Just Dance: Supporting Teachers in Dance Education

By

Jose Miguel Esteban

A research paper submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Teaching
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

Dance is a way of knowing, of expressing, of understanding, and of sharing; it is a way of learning. With a curriculum that seeks to introduce the benefits of dance to the students of Ontario, it is unclear why it is not always present in the classroom. This study aims to understand why this is the case by looking at teachers’ perceptions of dance and their own abilities to teach dance. Through semi-structured interviews with three experienced dance educators who are dedicated to supporting teachers in their delivery of the dance curriculum, this study finds that there needs to be more awareness to the benefits of dance in the classroom. Analyzing the participants’ experiences, this study also presents suggestions of what needs to be done by the educational community in order to support teachers in effectively incorporating dance into their practice. In order to integrate dance into the classroom and to see the benefits it can bring, a paradigm shift must occur in the educational community. Students and educators alike need to put away the notion of there being an ability to dance so that they can just experience it, so they can just dance.

Keywords: Dance, Arts Education, Support for Teachers
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper was an opportunity for me to link my two passions: teaching and dance. So first I would like to thank all of the people who have been instrumental in introducing me to and nurturing those passions. To all of the teachers I’ve had throughout my life, thank you for making me the person I am today. To every dance teacher and everyone I’ve ever danced with, thank you for giving me the gift of self-expression, of creativity, and of joy.

I would also like to thank all of those who were instrumental in the actual writing of this paper. I would like to thank Hillary Inwood who helped me in the very beginning of this research. Without your guidance and encouragement this paper would never have been conceived. The work you do advocating for the arts and its important place in education is what inspires me to do my part in bringing dance into schools. Next I would like to thank Ken McNeilly for his support in the completion of this paper. Even through many difficulties, you remained dedicated to your students and I feel very lucky to have had you as a mentor. Finally I would like to say a huge thank you to my colleague and friend, Olivia, who was the best peer editor I could have ever asked for. You have definitely pushed me throughout the process of writing this paper and have been there for me throughout this entire journey in the MT program. And so I just want to say…YAY WE DID IT!

Finally, I would like to thank my family for constantly supporting me throughout this process. Your confidence in me has always made me strive to be the best I can be and to achieve the extraordinary. In particular, thank you to my partner Ben. Thank you for buying me coffee, getting me food, and just being there for me every step of the way. Don’t worry, now I can do more cleaning.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Introduction to the Research Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Research Questions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Introduction to the Methodology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Background of the Researcher</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Overview of the Research Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Literature Review</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Benefits of Dance</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Effective Integration of Dance in Education</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Support for Teachers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Conclusion</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Methodology</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Introduction</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Research Approach and Procedures</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Instruments of Data Collection</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Participants</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 Sampling Criteria</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Sampling Procedures</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3 Participant Biographies</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Data Collection and Analysis</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Ethical Review Procedures</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Conclusion</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Research Findings</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 Introduction</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Role of Dance in Education</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1 Cross-Curricular Integration</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2 Communication</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3 Teaching the Whole Child</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Challenges to Implementing Dance</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Fear/Lack of Experience</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Lack of Focus on Dance Education</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Curriculum</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Effective Professional Development in Dance</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Environment</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Experience the Benefits</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Relation to Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Conclusion</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Implications</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 Introduction</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Implications</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Broad</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Narrow</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Recommendations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1 School Boards and Initial Teacher Education Programs</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2 School Administrators</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3 Teachers</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Areas for Further Research</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Concluding Comments</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Interview Protocol</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction

“Nobody cares if you can’t dance well. Just get up and dance. Great dancers are not great because of their technique, they are great because of their passion.”

-Martha Graham

1.0 Introduction to the Research Study

“I can’t dance.” Dance has become such an important tool for me to make sense of the world, and so whenever I hear this phrase, it troubles me. It troubles me especially when I hear it from children in a classroom.

Research, such as that done by MacDonald (1991) has shown that dance can enhance learning for children and can thus be a great tool in elementary school education. Her study demonstrated that when given training, teachers saw dance as being a practical element of their curriculum for three reasons: “children enjoy and benefit from creative-dance activities and are therefore enthusiastic about learning through this art form; creative dance may be used as an alternative, integrative method of teaching; and creative dance can enhance whole child development” (p. 438).

As I began to learn about education in Ontario and discovered The Arts curriculum (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009), I was elated to find that the Ministry of Education had included dance as a strand equal to visual arts, music and drama. I was ecstatic when I saw that dance is being identified as a “medium for learning about the self and the world” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009, p.15). This is what I believe dance can be for everyone, and so I
am very pleased that there is now a greater emphasis on introducing children to this amazing, and creative medium. I soon began to realize, however, that many children, and even adults, who have been educated in Ontario, have not fully realized the potential dance possesses as an expressive form of art.

During my studies in OISE’s Masters of Teaching program, I was surprised that many of my colleagues were unaware of dance being currently taught in schools as a part of the Ontario Arts curriculum. Even more shocking was that most of them who had attended elementary school in Ontario, did not remember experiencing dance as students. Most people, who I have asked, remembered dancing as part of a holiday or end-of-year performance, or as part of a rare gym class. No one remembered it as being a part of school to the same extent that music and drama were present. Most critically, no one ever saw dance being taught as a form of expression that they themselves could utilize. If asked, many of them would still say, “I can’t dance.” It was clear to me that although dance has been accepted, in theory, as a beneficial component to the elementary classroom, in many cases, it is not being explored to its full potential.

I believe that many see dance as a very specialized form of art that requires dedication and the commitment of many years of training. Although other forms of art are seen in the same way (such as music, visual art, and drama), many people still feel that they can participate recreationally without any formal training or experience. From my experience, this notion is evident in the classroom setting as students and teachers seem to feel much more comfortable and less self-conscious when asked to draw, sing, or act compared to when they are asked to dance.

The best way to change these misconceptions about dance is with the help of teachers. Classroom teachers can show their students the expressive potential that dance possesses. The
problem arises when teachers themselves are repeating the phrase, “I can’t dance,” as they attempt to incorporate elements of the dance curriculum into their lessons. We must examine how teachers are using dance and how they can be supported, in order to move towards hearing the phrase, “I can dance.”

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into dance education in Ontario classrooms. An examination is conducted into how teachers are delivering the dance curriculum, their perceptions of dance, and finally what can be done to help them use dance to its full potential.

There has been a wide selection of research looking at how teachers can be supported in implementing and delivering dance lessons to their students (MacDonald, 1991; MacDonald 2001), however despite this there have not been many specific studies that look at the situation in Ontario elementary classrooms. Furthermore, there has been a lack of research focused on the implementation of the 2009 curriculum that established dance as its own independent strand (differing from the previous 1998 curriculum where dance was incorporated with drama). This current research seeks to fill this gap in the literature by analyzing how the latest curriculum is being and can be implemented.

Teachers’ perceptions towards their own ability to teach dance may be a key to motivating and helping them. Russell-Bowie (2013) demonstrated how a culture’s emphasis on dance could influence a teacher’s confidence in teaching it. The current study aims to extend this finding by examining what attitudes Ontario elementary teachers have towards dance in general, and dance as an educational tool. This research further seeks to extend previous work that explores how teachers can be supported, such as through dance workshops (Hanna, 2002; MacDonald, 1991; MacDonald, 2001), by looking specifically at the situation in Ontario. This
study analyzes what Ontario elementary teachers need in order to fully deliver the dance curriculum.

1.2 Research Questions

Through this research into dance education in Ontario elementary schools, the main goal is to gain insight into one key question:

Why might elementary school teachers in Ontario have difficulty delivering the dance curriculum to their students?

To further my investigation, I have also created the following set of sub questions:

1) What are Ontario teachers’ attitudes towards teaching dance at the elementary level?

2) What do teachers perceive as being the abilities necessary to teach dance, and do they feel confident that they possess them?

3) How can teachers be supported and motivated to fully deliver the dance curriculum?

1.3 Introduction to the Methodology

The methods employed, in this qualitative research, follow a multiple case study approach in order to gain broader insight into my issue as outlined by Yin (2009). Wanting to understand Ontario teachers’ perspectives on dance, open-ended interviews were chosen to collect data in order to, as Yin describes, “reveal how case study interviewees construct reality and think about situations” (p. 264). In the analysis, there is a search for “correspondence” as described by Stake (1995), in order to find patterns and commonalities between my different case studies.
1.4 Background of the Researcher

Throughout my elementary and high school education in Vancouver, BC, I was constantly looking for a creative outlet. I was immediately drawn to music, drama, and writing as ways of expressing different aspects about myself. Although these avenues allowed me to explore who I was, it was not until I found dance that I was truly able to express my thoughts, feelings, and ideas to their fullest extent. Dance was what allowed me to gain a sense of self-confidence that I had never felt before, which helped me to succeed both academically and in other aspects of my life. I became motivated to train in many different forms of dance, exploring how each one represents the dancers’ own perspective of the world while staying true to my way of movement and expression.

By deepening my understanding of the power that dance can have on a person, I began to find ways of sharing this. Beginning with my peers, fellow university students who were searching for the same means of expression that I was, I witnessed the number of people who were impacted by dance. This further inspired me to discover whether kids could also benefit. I wanted to provide them with the thing I had always craved but never received in my own childhood. With the help of my university dance group, I began to create workshops for children. The key to these workshops was to introduce these children to dance as a creative tool for self-expression. I used a multitude of techniques, ranging from hip-hop free styling, to modern and contemporary improvisation, to show children how dancers create. I further adapted these techniques and gave the children a chance to create dances for themselves. In doing this, I saw them in new ways, doing things that no one had believed they could. Those who had been quiet were much more engaged and took more risks, while others who were initially quite rambunctious were able to demonstrate a more reflective and introverted side. They were truly
experiencing dance.

Now as a teacher candidate, I have begun to see the benefits of dance in a classroom that promotes diversity, equity, and the belief that every child has something to offer. I see dance as a way to collectively express our own individuality. I see dance as a means of getting to know my students in a new and different approach. I see dance as a way my students can explore the curriculum material. I see dance as a way my students can learn.

1.5 Overview of the Research Study

Chapter 1 consists of an introduction to this study, discussing the purpose, the research questions, my background, and what led me to study this topic. In Chapter 2, a full review of the literature that has been done surrounding dance in education is conducted, focusing on research looking at how teachers can be supported to get the most of dance in their classrooms. In Chapter 3, a discussion on the methods and the procedures used in this study is presented, including information on the participants, data collection instruments, and the limitations discovered. In Chapter 4, an analysis of the data in relation to my key questions is made. Finally Chapter 5 concludes the study with a discussion on my insights and recommendations for various members of the educational community, the limitations of this study, as well as suggestions for further study of this topic. References and a list of appendices follow at the end.
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter examines previous research done on dance education. A focus is placed on the benefits of dance to students in the classroom setting, the ways dance can be most effectively integrated into other subject areas, and the means by which teachers can be supported in their teaching of dance.

2.1 Benefits of Dance

In order to support teachers in their effective implementation of the dance curriculum, it is crucial to instill in them an understanding of the benefits of dance. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) advocates for the great power that the arts, including dance, has on students:

Education in the arts is essential to students’ intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth and well-being. Experiences in the arts – in dance, drama, music, and visual arts, play a valuable role in helping students to achieve their potential as learners and to participate fully in their community and in society as a whole. (p. 3)

Becker (2013), in her narrative study has also highlighted some of these benefits. She described dance as being good to counter obesity, and as a tool for cognitive development. Through an analysis of her experiences integrating modern dance into the classroom, she found that dance helped students to develop skills such as “communication, critical thinking, and collaboration” (p. 7).

Other researchers (Jounghwa, Lee, Ko, & Boswell, 2013; Kraus & Chapman, 1981) have further shown that dance can be beneficial in the educational setting. Jounghwa et al. (2013) looked at how creative dance can enhance self-expression in Korean high schools. They found,
through an investigation of student logs and drawings, that their creative dance program helped students in three main areas: “a) enhancing positive perceptions, b) expanding self-expression, and c) cultivating communication” (p. 75). This study demonstrates that the students themselves saw the benefits of having dance in their educational lives. Although this study may not be directly applicable to the situation being studied, the basic themes of the positive effects of dance with self-expression and self-perception could prove useful in helping to motivate teachers to use dance in their classrooms. Kraus & Chapman (1981) provide a great summary of dance in education by identifying six areas in which dance is beneficial: movement education, development of personal creativity, aesthetic experience, intercultural and integrative experience, social involvement, and carry-over values.

Some researchers (Hanna, 2002; Becker, 2013) have highlighted the benefits of dance as a tool for helping students learn through the use of multiple intelligences, particularly bodily/kinesthetic intelligence. Howard Gardner (2011), the creator of the theory of multiple intelligences, has even identified dance as being important. He states that, “Of all the uses of the body, none has reached greater heights, or has been more variably deployed by cultures, than the dance” (p. 235). Lowden (1989) also demonstrates that dance can be a way in which “the teacher can ‘see’ the children’s thought processes” (p. 28), thus becoming a form of assessment that takes into account the students’ physical way of thinking. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) further describes the amazing communicative powers dance, and the arts has by explaining that “the arts provide a natural vehicle through which students can explore and express themselves and through which they can discover and interpret the world around them” (p. 3). Seeing dance as a different way of thinking can therefore allow teachers to use it in all subject areas.
MacDonald (1991) added to the literature through her analysis of the benefits of dance in the Canadian education setting. She discovered that if integrated effectively, dance could benefit children in many aspects of their learning. This points to another theme presented in the literature: how dance can be incorporated into various aspects of the curriculum.

2.2 Effective Integration of Dance in Education

Traditionally, dance has been present in schools through the physical education curriculum. The goal was for dance to be a tool to achieve physical fitness (Lowden, 1989; Kraus & Chapman, 1981). This however, covers only one of the benefits highlighted in the literature analyzed above. The question then becomes, can dance be effectively incorporated into other aspects of the curriculum?

Further research (Becker, 2013; Robelen, 2010) has shown that dance can be an effective tool throughout all aspects of the curriculum. Becker (2013) outlines the benefits of integrating modern dance with other subjects in the curriculum as a method of engaging students in the classroom. She looks at how “integrating creative movement into the curriculum can also help students with different learning styles to achieve in school” (p. 7). Robelen (2010) takes a more focused route by looking at dance specifically in the science curriculum. He analyzed Fort Garrison Elementary School’s program called “Teaching Science with Dance in Mind” (p. 1). Through interviews with teachers and administrators of this school, Robelen demonstrates that using dance in other aspects of the curriculum not only is an efficient way of incorporating the arts, but also engages students to learn in a different way.

Looking at the great benefits dance can have throughout a child’s education, it is clear that as teachers, we have to move beyond its traditional role in physical education. Byeon (2012) describes dance education in Korea, highlighting its use in the physical education curriculum as a
form of physical expression. Through an analysis of previous studies however, he argues that creative dance should be taught as a different, standardized course. Lowden (1989) further argues that “the attitude towards physical ability in dance is secondary” (p. 35), and that the focus of dance should be on the artistry, creativity, and expression that dance allows students to experience. Finally, Murray (1975) explains that dance “should be considered a separate aspect of movement education” because “dance as a performing art has deeper aesthetic values than any functional movement” (p. 15).

Having found these benefits, and looking at the research on how dance can be effectively used in the classroom, this study hopes to find how teachers can be supported in this effective integration of dance into their programs.

2.3 Support for Teachers

In order to even begin looking at how to support teachers, it will be necessary to understand what educators believe is needed. This study aims to expand on research done on teachers’ perceptions, such as that done by Russell-Bowie (2013). Russell-Bowie looked at the backgrounds and confidence of student teachers from five different countries (Australia, Nambia, South Africa, the USA, and Ireland) in respects to teaching dance. Participants were given a survey that asked them for their own perception of their background and confidence in teaching dance. Russell-Bowie found that most students did not have a background in dance and that there was greater confidence in South Africa and Nambia as compared to the western countries. She attributes this to cultural differences because dance is a part of African traditions and is seen as a part of life whereas in western nations, dance is seen as a skill that needs to be learnt. Russell-Bowie also saw a correlation between having a background in dance and feeling
confident in teaching dance. Thus to support teachers, we may need to look at how they perceive dance and their confidence in teaching dance.

There have been some researchers (Hanna, 2002; MacDonald, 1991; MacDonald et al., 2001) who have created workshops or programs to help support teachers incorporate dance into their classrooms. Although they may have had ulterior motives, such as advertising the success of their products, these researchers have demonstrated some of the ways in which teachers can be supported and motivated to incorporate dance in their programming: for example by helping change teachers’ attitudes to the benefits of dance and their perceived abilities to teach dance.

One such workshop was created by Hanna (2002) for teachers with no prior experience, as well as experienced dance educators. This workshop, entitled “Intelligent Moves-Partnering Dance & Education K-12” (p. 47), was intended to help participants with the struggles they face in teaching dance, as well as to encourage them to integrate dance into other subject areas. Participants were invited to the workshop and Hanna analyzed some of their feedback. She demonstrated that learning dance could help students with their overall intellectual growth as it is engaging and incorporates many of the multiple intelligences. Thus, teachers may just need to be presented with direct examples of the benefits of dance to student engagement and achievement.

Other researchers (MacDonald, 1991; MacDonald, Stodel, & Farres, 2001) hoped to give teachers a chance to become comfortable with their abilities to teach dance in their classrooms. MacDonald (1991) created a series of workshops in the Canadian elementary education context. Her study examined case studies on participants who took part in her series of creative dance workshops held in their schools. This allowed the participants to experiment with using some of the techniques learnt, in their own classrooms. After analyzing personal journals of the
participants, and conducting a series of in-classroom observations, MacDonald found that through the workshops, teachers became much more comfortable with teaching dance in their classrooms, and that teachers began to see a practical use for dance. MacDonald et al. (2001) furthered this research by looking at dance education through the lens of student teachers. Using the data collected from surveys conducted before and after a workshop created for student teachers, the researchers discovered that participants had discomfort in teaching creative dance before the workshop due to three main reasons: “physical concerns,” “a lack of practical ideas,” and “inadequate understanding” (p. 227). Their analysis also found that after the workshop almost all of the student teachers (122 out of 124) changed their attitudes showing more positivity toward teaching creative dance due to four reasons: “greater understanding, level of comfort, physical and therapeutic benefits, and ease of integration” (p. 230). This study has looked at support for teachers in a new way by exploring how providing student teachers with support during their pre-service education could be beneficial for when they get their own classrooms. Both of these studies have demonstrated that it may be necessary to support teachers through professional development opportunities; this would give them a chance to gain skills, experience, and confidence in teaching dance.

Finally a key to supporting teachers may be to find support systems within their environment. Sprague (2009) looks at the value of bringing in other members of the school community to share dance from different cultures, or to share the students’ dances with an audience. Sprague presents the idea that by bringing dance education out into the wider school community, teachers may get even more support.
2.4 Conclusion

After examining some of the literature on dance in education, it is clear that the reason some elementary school teachers in Ontario may have difficulty delivering the dance curriculum to their students, may be due to their attitudes towards teaching dance and their perceptions of whether they have the ability and confidence to teach dance. A major goal of this research, stemming from this review of the literature, is to understand what teachers may need in order to feel supported and motivated to deliver the dance curriculum.
Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology used is presented. The procedures used in the study and the instruments of data collection are outlined. This is followed by a description of the participants and the rationale for their selection. A brief discussion on the methods used for data collection and analysis will be presented. Finally this chapter outlines the procedures followed for ethical review, and an examination of the methodological limitations of the study is made.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

A qualitative approach has been taken in this study in order to gain an understanding of educators’ perspectives. In order to gain insight into why some teachers may have difficulty in teaching the dance curriculum, the research questions must be understood from educators’ points of view. The qualitative approach, as described by Creswell (2013), places a focus on the “participant’s meanings” (p. 47). In particular, a social constructivist framework has influenced this study where, as Creswell describes, “the goal of research, then, is to rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation” (p. 25). By looking at the multiple viewpoints of the participants, and by seeing their beliefs about dance in education, this study can come to understand what teachers need in order to be supported and to deliver the dance curriculum to the best of their abilities. Further, through the emergent process of qualitative research, this study can as Creswell states, “learn about the problem or issue from participants and engage in the best practices to obtain that information” (47).

For this study, a literature review was first conducted to see what has been previously studied in the field of dance in education. This review also helped to inform this research,
directing it towards questions that have yet to be answered in the field. Following the literature review, semi-structured interviews were conducted with dance experts and educators as part of a multiple case study approach.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

For data collection, a semi-structured interview protocol was chosen (see Appendix B) in order to allow the participants to expand on their own experiences while still focusing the interviews toward answering the research questions. By keeping the questions open-ended, the participants, as Turner (2010) describes, were able to include as much detail as they wanted based on their own experiences, while allowing for the use of follow-up questions to gain deeper insight. The open-ended interviews allowed for an understanding of, as Yin (2009) describes, “how case study interviewees construct reality and think about situations” (p. 264).

The protocol was in the form of an informal interview. Firstly it included a series of introduction questions in order to get a basic understanding of the participants’ backgrounds in education as well as to make them feel comfortable and to create a friendly and positive environment for them to further share their experiences and insights. This was followed by a series of questions asking them about their background in teaching dance. Finally, they were asked a set of questions focusing on their beliefs and perspectives about dance in education and what they believe teachers need in order to teach dance effectively to their students.

3.3 Participants

In this section, the sampling methods are described, including the criteria for participants, the procedures undertaken, and a brief description of the participants.
3.3.1 Sampling Criteria

In order to properly answer the research questions, participants were required to have had experience teaching the Ontario dance curriculum at the elementary level, and have demonstrated some expertise. In order to select the ideal participants, the following criteria was created:

• Participants must have had experience teaching the Ontario Ministry of Education’s dance curriculum at the primary and/or junior level.
• Participants must have demonstrated some expertise in the area of dance education.
• Participants must have had experience creating or leading some form of professional development with the goal of supporting teachers or teacher candidates in the delivery of the dance curriculum.
• Participants must be willing to take part in this research and willing to reflect on, and share their experiences teaching dance.

Firstly, since the study aims to gain insight into the Ontario elementary school context, participants were required to have had experience teaching the Ontario dance curriculum at a primary and/or junior level. Further it was required that those teachers with experience have gained expertise in dance education. This criterion was necessary because to be able to understand how teachers can be supported to teach dance, examples of teachers who have been successful were essential to gaining insight into what may be necessary for other teachers who are looking to improve their abilities. Finally participants needed to be willing to share their experiences in order to follow the ethical review procedures and to get the best quality data possible.
3.3.2 Sampling Procedures

This study relied on convenience sampling due to the time constraints placed upon us in our program that in addition to our research requires us to fulfill all the requirements of an initial teacher education program. Being immersed in a community of educators and education researchers, existing networks with teacher colleagues were used to recruit participants for this study.

3.3.3 Participant Biographies

Three participants (Participant A, Participant B, and Participant C) were selected and agreed to participate in this study. They were chosen based on their experiences aligning with the eligibility criteria previously described.

Participant A started dancing at the age of ten. She has had experience working with elementary students, teaching dance for over twenty years. Her education consisted of an undergraduate degree with a major in Fine Arts Studies (which included training in teaching creative movement to children), followed by a post-graduate degree in Dance. Through her education, she has gained a great amount of knowledge on the current Ontario dance curriculum. She ran her own creative arts centre for a number of years that included music and movement programming. Part of her programs included running in-school workshops for students as well as professional development workshops for teachers. She has also created workshops geared towards pre-service teachers as part of their initial teacher education programs. Some of these workshops also included a focus on integrating dance into other subject areas.

Participant B started dancing at the age of nine. She has had fifteen years of experience teaching almost all subject areas from Kindergarten to Grade Eight with a focus on dance. She has also had opportunities to teach in an arts-focused elementary school. Her own education
consisted of a degree for Theatre as well as training in Modern Dance. She has also trained in how to deliver dance and other forms of art in the classroom with a focus on using it as a tool for teaching other curriculum subjects. Outside of the classroom, she has also had twenty years of experience as a studio dance teacher for the recreational and competitive levels. Her experiences leading professional development have included presenting in-school workshops for teachers that focus on the integration of dance into other curriculum subjects, as well as workshops geared towards pre-service teachers in initial teacher education programs.

Participant C started dancing at the age of four and has had experiences working professionally in dance and musical theatre. Experiences teaching dance at her own studio and in summer camps led her to gaining her Bachelor of Education. Through her experiences as a teacher, she has taught Grade Six to Grade Eight. She has also taught Dance and Drama. She then decided to leave teaching in a classroom to start her own organization that teaches dance workshops in schools across Ontario. Her organization also creates workshops for teachers helping them to effectively, and easily implement dance in their own classrooms. Through her organization, she has also brought workshops to pre-service teachers in initial education programs. She has presented at many conferences at the board level, provincial level, national level, and international level. She also has experience teaching the Dance Additional Qualification and courses on dance in Bachelor of Education programs in Ontario.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and analysis first began with the reading of each individual interview transcript. After the initial reading, secondary readings were conducted in order to begin coding the data by trying to find common themes and divergences. The analysis consisted of looking for “correspondence” as described by Skate (1995), in order to find patterns and commonalities
between the different case studies. The null data was also analyzed, in order to see if
information that participants left out could be used to identify any more themes. Once each
transcript was coded, the transcripts were read through again in order to synthesize themes, and
to consolidate them into more general themes. Finally, an analysis into the meaning behind these
themes was conducted and these themes were related to the research questions.

Four main themes arose from an analysis of the data: the role of dance in education, the
challenges to implementing dance in the classroom, the elements of effective professional
development in dance, and the relationship between dance and health and physical education.
These were further broken down into subthemes that were analyzed in order to gain insight on
the implications that are discussed in the final chapter of this paper.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

The ethical review approval procedures for the Master of Teaching program were
followed. In selecting participants, potential participants were first contacted and given a general
overview of the research topic and the background for conducting the research. They were then
asked if they were interested in participating by taking part in an interview that had no known
risks to participation. It was stated that being a part of the study would be completely voluntary
and informed them that they could refuse to respond to questions, and could choose to withdraw
from the study at any time, including having any records or data received destroyed. Once they
expressed interest, each participant was given a letter of consent (see Appendix A), and was
asked to read and sign it. They were further ensured of their confidentiality, and were informed
them that pseudonyms would be used and that their names or the names of the schools in which
they worked would not be identified.
After the interview, all data (including transcripts and digital recordings) were stored on a password-protected laptop in order to ensure confidentiality. Participants were also given the opportunity to review all transcripts of the interview allowing them to rephrase or retract anything they had said. They were finally informed that all of the findings and the final paper would be made available to them upon request.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

The major limitation to this research has been related to the parameters afforded by the Master of Teaching program, and the associated ethical review procedures. Conducting the research in the context of a professional graduate program, that included requirements for an initial teacher education program, limited the time in which the research could be conducted, as well as the scope of the study. With these limitations, especially on time, only a limited sample of teachers could be recruited based on existing networks within the educational community. Further, because of the limited scope of the research due to the prescribed ethical review procedure, the study was unable to conduct larger scale surveys or observe teachers in the classroom.

The limitations placed on the study have however allowed the research to be taken in a direction that allows the use of a social constructivist lens, as with the limited sample size, the goal of the study has been to fully understand the perspectives of each of the participants. Rather than getting a general view of the topic, as Creswell (2013) describes, “a detailed understanding emerges from examining a case or several cases” (p. 123). This could become a key component to the research, as the goal is to find out what individuals in the educational community believe is needed in order to support the teaching of dance. By looking at the detailed experiences of individual educators, a greater depth of understanding into their situations will be gained.
Further, as the ultimate goal is to help teachers in the development of their ability to effectively deliver the dance curriculum, this process of reflection could further help the participants in their practice and inspire other teachers to undergo this process of reflection.

3.7 Conclusion

With the methods developed for this research study, the goals were to gain a deep understanding of these specific cases in order to have a sense of what educators believe is needed in order to effectively deliver the dance curriculum. By focusing on the details of the participants’ experiences, the goal was to find basic themes that could then be studied further in the future at a much larger scale.

In the following chapter, a discussion of the findings takes place, and the major themes found in the data are identified and analyzed.
Chapter 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

Analyzing the data collected through interviews with the participants, four main themes emerged that have helped to address the research questions. Those four themes are: the role of dance in education, the challenges to implementing dance in the classroom, the elements of effective professional development in dance, and the relationship between dance and health and physical education. This chapter will include a presentation of these themes and what the participants have said in relation to these themes. In addition, the study’s findings will be placed in relation to the previous literature that has been reviewed.

4.1 Role of Dance in Education

All three of the participants passionately presented their arguments for why dance is not only beneficial in education, but also why it is essential and should be present in Ontario classrooms. In particular, they addressed three main areas where dance can have a big role in the classroom: through cross-curricular integration, as a communication tool, and as a way to educate the whole child.

4.1.1 Cross-Curricular Integration

Each participant highlighted the benefits of using dance in a cross-curricular way. They demonstrated that the dance curriculum can be easily and effectively used together with the other subject areas. More importantly, they believe that the use of dance could actually help students in other subject areas.

Participant C described dance as being “a vehicle for a teacher, if they’re comfortable, to explore any curriculum context. I see dance as being cross-curricular, one hundred percent.”
Participant B shared similar opinions stating that “in order to deliver science, math, social studies, and any kind of lesson on any topic, whatever you are teaching, you can use dance.” Participant A even shared her own personal experiences with dance helping her as well as some teacher candidates in math. After being asked to teach a workshop that integrated math and dance to a group of initial teacher education students she realized how much dance made everyone comfortable with math as she described:

At first I hesitated, but decided that it was worth the challenge. I realized after the workshop that what I did, people were so grateful because again, I’m not alone in the fact that math has not been a great experience for me. Being able to connect these mathematical concepts through movement was a real eye opener.

The benefits of dance in other curriculum areas, as described by my participants, links very well to the research done by Robelen (2010) in his case study analysis of Fort Garrison Elementary School’s program integrating science and dance, as well as other areas of the arts. In particular, Participant B even described the example of using dance to teach a science lesson on molecules explaining how students could physically explore how their movement may change, as they get hotter.

The cross-curricular benefits of dance can be linked to dance being a way for students to learn as well as showcase their knowledge as outlined by Gardner’s (2011) theory of multiple intelligences. Participant A directly used Gardner’s term bodily/kinesthetic intelligence as she describes the use of the body through dance as being a “kinesthetic experience.” This use of dance as a type of intelligence was, in particular, described by each of my participants as being a key form of communication.
4.1.2 Communication

Communication was a sub-theme that permeated each of the interviews. In some way they all described dance as being a tool for communication. In particular, Participant C described dance as “a kinesthetic and creative way to have kids express their ideas and feelings.” Participant B took this a step further and not only highlighted dance as another way of communicating, but stressed the importance for kids to learn how to communicate through their bodies. She explained how “the body can express so much without words, and I think kids have to learn that. They have to learn to pay attention to communication that’s non-verbal. I think that’s an important skill to learn.”

Participant C also highlighted how dance can be used to help our students in learning the skill of critical analysis as she described how “the critical analysis process is a huge part of the dance curriculum. It’s having students learn how to appreciate and talk about dance.” This aligns very well with the research done by Becker (2013) who included critical thinking as one of the skills that dance helped students to develop. Participant C demonstrated that, in particular, dance could be a great tool to help our students communicate their critical thinking as they analyze various kinds of dance.

Beyond these communication skills, the participants highlighted dance as being important to teaching students holistically. They demonstrated that dance could teach lessons that students can apply in their day-to-day life.

4.1.3 Teaching the Whole Child

For the participants, the largest role they believed dance has in education is its ability to help teachers teach the whole child. Participant A describes this as she explains how “it is a support for students, not only that need the kinesthetic experience, but it really allows us to
develop the whole child.” Participant B further looks at how “when you are moving your body, you are using your whole self. Holistically you are learning so much and it’s a richer experience because you are learning emotionally, physically, and mentally. It’s an incredible way to learn.” This is very similar to what Kraus & Chapman (1981) found when they outlined their six areas in which dance can be beneficial. All of these areas can contribute to teaching our students holistically, and it would be interesting to see if dance can be beneficial in more areas and could be taken even further to help teach students in new ways.

Participant A highlighted how dance goes beyond helping students learn basic subject material as she described how dance plays a key role in our students’ emotional development:

I mean students go to school to learn specific subject matter, and then behind that we may say, okay now we’re going to help you with your emotional intelligence. We forget often that the body really translates all of that knowledge.

Thus dance plays not just an important role in our students’ school lives, but in their whole lives. As said perfectly by Participant B, “that’s what’s beautiful about dance and about the arts: you learn so many lessons that aren’t only about art, they are about life.”

4.2 Challenges to Implementing Dance

Having outlined the amazing impact dance can have in classrooms, the participants also acknowledged that in Ontario there are many challenges to effectively implementing dance. This may be a reason why dance is not as present as it should be. The participants identified three main challenges: a lack of experience in dance resulting in a fear of teaching it, a general lack of focus placed on dance education in Ontario, and a potentially confusing curriculum document for those with a limited experience in dance.
4.2.1 Fear/Lack of Experience

The greatest barrier to teaching dance that all of the participants identified is a lack of experience and the fear that this may create in many teachers. Participant B shared her opinion when she said, “I think teachers are afraid to teach it. They feel unqualified […] I think it’s really a lack in confidence, a lack of experience.” With this lack of experience Participant A described how dance is particularly challenging because although teachers may be able to see the various concepts, “how they translate into movements is something completely different […] If you don’t understand how to use your own body, or you haven’t been taught that or haven’t experienced it, it can seem very abstract.”

A big misconception that all three participants addressed when discussing this fear of dance is that, as Participant C described, “[teachers] still see it as if they have to be a dancer.” Participant B highlighted the perception that she believes many teachers seem to have, that, “with dance, it’s as if it’s either you can or you can’t which is ridiculous, but that’s how people have framed it.” She goes on to explain that this can be detrimental to a teacher’s ability to teach dance because, “if that teacher says ‘Well, I can’t dance,’ then you already set up a mental block.”

This perception that one needs to be trained in dance to be able to teach dance is similar to the findings of Russell-Bowie (2013) in that western cultures see dance as being something that must be learnt compared to other cultures that see dance as a more integral part of culture and life, such as in some African traditions. Participant A summarizes it perfectly when she said, “a lot of times, people judge themselves on their dance.” The participants have highlighted that there seems to be too much of a preoccupation with the idea of having to be formally trained in dance that prevents teachers from experiencing it. They judge themselves before they even try it,
and it is clear from my participants that teachers do not get many opportunities to try or experience it.

4.2.2 Lack of Focus on Dance Education

It was evident from each interview, that all of the participants believe that dance does not get the attention that it deserves in the Ontario education system. Dance is being, as Participant B stated, “left behind in favour of other things and other subjects.” Participant C even stated that “often it seems that [dance] is unfortunately seen as fluff.” After discussing the benefits of dance in education, according to them there is a lack of focus placed on teaching dance in the classroom, and thus many teachers do not get the chance to see how much dance can enhance their students’ learning experiences.

All of the participants identified that the root cause for this lack of focus is the lack of adequate preparation teacher candidates receive in their initial teacher training. Participant B stated that teacher candidates “are not getting any training […] In teacher’s college we are definitely not preparing them.” Participant A outlined how introducing teacher candidates to dance could create the momentum needed to bring dance into the spotlight:

I think we really need to start at the foundation, which is our teacher education programs […] and then, once more and more people have knowledge in dance, then there may be more AQ courses that could be offered, there may be more people who are really interested […] maybe we can start getting people in schools, actually having dance specialists in schools.

Participant C echoed this sentiment calling the education of future teachers in dance “the missing link.” She also addressed that a big issue is that there needs to be “more awareness” about the role that dance can play in the classroom. She also believes that this awareness can
lead to more support as she said, “I don’t think the boards provide enough support for the teachers…and that’s the first step, to get some dance awareness and excitement in your board.”

This idea goes in line with research done by MacDonald et al. (2001) where they found the benefits of introducing dance to student teachers in their initial training programs.

Participant B really identified the lack of focus by many school boards when she said, “I think someone should be overseeing it […] I think they should have someone designated for dance to come into every school […] I think someone needs to come in and hold each school accountable for how they are delivering the arts curriculum.”

Participant A described that even if teachers wanted to get more support, they could not because it is very hard to find. She emphasized the lack of resources and said, “you have to really research to find it.” She also emphasized the lack of effective workshops as she said, “you need to be in a classroom with other people, and a facilitator, and actually do it. And those workshops are so few and far between.”

4.2.3 Curriculum

When discussing the dance curriculum, all of the participants had positive views towards the layout of the updated 2009 document, however their opinions differed as to whether they thought it was accessible to teachers. Participant C found that the document is very accessible while Participants A and B found it to be difficult for someone not versed in dance to follow.

Participant C described the curriculum as being “user friendly,” and describing how she “love[s] the consistency of the elements of dance being always the same from Grade One all the way to Grade Twelve […] you can ebb and flow through the overall expectations throughout the grades.” She highlighted the fact that this is essential because there is a lack of consistency in the teaching of dance so having the same expectations throughout the grades allows teachers to
instruct their students based on the level they are at. Participant C further appreciates that in the document “they don’t tell you what style you have to do. So that’s sort of open for interpretation style.” According to her the curriculum is very accessible because teachers can use what they are comfortable with in teaching very general expectations.

Although Participants A and B agree that the document has some great elements for teaching dance, they believe it may be difficult for teachers without a lot of prior knowledge of dance concepts. Participant A found that “dance in the curriculum is really under-utilized, even though we have this beautiful curriculum, it’s just, it’s abstract and it’s sometimes I think a bit hard to access.” Participant B agrees with Participant C in that it is great that “the curriculum is so open and interpretive,” but believes that “if [teachers] don’t have a background in [dance], they are very intimidated by it. Even just picking it up and looking at it is intimidating for them […] They really need someone to translate it for them.” She goes on to describe how she believes that teachers “really need access to proper lesson plans and the knowledge of how to deliver the lesson plan.” It is clear that teachers may need help in being able to deliver the dance curriculum that has so much potential in the classroom.

4.3 Effective Professional Development in Dance

Throughout the interviews, the participants described many examples of the professional development they themselves took part in, as well as ones they had led. Through these examples, they were able to highlight what they believed to be some of the most important elements to helping teachers overcome the potential challenges they face. Two main strategies were common throughout all of the experiences the participants described: creating a safe environment, and allowing the teachers to experience the benefits of effectively using dance in the classroom.
4.3.1 Environment

When discussing professional development workshops that the participants both took and led, the one key element that was always present was that any workshop was done in the context of a safe environment. Participant A really stressed that when she leads a workshop that she has to “first and foremost, make them feel safe […] we can never assume that anybody is fully safe, but I really like to start by having a discussion […] I really want to put them at ease.” Participant B also stressed that she “create[s] only safe environments so that they can get a chance to explore and dance and move themselves.” With the discussions of the fears that so many people may have in relation to dancing, the participants really believed that creating a safe environment is the first step in helping teachers to overcome that fear.

Participant B found that one of the best ways to create this safe environment is through the use of humour. She described how “I like to joke around and have fun and I just keep reminding everyone, this is just to have fun. We are having a great time here. We can learn and have fun at the same time.” She goes on to say how important it is to create the environment where you can “laugh at yourselves…We are here to have a good time and let’s know that if you make mistakes it’s part of learning.”

From these interviews, it became clear that creating a safe environment allowed teachers to take risks. Participant C remarked that “they need to be open-minded, open to taking risks, but also willing to make mistakes.” All three participants stressed the importance of letting their students know that being trained in dance is not a prerequisite to becoming a dance teacher in the classroom. As Participant C said, “You don’t have to have a strong background. You don’t have to have a dance degree. It’s about just getting them comfortable.” A lot of researchers (MacDonald, 1991; MacDonald, Stodel, & Farres, 2001) have focused on this idea of supporting
teachers by helping them gain confidence in their abilities and it is clear that a safe environment is the first step towards doing this. The goal then, is to create an environment that allows teachers to feel confident in exploring their movement regardless of their abilities and backgrounds.

4.3.2 Experience the Benefits

A strategy common to all of the various effective workshops that the participants described was to have teachers experience the benefits of dance by seeing their own students in action, as well as taking part themselves. As Participant A said, “they have to experience it in their own bodies if they’re going to learn how to teach it or to have some sense of what it means to teach dance education.” By experiencing it, not only does it seem like teachers have a better understanding of the role dance can play in the classroom, but it appears that teachers actually become more motivated to teach dance seeing how much it has benefited them.

Participant B described her strategy of getting teachers to actually experience lessons that they could do for their students:

I would just deliver lesson plans to teachers as if they were the kids…and I explain to them so they can actually do this, they can perform it, they can get into their body […] I try to inspire my student teachers to just think differently, to think outside the box…how can they deliver a lesson without a pencil or a paper or a blackboard…how can we get into our bodies?

She even wonders whether teachers should see their own students experience the workshop, which is a strategy that Participant A would often employ in her workshops. Participant A explained how she “would teach students and also offer professional development for the teacher.” She found that “teachers often really love what they would see happening with
their students.” This echoes the work done by MacDonald (1991) with her programs that taught teachers but then also followed them as they tried it on their students, seeing how once teachers actually saw the effects on their students, they appreciated the importance of dance. It seems like there is no better way of demonstrating the benefits of dance and motivating teachers to use it than actually having them see their own students experiencing it and gaining a lot from it.

### 4.4 Relation to Health and Physical Education

One final major theme that came out of these interviews was the relationship that dance has to health and physical education. While all of the participants acknowledge that the relationship between dance and health and physical education is good because it is at least getting dance into Ontario schools, there is an issue that many of the benefits of dance are being left out with this combination. While Participants A and B believe that dance should be kept completely separate from health and physical education, similar to what Byeon (2012) concluded through his research in Korea, Participant C differed finding that dance and physical education can work really well together, as long as the teacher is doing it effectively and in an integrative way.

Participant C highlighted how dance and physical education are two subjects, in particular, that work well together as she explains how, “there is actually a nice synergy between the curriculums in terms of the elements of dance and the movement competencies.” She outlines that the issue is not that dance and physical education do not work together. The issue is that when integrated, sometimes the artistic, creative, and analytical aspects of the dance curriculum are lost to the purely physical elements of dance. According to her, as long as the teacher includes all of those elements, then dance and physical education go hand in hand.
4.5 Conclusion

The data collected from interviews with the participants really gave insight into why dance may not be as present in Ontario classrooms even though it has so many benefits and is a required subject by the Ministry of Education. More importantly however, the participants shed some light on what could be done to bring dance into the classroom. The final chapter of this study will outline what the educational community in Ontario could do to raise awareness to the benefits of dance, and how teachers can be helped to effectively integrate dance into their practice.
Chapter 5: IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter focuses on the implications of the current study based on the themes identified in the previous chapter’s analysis of the data. First, key findings from the data and their significance is reviewed. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings for the education community as well as for me personally. Recommendations that stem from each of these implications are then offered. Subsequently directions for further research that can be conducted to further study this topic are suggested. Finally, concluding comments are presented.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

Through the interviews conducted, four main themes were discovered that are important to understanding how teachers can be supported to use the dance curriculum to its full potential. Those themes are the role of dance in education, the challenges to implementing dance in the classroom, the elements of effective professional development in dance, and the relationship between dance and health and physical education.

Each of the participants highlighted how essential dance can be in the classroom. They discussed how dance can be effectively integrated into other subject areas and can even help students access those other curriculums more successfully. They also demonstrated how dance is an amazing tool for communication that goes beyond writing or speaking. Finally, they advocated for dance as a way to educate the whole child. Through their discussion on the role of dance in Ontario classrooms, it is clear that my participants believed that if teachers recognize how beneficial dance can be to their students, then they would be more motivated to use it.
The second theme, the challenges to implementing dance in the classroom, allowed for analysis of why some teachers may not be using dance to its full potential. All of the participants found that many teachers find it difficult to effectively incorporate the dance curriculum into their classroom due to their lack of experience and thus a fear or a feeling of an inability to teach dance. They further identified the fact that this lack of experience is due to a limited focus on dance education, especially in initial teacher training programs. Without this experience, some participants further highlighted that teachers may find it difficult to navigate the dance section of the curriculum. They found that although the curriculum is well written and encompasses the essential elements needed to bring the benefits of dance into the classroom, without prior knowledge or training, it might be difficult for teachers to fully utilize it.

The third theme pertained to the notion that after coming to terms with the challenges of bringing dance into the classroom, participants were able to explore effective elements to successful professional development in dance. They emphasized the importance of creating a safe environment where teachers can take risks. They also found that it was crucial that teachers experience the benefits of dance for themselves and more importantly for their students directly. When given the space to truly experience dance in a positive and productive way, the participants found that teachers became more motivated to bring more dance into their classes.

The final theme analyzed the relationship between dance and health and physical education. They concluded that although they believe that having dance in physical education is better than not having it at all, there is a problem in that some of the artistic, creative and analytic aspects of dance are being left out. Through the interviews however, it was clear that if done effectively, there could be a very positive relationship between dance and physical education.
5.2 Implications

Through the analyses conducted in this study, it is clear that there are very important broad and narrow implications presented that can have a great impact on the elementary educational community in Ontario.

5.2.1 Broad

The findings of this study serve to demonstrate the important role that dance plays in elementary education. Consistent with research done in the Canadian context by MacDonald (1991), the Ontario dance curriculum has been demonstrated to have the potential to help teachers educate the whole child in many aspects of their learning, and thus cannot be forgotten. This study acts as a reminder to school boards and initial teacher education programs that the dance curriculum can only truly be utilized if teachers are provided with the motivation and support needed to successfully deliver it. Through more access to effective professional development and training, teachers and student teachers can gain experience and confidence in dance. Aligning with the work of Hanna (2002), if teachers can experience training where they are also shown direct examples of the benefits of dance to their students, they will be more motivated to seek the development they need. Thus the broad implication for educational reform presented by this study is the need for a greater focus to be placed on dance by the entire educational community.

5.2.2 Narrow

The narrow implications for this study focus on specific implications for elementary educators who are responsible for delivering the dance curriculum. Consistent with the findings of Russell-Bowie (2013), for teachers who may have not had a background of dance, a lack of confidence should not dissuade them from bringing dance to their classes. This study
demonstrates that through experiencing dance first hand, teachers can begin to see the values of
dance and can build confidence in teaching it to their students. Thus teachers should be
reminded to seek out the support they may need. For health and physical education teachers
responsible for delivering the dance curriculum, it is just as important to gain the training and
experience of using dance as an art form. Aligning with the work done by Byeon (2012), this
study highlights that there are some key components to the dance curriculum that differ from the
health and physical education curriculum and thus physical education teachers need to ensure
that they are appropriately delivering those creative and analytical expectations as well.
Therefore this study highlights that teachers must experience dance, as outlined in the
curriculum, in order to be able to successfully teach it to their students.

This study also has direct implications for me as an educator with a dance background.
Understanding the great benefits of dance, I am very motivated to incorporate dance into my
practice, however having not had a lot of experience teaching the Ontario dance curriculum, I
understand the limitations to my knowledge of how to bring it into the classroom. Having
further had barely any training in my initial teacher education program centered on delivering the
dance curriculum, I know that I must continue to seek professional development in order to hone
my skills. I also believe that this study has reminded me of the important role I now have as an
advocate for the benefits of dance in the various school communities I interact with. I can be the
person who can motivate colleagues to learn more about how to effectively incorporate dance in
their teaching practice, and to potentially ease the hesitation towards, and fear of dance.
5.3 Recommendations

Understanding the implications of this study, recommendations for school boards and initial teacher education programs, school administrators, and elementary classroom teachers have been clearly revealed. These recommendations are outlined below:

5.3.1 School Boards and Initial Teacher Education Programs

This study demonstrates that school boards and initial teacher education programs in Ontario need to place a greater focus on the importance of dance and provide more professional development around the topic of delivering the dance curriculum. School boards should push for a greater incorporation of dance, and the arts in general, in all of their schools. They should provide more training opportunities for teachers and find or create more resources to help support teachers in using the dance curriculum. The initial teacher education programs of Ontario need to also place a greater emphasis on the importance of dance education in the elementary classroom by ensuring that their teacher candidates take courses that fully train them in the teaching of dance in their classrooms. There must be a greater push in the necessity to be able to teach dance at the elementary school level.

5.3.2 School Administrators

Understanding the importance of having dance in the classroom, individual elementary school administrators should be focusing on having staff members who can effectively teach the dance curriculum expectations. Principals should be providing teachers opportunities to gain more professional development in dance education whether through workshops or lunch and learns. Principals should also be pushing to have dance specialists or teachers who can act as the dance expert in their schools. Having a specialist or expert can allow for a rich integration of the dance curriculum as they can act as a support for the whole school community.
5.3.3 Teachers

Finally, individual elementary teachers need to shake away any fear or hesitation towards teaching dance. As this study demonstrates, once teachers get some experience of dance, they begin to see it as a less daunting task. Thus a recommendation for elementary teachers, especially those who are intimidated of dance, is to just give it a try. Teachers should seek out professional development for dance, seek out support, or even just seek out an effective lesson plan that they can easily teach to their students. Once they see the benefits dance can have in their classrooms and for their students, they can begin to seek more ways of bringing it into the classroom.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

This study focused on looking at the current research on the benefits of dance in elementary education as well as what is needed in order to effectively deliver it in the classroom in relation to the Ontario context. While beginning to understand what must be done in Ontario to improve the delivery of the dance curriculum, it is clear that further research must be conducted in understanding teachers’ perceptions towards professional development. This study focused on the perceptions of exemplary dance educators as well as those who created and taught professional development workshops in Ontario, thus it is necessary to study teachers’ perceptions of the effects of the incorporation of dance after having taken professional development. It would also be beneficial to understand teachers’ perceptions of the role dance can have in the classroom after having tried to incorporate it themselves.

Furthermore, elementary students’ perceptions of dance in school would be beneficial to understanding how dance can be more effectively integrated into the curriculum. Understanding
whether students who have experienced effective dance integration see a place for dance in their own education will allow us to see if dance really can help our students in their overall learning.

5.5 Concluding Comments

This study sought to understand why although the Ontario Ministry of Education (2009) has indicated that dance has an important place in elementary education, many teachers may be having difficulty effectively delivering dance to their students. Through this study, I have summarized the many benefits of dance to elementary school students and how teachers may be supported to incorporate dance in their classes. The question now remains, why should the educational community care?

As an educational community, we should care for those students who feel that they cannot express themselves through their words, for those students who cannot just sit still or just want to get their bodies moving. We should care for those students who are not having fun at school, for those students who need a way to show their creativity. We should care for those students who would never have the opportunity to experience using this medium to explore the world around them, for those students who will end up growing up saying and believing that they just can’t dance. As Martha Graham said, “Nobody cares if you can’t dance well. Just get up and dance.” At its core, dance is a way of using one’s whole, physical self to experience life. By creating an environment that perpetuates the idea that dance is something that we are or are not able to do, we lose the opportunity to experience the catharsis that dance can give us. We need to create a community that does not ask whether we can or cannot dance. Instead we need to create a community that allows us all to put any fear or hesitation aside, to get up, and to just dance.
REFERENCES


Robelen, E. W. (2010). Schools integrate dance into core academics: The infusion of the arts appears to be gaining a stronger foothold at a time when advocates are struggling to ensure time and support for their disciplines. *Education Week, 30*(12), 1, 14-15.


September 17, 2015

Dear __________________________.

My name is Miggy Esteban and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on studying why some teachers may have difficulty delivering the dance curriculum to their students and how they can be supported. I am interested in interviewing teachers certified by the Ontario College of Teachers, who have had experience working in the primary and junior grades and have demonstrated some expertise, or shown interest in gaining expertise in the area of dance education. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or
through publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. Any information that identifies your school or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only person who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor, Dr. Ken McNeilly. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jose Miguel (Miggy) Esteban
Phone number: 647-871-6882
Email: miggy.esteban@mail.utoronto.ca

Course Instructor’s Name: Dr. Ken McNeilly
Email: kenneth.mcneilly@utoronto.ca
Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Jose Miguel (Miggy) Esteban and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ____________________________________________

Name: (printed) ____________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________
APPENDICES

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Introduction Script

I would like to first of all thank you for volunteering to participate in this interview. As was mentioned in the consent letter, the aim of my research is to gain insight into why some teachers may have difficulty delivering the dance curriculum to their students and how they can be supported. This interview should take approximately one hour and I will be asking you a series of twelve questions focused on your background teaching dance and your beliefs and perspectives of dance in education. I want to remind you that you may decline to answer any of these questions and may withdraw from this interview at any time. Before we begin do you have any questions for me?

Introduction Questions

1. What do you teach?
2. Where do you teach? How long have you been teaching there for?
3. How long have you been teaching for? Where else have you taught?

Dance Background

1. What are your experiences in delivering the Ontario dance curriculum?
2. Have you participated in any dance training or professional development with a focus on teaching dance in the classroom? How have those experiences informed your practice?

Beliefs and Perspectives

1. Why do you believe dance is an important component of elementary education?
2. Do you believe dance is being effectively incorporated into Ontario’s elementary classrooms?
3. What skills do you possess that allow you to feel confident in teaching dance?
4. What other skills would you like to develop or continue to develop in order to improve your ability to teach dance?
5. Do you feel that you were able to access enough support that has allowed you to effectively implement the dance curriculum in your classrooms?
6. What forms of support do you wish had been or would be available to you in developing your abilities to teach dance?
7. How do you believe teachers can be motivated to fully deliver the dance curriculum to their students?