear the dancer's reflections. A Freshmen Seminar can be made up of many different topics and will always need to be adjusted as time goes on, however the core of the seminar should always be focused on the identity of the individual that is both human and a dancer and how the individual fits into a community. From there the seminar can expand into the different themes. How does an individual exist within their campus and community of like-minded students? How does the individual take on this new responsibility in higher education? How does this individual keep themselves going in times of stress or physically demanding activities?

Between the development of a plan for a Freshmen Seminar, conducting interviews, literature review research and my choreographic process, I realized that many students are dealing with a busy schedule and are over worked. They are taking on more projects so they can perform, they are taking 30 units each quarter to make sure they can graduate on time, they are putting pressure on themselves to be the best they can be, and they truly just want to be seen as a person and as a dancer. This seminar is not meant as a course to hand hold students in their first year, but to give a foundation for them to stand on and feel confident as they embark on their first-year experience in higher education.

REFERENCES

- Amans, Diane. 2008. *An Introduction to Community Dance Practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Barrow, Giles. 2015. "Transactional Analysis in the Classroom, Staffroom and Beyond." *Pastoral Care in Education* 33, no. 3: 169–179.
- Bernstein-Yamashiro, Beth., and Noam, Gil G. 2013. *Teacher-Student Relationships Toward Personalized Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Black, Aaron E., and Deci, Edward L. 2000. "The Effects of Instructors' Autonomy Support and Students' Autonomous Motivation on Learning Organic Chemistry: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective." *Science Education* 84, no. 6: 740–56.
- Block, B. and Kissell, Judith Lee. 2001. "The Dance: Essence of Embodiment." *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 22, no.1 (January): 5-15.
- Buckroyd, Julia. 2000. *The Student Dancer: Emotional Aspects of the Teaching and Learning of Dance*. London: Dance Books.
- Buckroyd, Julia. 2001. "The Application of Psychodynamic Ideas to Professional Dance Training." *Psychodynamic Counselling* 7, no. 1 (January): 27–40.
- Collingwood, Robin, George. 1938. *The Principles of Art*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Deci, Edward L., Ryan, Richard M., Sherman, Steven J., Reis, Harry T. , Sarason, Irwin G. , and Kihlstrom, John F. 1987. "The Support of Autonomy and the Control of Behavior." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 53, no. 6 (December): 1024–1037.
- Dweck, Carol S. 2008. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Ericsson, A. 2006. The influence of experience and deliberate practice on the development of superior expert performance. In *The Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert performance*, ed. A. Ericsson, N. Charness, P. Feltovich, and R. Hoffman, 683–704. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Eusanio, Jacqueline, Thomson, Paula, and Jaque, S. Victoria. 2014. "Perfectionism, Shame, and Self-Concept in Dancers: a Mediation analysis. (Report)." *Journal of Dance Medicine & Science* 18, no. 3 (July): 106–14.
- Estrada, Lisi, Dupoux, Errol, and Wolman, Clara. 2006. "The Relationship Between Locus of Control and Personal-Emotional Adjustment and Social Adjustment to College Life in Students with and Without Learning Disabilities." *College Student Journal* 40, no. 1 (March): 43–54.
- Ishler, Jennifer L. Crissman. 2003. "Laying the Foundation for General Education: The Role of First-Year and Short Seminars." *The Journal of General Education* 52, no. 2: 71–83.

Nordin-Bates, S., J. Cumming, D. Aways, and L. Sharp. 2011. "Imagining yourself dancing to perfection? Correlates of perfectionism among ballet and contemporary dancers." *Journal of Clinical Sports Psychology* 5, no.1 (March): 58–76.

Prichard, Robin. 2017. "Redefining the Ideal: Exquisite Imperfection in the Dance Studio." *Journal of Dance Education* 17, no. 2 (April): 77–81.

Robson, Bonnie E. 2001. "Adolescent Development: How Dancers Compare with the Typical Teenager." *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 16, no. 3 (September): 109–114.

Rotter, J B, and Rotter, J B. 1996. "Generalized Expectancies for Internal Versus External Control of Reinforcement." *Psychological Monographs* 80, no. 1 (January): 1–28.

Schnitt, Diana. 1990. "Psychological Issues in Dancers—An Overview." *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 61, no. 9 (December): 32–34.

Schupp, Karen. 2015. *Studying Dance: a Guide for Campus and Beyond*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Stefanou, Candice R., Perencevich, Kathleen C., Dicintio, Matthew, and Turner, Julianne C. 2004. "Supporting Autonomy in the Classroom: Ways Teachers Encourage Student Decision Making and Ownership." *Educational Psychologist* 39, no. 2 (June): 97–110.

Stone, Megan. 2014. *Own Your Education!: A Student's Guide to Greater Success in School (and Life)*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Thomas, Brian. 2017. *Psychology for Dancers: an Introduction*. Matador: Troubador Publishing.

Tinto, Vincent, and Goodsell, Anne. 1994. "Freshman Interest Groups and the First-Year Experience: Constructing Student Communities in a Large University." *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience* 6, no. 1: 7–28.

Young, Dallin George. 2017. "National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition."
https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/national_resource_center/research/research_findings/details.php?id=13.

APPENDIX A

Undergraduate Interviews/ Recent Graduates

1. What factors helped make your decision when wanting to pursue a dance major/minor degree?
 - a. If you are a double major- what were the reasons behind this decision?
 - b. If you are only a dance major, did you think about double majoring?
 - i. If so what would it have been?
2. What expectations do/did you have as an undergraduate?
 - a. Were there certain factors you were looking for when applying to a University/College?
3. What goals would you like to accomplish while being an undergraduate?
 - b. Do you feel that you will be able to access the tools needed to accomplish these goals?
4. If dance was no longer an option what would be another job/career you would like to pursue?
5. Are there any classes you wish the curriculum incorporated?
 - c. What classes do you feel the curriculum could do without, or revamp?
6. What advice do you have right now for incoming freshmen, or if you are a freshman, what advice or information would you have liked to have received prior to coming to college?
7. Did you feel well prepared to come into higher education as a new student?
 - a. If yes, what certain aspects did you feel prepared in?
 - i. If no, what was it that was missing prior to your arrival at college?

University/Community College Faculty/Staff Interviews:

8. When working with freshmen dance majors/minors what do you feel they miss out on within their first year?
 - b. What do they miss out altogether in their four years of undergraduate education?
9. Can you recall certain aspects of your education that you wish you knew earlier?
10. Do you feel that the current curriculum meets all expectations for every student in the program?
 - c. If not, how come?
11. Can a curriculum meet everyone's expectations?
 - d. If not, do you feel that the curriculum can be revamped or at least come close to reaching everyone's needs?
12. Does your school have a freshmen/ senior seminar?
 - a. If yes to both, what are the differences between the two?
 - b. If yes to freshmen seminar, what was the goal in creating this seminar?
 - c. If yes to Senior seminar has there been a discussion about adding a freshmen seminar. If not, what are the reasons behind this?
 - d. What courses would like to see in a freshmen seminar compared to what is in a senior seminar?
13. What do you feel are the most common concerns a freshman encounters in their first year in higher education?

Thesis Cast

14. How would you describe who you are, as a human, in a couple of words? Try not to think in dance terminology but really focus on who you are as a person and what that means.

15. Reflect on your time at UCI, both as a dancer and as a person.
 - e. What changes have you seen?
 - f. What challenges have you faced?
 - g. As you start to near graduation what do you want to accomplish prior to that moment?
16. Do you remember a defining moment as a freshman?
 - h. How did it make you feel?
 - i. It could be a performance, an accomplishment in class, something special with family, non-dance related, maybe it is not a fond memory but resulted towards something that had a big impact.
17. What does dance mean to you?

APPENDIX B

FRESHMEN SEMINAR OUTLINE

3 Quarters- Meet one time a week- 1 hr. 20 minutes

Quarter 1

Navigating student's school/community

- Meet the teachers/learn their background

- Resources outside of the department

 - Library Subject Specific Person

 - Student Health Center

Identity as human/dancer

- Goals/Expectations for college

- What kind of dancer are you?

- Areas of interests

- Qualities as a mover/movement tendency

- Values in dance but also as a human- Morals

Time Management

Injury Prevention

- Nutrition

Quarter 2

Looking to the future/Reality Check

- Research Dream Job

 - Benefits, pay, rehearsal schedule expectations

 - Explore other options/jobs

Pedagogy/Dance Studio

- Create lesson plan/teach lesson plan

Quarter 3

Networking

- Plan out next year

Building a website

- Journey and goals- update throughout college

- Resume

 - Headshot/Bio

Mini Film Project

- iMovie- What should be included in a dance reel