PROTECTION OF AUTHOR’S COPYRIGHT

This copy has been supplied by the Library of the University of Otago on the understanding that the following conditions will be observed:

1. To comply with s56 of the Copyright Act 1994 [NZ], this thesis copy must only be used for the purposes of research or private study.

2. The author's permission must be obtained before any material in the thesis is reproduced, unless such reproduction falls within the fair dealing guidelines of the Copyright Act 1994. Due acknowledgement must be made to the author in any citation.

3. No further copies may be made without the permission of the Librarian of the University of Otago.
DECLARATION CONCERNING THESIS

Author's full name (for cataloguing purposes): RALPH MCKAY BUCK

Title of thesis: Teachers and Dance in the Classroom: "So, do I need my tutu?"

Degree: PhD

Department: School of Education

I agree that this thesis may be consulted for research and study purposes and that reasonable quotation may be made from it, provided that proper acknowledgement of its use is made.

I consent to this thesis being copied in part or in whole for

i) a library

ii) an individual

at the discretion of the Librarian of the University of Otago.

Signature: [Signature]

Date: 24 Nov 93

Note: This is the standard Library Declaration Form used by the University of Otago for all theses. The conditions set out on the form may be altered only in the most exceptional circumstances. Any restriction on access to a thesis may be permitted only with the approval of:

(i) the appropriate Assistant Vice-Chancellor in the case of a Master's thesis;
(ii) the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and International), in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Vice-Chancellor, in the case of a PhD thesis

and after consultation with the Director of the University Consulting Group where appropriate.

The form is designed to protect the work of the candidate, by requiring proper acknowledgement of any quotations from it. At the same time the declaration preserves the University's philosophy that the purpose of research is to seek the truth and to extend the frontiers of knowledge and that the results of such research which have been written up in thesis form should be made available to others for scrutiny.

The normal protection of copyright law applies to theses.

September 1998
Teachers and Dance in the Classroom:

"So, do I need my tutu?"

Ralph Buck

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

At the University of Otago, Dunedin,

New Zealand.

21 July 2003
Abstract

Implicit in the inclusion of dance in the school curriculum are philosophical, educational and political arguments that this particular body of knowledge offers children a means for thinking, and a form for the expression and understanding of self, others and events. Research that seeks to understand teachers' perspectives of dance in New Zealand primary schools is made all the more pertinent by the mandated inclusion of dance within the arts curriculum as from 2003. Given this context, teachers' comments such as “I can’t teach dance, I can’t even dance myself”, “I don’t even know what dance education is” and “So, do I need my tutu?” reflect a discomfort common among primary school teachers around bringing dance into their classrooms.

The questions: ‘What are primary school teachers’ meanings of dance in their classroom?’ and ‘Do these meanings create barriers or opportunities for teaching dance?’ directed this research, which took the form of a constructivist study of nine primary school teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms. The data arose from co-structured interviews, classroom observations and reflections upon a shared dance activity.

An emergent analysis of data found that teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms were predominantly informed by performative assumptions of dance. The teachers’ educative roles emerged as they included and negotiated their own, the children’s and curricular expectations of dance in the classroom. A key finding of the study is that when meanings of dance emerge from the classroom rather than by being imposed or directed by external expectations and assumptions, many of the supposed barriers to teaching dance fall away.
Acknowledgements

The journey of this thesis has been made possible through the help and belief of many people. Firstly, thanks go to the nine teachers in this study, Lola, Ethel, Gessie, Kate, Joe, Paul, Mick, Helene and Bella. Their generosity and teaching energised this research and provided the riches of the voyage. Professor Keith Ballard and Associate Professor Terry Crooks of the School of Education, University of Otago, provided direction and an even keel, making it possible for the energy and generosity provided by the teachers to be recognised, valued and harrased. The steady course of this research journey has been made smoother because of Keith and Terry’s experience and wisdom.

The journey would not have commenced without financial support from the School of Physical Education, University of Otago and encouragement from staff and colleagues, thankyou. On board were many ‘mates’ who gave advice, critiqued, listened, argued, and cheered. Winifred, Alys, Sylvie, Ali, Warwick, Davina and Hamish, each lent a hand or two and for their time, thoughts and encouragement I am particularly grateful.

Along the journey I berthed at many shores where sustenance was provided with abundance and great care. Mum and Dad, Mark and Nora, Eva and Bill, thankyou for such kindness and support given to my family and me.

My children, Rafael and Sholto have been the stars in the sky from which I navigated. That they continued to shine and sparkle patiently whether or not I was looking revealed their true selves. Finally and most importantly, this journey could only have happened because of the love given by Terry, my wife and best friend. Terry, your absolute unconditional love, artistry of living, and belief, provided enduring warmth that has sustained me throughout this journey. I cannot thank you enough, though will endeavour to do so as we set course for other ‘adventures’.
# Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................................. I  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................................. II  
LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................................... VII  
LIST OF FIGURES ................................................................................................................................ VIII  
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 1  
1.1 THE RESEARCHER AND THE ISSUES .................................................................................... 1  
1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION ................................................................................................ 5  
1.3 DANCE IN THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM ................................................................... 6  
1.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY ....................................................................................... 9  
1.5 DANCE AS A WAY OF KNOWING: ASSUMPTIONS AND MEANINGS ............................... 9  
CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE .................................................................................. 13  
2.1 INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................. 13  
2.2 WHAT IS DANCE? ......................................................................................................................... 13  
2.3 DANCE AND ARTS EDUCATION THEORIES AND MODELS ............................................... 17  
   2.3.1 Modern Educational Dance ............................................................................................... 19  
   2.3.2 The Study of Dance: Choreography, Performance and Appreciation ......................... 21  
   2.3.3 The Midway Model ............................................................................................................. 23  
   2.3.4 Discipline Based Arts Education (DBAE) ......................................................................... 25  
   2.3.5 Theory of Multiple Intelligences ....................................................................................... 27  
   2.3.6 Somatic Education ............................................................................................................ 31  
2.4 DANCE IN THE NEW ZEALAND AND INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM CONTEXT .......... 33  
   2.4.1 Curriculum ......................................................................................................................... 33  
   2.4.2 The Dance Strand of The Arts: In the New Zealand Curriculum .................................... 34  
   2.4.3 Dance in Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum ................... 36  
2.5 DANCE IN INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM ........................................................................ 39  
2.6 DANCE CURRICULUM RATIONALE ....................................................................................... 40
2.7 PEDAGOGY .......................................................................................................... 44
2.8 CONSTRUCTIVIST PEDAGOGY ............................................................................. 47
2.9 TEACHING DANCE IN THE CLASSROOM ............................................................... 50
2.10 CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVE OF DANCE ............................................................... 58

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY ............................................................................. 62

3.1 INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................... 62
3.2 PHENOMENOLOGY AND CONSTRUCTIVISM ......................................................... 62
3.3 A CONSTRUCTIVIST ONTOLOGY ......................................................................... 64
3.4 A CONSTRUCTIVIST EPistemology ..................................................................... 66
3.5 RESEARCH METHODS .......................................................................................... 71
  3.5.1 Narrative Inquiry ........................................................................................ 72
  3.5.2 Educational Connoisseurship ....................................................................... 73
3.6 DATA COLLECTING METHODS .......................................................................... 76
  3.6.1 A Case Study Design ................................................................................... 76
  3.6.2 Co-Structured Interviews .......................................................................... 78
  3.6.3 A Shared Dance ......................................................................................... 83
  3.6.4 Participant Observation .............................................................................. 87
  3.6.5 Recording the Data ..................................................................................... 91
3.7 DATA ANALYSIS ................................................................................................. 91
  3.7.1 The Constant Comparative Analysis ........................................................... 94
  3.7.2 Collecting and Transcribing the Data ........................................................ 95
  3.7.3 Initial ‘gut’ Observations ........................................................................... 95
  3.7.4 Coding the Data ........................................................................................ 96
  3.7.5 Chunking the Data ..................................................................................... 97
  3.7.6 Noting Initial Discoveries ........................................................................... 98
  3.7.7 Refining Discoveries .................................................................................. 98
  3.7.8 Refinement of Categories ......................................................................... 99
  3.7.9 Exploration of Relationships and Patterns across Categories ................. 100
  3.7.10 Reviewing ................................................................................................ 100
  3.7.11 Writing the Analysis ................................................................................. 101
3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND VALIDITY .................................................................... 102
  3.8.1 Transparency of Method ............................................................................ 104
    3.8.1.1 Case Study Protocol ........................................................................... 104
3.8.2 Member Checking....................................................................................107
3.8.3 Triangulation..........................................................................................109
3.8.4 Peer Debriefing......................................................................................109
3.9 METHODOLOGY SUMMARY.....................................................................110

CHAPTER FOUR TEACHERS' NARRATIVES.............................................111
4.1 NINE TEACHERS’ STORIES.......................................................................111
4.2 THE TEACHERS..........................................................................................114
4.3 LOLA ..........................................................................................................116
4.4 ETHEL .........................................................................................................131
4.5 GESSIE ......................................................................................................144
4.6 KATE .........................................................................................................159
4.7 JOE ............................................................................................................170
4.8 PAUL ..........................................................................................................178
4.9 MICK .........................................................................................................187
4.10 PAUL AND MICK ....................................................................................196
4.11 HELENE ..................................................................................................205
4.12 BELLA ....................................................................................................224

CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION.................................................................242
5.1 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS .............................................................242
5.2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHERS, CHILDREN, DANCE AND CURRICULUM 242
5.3 TEACHERS AND CHILDREN.................................................................246
5.4 TEACHERS AND DANCE.................................................................255
5.5 TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM.........................................................262
5.6 CHILDREN AND DANCE.................................................................277
5.7 DANCE AND CURRICULUM...............................................................288
5.8 CHILDREN AND CURRICULUM.........................................................297
5.9 REFLECTION UPON METHODOLOGY ................................................310
5.9.1 Professional Development: Talking, Observing and Dancing........311
5.9.1.1 Talking..........................................................................................312
5.9.1.2 Observing......................................................................................314
5.9.1.3 Dancing.........................................................................................315
5.9.2 Constructivist Reflections on the Method Implementation........318
CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

6.1 KEY FINDINGS

6.2 IMPLICATIONS

6.2.1 Teacher Support

6.2.2 Pre-service Education

6.2.3 Curriculum Development

6.2.4 Teachers' Critical Reflection of Classroom Relationships

6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.4 EPILOGUE

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B
List of Tables

Table 1 The Midway Model ................................................................. 24
Table 2. Discipline Concepts for DBAE ........................................... 25
Table 3. Meaning Categories: Teachers, Children, Dance and Curriculum .......... 112
List of Figures

Figure 1. Inter-relationship between teacher, children and dance curriculum ............. 46
Figure 2. Constant Comparative Analytical Pathway ............................................ 93
Figure 3. Initial Observations of Related Categories ............................................ 95
Figure 4. Classroom Relationships ....................................................................... 245
Figure 5. Classroom Relationships: A Reflective Framework .............................. 331
Chapter One

Introduction

“So, do I need my tutu?” (Joe).

1.1 The Researcher and the Issues

I am a teacher. I have taught primary and secondary school children, children and adults with intellectual and physical disabilities, the elderly, teachers and tertiary students. I have taught in schools throughout Australia and New Zealand in the capacity of classroom teacher, visiting guest artist, teacher in-service provider, dance specialist, and recreation centre coach and coordinator. I have developed a passion for dance in the education context.

I am a dancer. I consciously began dancing at a school ‘social/ disco’ at the Bowraville Church of England hall, Australia. I call myself a dancer because I dance. Throughout my childhood, throughout my physical education teacher training, as I travelled the world, and as a teacher, I danced. It felt good. I did not receive any formal dance preparation as a youngster. However, when I was 26 years old and jaded from competitive sport I did a beginner adult ballet class. I loved it. I had to be physical, I had to think, and the dance had to look good. With the guidance of an excellent teacher I did more dance classes and eventually decided to study dance for a Master of Arts in the UK. A formative experience whilst in England was working with Wolfgang Stange and the Amici Dance Group. Wolfgang was a community dance teacher, choreographer and dance advocate who worked in the main with adults with varying abilities. Wolfgang’s emphasis upon inclusion and participation resonated with my views of education and my experience of dance, that is, we all can dance and learn about ourselves and others through dance. This view has become an automatic assumption as I enter classrooms to teach dance.
At the age of 30, I asked the artistic director of an Australian dance company if I could join her contemporary dance company in order to appreciate the artist’s perspective as I wrote the Queensland dance curriculum for teachers. I attended daily class and after approximately 5 months I performed with the company. My curiosity to perform with a professional company was ‘an itch I had to scratch’. The whole company experience was enjoyable and I am grateful for the director’s understanding. The experience crystallised for me what I loved about teaching. The teacher, and particularly the primary school teacher, performs and choreographs all day; creating, and organising ideas in ever shifting choreographies of relationships; directing and building others’ abilities for expression, creation of knowledge and articulation of ideas. I left the experience with the dance company realising it’s the thrill and slog of teaching that most vividly captures my imagination, stimulates my creativity and fulfils my desire to help people learn about themselves and others.

In Australia, and predominantly in the state of Queensland, my passion for dance education led me into leadership positions within professional networks and teaching. I was employed to write dance education curriculum, develop dance education teacher resource kits and provide dance in-service for classroom teachers, teachers who were both keen and hesitant to teach dance. Over a ten-year period, teaching mostly primary school teachers in their own school contexts, teaching at conferences, speaking with regional teacher advisers, principals, teachers, students and parents, I made recurring observations of the teachers and myself. I felt some sense of achievement in working with teachers at ‘that’ in-service, in ‘that’ classroom, on ‘that’ day, and yet I could only guess at what each teacher genuinely believed or practised in respect to dance, nor did I have access to teachers’ classrooms after such sessions.

Increasingly I reflected upon these sessions in relation to the teacher’s classroom practice, asking: “Did I address concerns specific to them and their classroom context? Were we sharing similar conceptions of and visions for dance in the classroom?” The answers remained unclear. Over the years in Queensland I designed teacher support activities in response to these and other questions and enjoyed some success in devising and implementing the dance curriculum. However, the repeated
observation that teachers were hesitant or even fearful about dance fuelled my feeling of dissatisfaction and led to the present research.

Many teachers commenced their in-service sessions clinging to their chairs or the wall, laughing about their personal inability to dance, silently grimacing, and/or outright refusing to physically participate (usually disguised with an excuse). Some teachers happily joined in, encouraging peers and enthusing about dance. These teachers were in the minority, and yet at the end of such sessions and days, every teacher would have participated, with the vast majority happy about their experience, commenting that dance offered something for the children in their classroom.

As I returned to my office I would reflect: "What do teachers think dance is, why are they so anxious, what causes that pained look on their faces?" Then in turn: "What did we do that reduced their anxiety for that session, and would they hold on to that feeling long enough to instigate something in their classroom?" Most of all I wanted to know what the teachers thought of dance in their classroom, and what they taught, for ultimately the purpose of such support is always to enhance children’s education.

These questions, founded in my experience in Australia, travelled with me as I took up a lecturing position at the University of Otago, New Zealand. I quickly became involved in commenting on and advising the development of the draft dance curriculum as part of the document The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999). I began to present workshops for primary school teachers, speak at conferences and talk to teachers and curriculum advisers. My questions concerning primary school teachers in Australia re-surfaced, as I detected that primary school teachers in New Zealand were also hesitant to teach dance in their classrooms. As I settled into several New Zealand dance networks I found that other advocates (Hong, 2001) perceived the same reticence.

At the inaugural New Zealand Teacher Refresher Course for Dance Education, Catherine Gibbs, Arts Curriculum Facilitator, Ministry of Education, stated in her address "there is a lack of teacher confidence, [dance] skills and dance resources" (2000, p. 1). Jan Bolwell, one of New Zealand's leading dance educators involved in providing professional development, noted that there was an "air of apprehension
amongst teachers in primary schools in regard to implementing the dance curriculum" (J. Bolwell, Personal Communication, 6 September, 2000). Melody Craw, Arts adviser, Gisborne School Support Services, also outlined similar concerns in respect to her daily school visits and contacts (M. Craw, Personal Communication, 5 October 2000). Tina Hong (2001) writer of the dance component of the arts curriculum summed up the challenge:

Arguably the most pivotal [challenge] in terms of implementation, must be to develop the confidence and competence of generalist teachers...Understanding as to what dance will entail is already beset with popular misconceptions...it is obvious that there is much to be done to both de-mystify dance and educate the school and general population as to the scope and value of dance (p.5).

These perceptions of ill ease and apprehension, echoed in local, national and international conversations and observations, drove me to re-look at dance education in the primary school. The teacher, being responsible for translating the curriculum and for guiding children’s learning, is the critical player in what occurs in the classroom, the locus for education. It seemed apparent that an understanding of teachers’ lived experience (Connelly, Clandinin and He, 1997) was a fundamental requirement to effect the establishment of dance as part of the curriculum in any meaningful way.

Connelly et al. (1997) supported the need to start directly with the teachers' practice in order to capture the experiential view, "Our research shows that to more closely relate ideas about teaching and learning, with the practice of teaching and learning, we need to be concerned with what it is that teachers know and with the knowledge environment in which they work" (p.674). In support of this view and with respect to the teachers’ situated knowing (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000; Russell and Bullock, 1999; Schön, 1983), I set out to explore teachers' meanings of dance in the classroom, in their everyday workplace context, working directly with teachers as research participants (Heshusius, 1994).
1.2 The Research Question

This research was directed by two questions: ‘What are primary school teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms?’ and ‘Do these meanings create barriers and opportunities for teaching dance?’ I concur with The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000) that primary school teachers are central to education in, through and about dance. Attitudes, knowledge and experiences are consciously and unconsciously modelled and fostered by teachers in the classroom. If we can better understand the teachers’ perspectives of dance in their classrooms, to see what teachers know and how their knowledge is realised in their teaching, then current and future dance curriculum, dance resources, dance in-service and dance policy may have a better chance of being genuinely useful for teachers and, consequently, the children. As Connelly et al. (1997) affirmed, "the main way to improve education through research is to study the construction and expression of teacher knowledge" (p. 666).

The emphasis in this study was upon gathering detailed information on teachers’ meanings of dance while honouring their practice and the complexity of the classroom. In this way it was intended that understanding and subsequent issues would emerge out of authentic classroom interactions and also provide trustworthy research findings.

Research that examines teachers’ meanings of dance is sparse, and in particular, the primary school teacher’s voice is largely missing from the dance literature. A further feature of the present study was the focus upon practising primary school teachers in New Zealand with the focus upon dance in their classrooms. As Hong, Foley and Thwaites (1998) wrote in reviewing the literature for the Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, “New Zealand research which documents attempts to examine current or recent practice with regard to Arts education in schools is scarce” (p. 4).

It is important to emphasise that this study was not about identifying and assessing teaching abilities. Nor was it about noting teachers’ pedagogical skills and attitudes with the intent to change them. Nor was its intent to critique the curriculum. This
study was about having extended conversations with nine teachers, with the view to better understanding their practice and their knowledge in regard to teaching dance to primary school children.

1.3 Dance in The New Zealand Curriculum

Dance is not new in New Zealand primary schools. It has a history of marginalised inclusion in the physical education programme (Bolwell, 1995; Hong, 2001), and has been predominantly taught by non-specialist classroom teachers. Over the duration of this research (1999-2003) a building ground swell of interest and concern has emerged as dance has become redefined within a new national arts curriculum and moved away from the aegis of physical education. In 2003, dance education was given the mandate to be taught in its own right within all New Zealand schools via the document entitled The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000). The new curriculum is, I believe, predominantly influenced by the Discipline Based Arts Education framework, which presents a unity of educational and theoretical concerns within the curriculum strands of dance, drama, music and visual arts. “Literacies in the arts” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 10) has been adopted as the unifying term that encompasses the four arts areas and the four discipline content strands common across the arts. Such disciplinary unity remains theoretically contested (Best, 1996; Broughton, 1994), but is counter argued for by the benefits gained from collective political strength and unifying concerns for aesthetic education (Abbs, 1987; Bolwell, 1995; Brinson 1991).

For the first time in New Zealand the arts are unified through their commonalities and argued for as one of the seven essential learning areas for all children. This document represents a landmark in New Zealand's dance education history, being the first of its kind to enter schools with the mandate that, "In years 1-8, students must study, and have opportunities to meet achievement objectives in, all four disciplines" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 90.). However, just how much work in any one discipline of dance, drama, music and visual art is at the discretion of each school (Ministry of Education, 2000). The curriculum has outlined a vision for the scope of implementing
dance and, in light of other curriculum demands could be said to be idealistic. How much is taught, how and when it is taught, is dependent upon the teacher’s personal vision of education and the place of dance in that vision.

For teachers with an interest in dance, the curriculum ‘vision’ may be achievable, but others may relate to the teacher who responded, "Oh, but I don't even know what you mean by dance education. There is no way that I can teach dance to my students." Another comment I found very interesting, this time from a keen and experienced teacher of dance in her classroom was, "Time - I can't find extra time to teach it, and my conditioning that maths and language MUST be done before all else, still gets me."

What happens to dance within schools in the next few years will, I believe, have an immense impact on the future of dance in New Zealand. Teachers currently teaching are the people who will realise what the reality is for the implementation of dance in the school system. They will realise what the barriers and the opportunities are for getting started and keeping a dance programme going. Staff rooms have been humming with anxious and excited conversations about teaching dance. I have heard questions and comments such as, "What is dance? I can't dance, so there is no way that I can teach it", "I have to mark the spelling test...you teach it", "I don't have any space, any music, any steps, any ideas, any support, any time, any resources, any anything", and "So, do I need my tutu?"

Such comments are echoed in Stoddart’s (1994) investigation of curriculum delivery of the arts in primary and secondary schools in the Taranaki region of New Zealand, where he found that dance was the least taught and least funded. Stoddart commented that a lack of subject area expertise in the arts was a critical issue in the delivery of arts education. As long as teachers give little attention to dance in the curriculum, they fail to explore its educational potential and, consequently, the learning potential of children.
The Educational Review Office (ERO), an independent state agency commissioned to evaluate and report on the performance of all schools in New Zealand, reported in 1995:

Good arts education in a primary school is a regular component of a balanced classroom programme. It requires competent, confident teachers and uses displays and performance to celebrate achievement. Good programmes are thoroughly planned, set specific objectives and promote high achievement for all children (p.27).

Statements within the ERO report such as ‘competent, confident teachers’ and ‘programmes are thoroughly planned’ present an expectation and vision for teachers that as the teachers’ comments above suggest, may well be dissonant with the current reality. This is the context into which dance is being introduced. In the short term, the teachers want recipes and answers that will get them through the next lesson and through the next ERO reviewing exercise. In teaching, I don't think we can presume to have standard answers for the complexity of issues that arise in every classroom. This research did, however, capture the reality for nine teachers and examined the themes, commonalities and differences in their experiences of teaching dance in their classrooms.

Accompanying The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) is a sister document Nga Toi I Roto I te Marautanga o Aotearoa (The Maori Arts Curriculum), (Ministry of Education, 2000a). This document, written in Te Reo Maori (the Maori language), recognises the artistic traditions of Maori and was developed “to provide support and guidance for teachers in Maori immersion schooling environments” (Hindle, 2002). This document was unique amongst the seven curriculum areas, as it was the only curriculum written in this way. I mention the Nga Toi document as it highlights social and political commitment to bicultural policy and understanding in New Zealand, and also the defining importance of the arts within Maori culture. While I mention Nga Toi curriculum here, I do not make further reference to it in this study as I am not familiar with the depth of Maori artistic and education traditions, I do not read or speak Maori, and none of the teachers involved in this study taught in Maori immersion schools- Kura Kaupapa Maori. While no teachers in this study taught from this document, several of the teachers could speak Maori, included the use of Maori
language in their daily teaching and were alert to the value and importance of including Maori perspectives.

1.4 Contribution of this study

While this study was contextualised in New Zealand at a time when a new arts curriculum was being trialled and implemented, I believe the key tenets of this thesis may be applicable in other similar education systems introducing dance within the primary school curriculum. What do teachers understand of dance in their classroom? How do their meanings evolve? What do they value or not value about dance in education contexts? Can dance be taught more effectively if teachers' perceptions of dance are more integral to curriculum documents? These questions are fundamental to this study and I suggest have international relevance.

The teachers' reflections on their personal experience of dance, personal philosophies about education, roles as teachers of dance education, and concerns about and aspirations for dance, provide access to an inside view of dance in the primary school classroom. These 'views' and their subsequent analysis may provide some understanding of the teachers' meanings of dance and illuminate the ways in which meanings manifest in the design and implementation of a dance programme in the primary school. It is hoped that the findings of this research may have relevance to future curriculum and syllabus design, assist in making teacher in-service programmes more appropriate, guide resource development, and inform advocacy documents.

1.5 Dance as a Way of Knowing: Assumptions and Meanings

As a dance curriculum writer, dance teacher and advocate, it is a truism that I believe in the value and role of dance in children's education. Implicit in the inclusion of dance in the curriculum are philosophical, educational and political arguments that dance offers children a way of coming to know, a means for thinking, and a form for

The ontological stance of this research is that there is no single way of knowing and, furthermore, that knowledge is always mediated (Eisner, 1993, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). Eisner’s position that “the roads to knowing are many” (Eisner, 1985, p.24) is intrinsic to this study. This epistemology corresponds with my belief in dance as a means for exploring and creating ways of being (Bond and Stinson, 2001; Hanstein, 1999; Shapiro, 1998; Stinson, 1991, 1995; Warburton, 2003). I question the hegemonic realist knowledge traditions in education that distance and objectify children’s relationships with knowledge and the activity of thinking (Gardner, 1983; McLaren, 1998). My constructivist orientation towards education, dance and research places emphasis on an active construction of knowledge, meaning that the participants in the process have views, ideas, biases, traditions and bodies that are integral to the dialogue. Such dialogue does not occur in isolation but within social, cultural, historical contexts, where shared understandings, practices, languages and dances provide conceptual frameworks through which the world may be described and interpreted (Eisner, 1998; Schwandt, 2000).

In claiming that dance is a valid way of knowing, I have drawn upon constructivist theories of knowledge and, in particular, Eisner’s (1998) seven premises listed below:

1. There are multiple ways in which the world can be known: artists, writers, and dancers, as well as scientists, have important things to tell about the world.
2. Human knowledge is a constructed form of experience and therefore a reflection of mind as well as nature: knowledge is made, not simply discovered.
3. The forms through which humans represent their conception of the world have a major influence on what they are able to say about it.
4. The effective use of any form through which the world is known and represented requires the use of intelligence.
5. The selection of a form through which the world is to be represented not only influences what we can say, it also influences what we are likely to experience.
6. Educational inquiry will be more complete and informative as we increase the range of ways we describe, interpret, and evaluate the educational world.

10
7. Which particular forms of representation become acceptable in the educational research community is as much a political matter as an epistemological one. New forms of representation, when acceptable, will require new competencies (Eisner, 1998, pp. 7-8).

Following from Eisner's final point above, inclusion of dance in education is more than educational; it is political (Aspin, 1995; Brinson, 1993). For too long, dance has been undervalued, under-utilised and under-funded within artistic, community, health, cultural and education contexts (Brinson, 1991, 1993). That we can learn, interpret, critique, imagine and celebrate through dance is, for this researcher, a given. In the education context dance is often misunderstood and discriminated against in respect to resources, time allocation and teacher support. Having said that, I recognise the placement of dance within the aesthetic dimension of curriculum through the document The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) as being a major policy and philosophical step in the right direction. Through advocacy for this document and its implementation, teachers in primary schools have been charged with a crucial responsibility for educating for a dance literate society (Ministry of Education, 2000). Dance professionals, choreographers, theatre managers, costuming departments, community artists, private dance studio teachers, dance therapists, university dance research programmes, dance writers, cultural groups and most of all, the general public, may potentially benefit or suffer in response.

What occurs in the classrooms is important if we are to believe in the power of education (Willis and Schubert, 1991), and by inference, what primary school teachers do in respect to dance in the classroom has the potential to impact upon the role and nature of dance in society. This epistemology which informed and directed the approach of this research is further outlined in the following chapters. Chapter two commences by discussing 'what is dance?' and what is meant by the term 'dance in the classroom' in this research. The chapter also outlines dance in education theories and curriculum frameworks that place the teachers and their curriculum in a context. A discussion of pedagogy and approaches to teaching dance leads into the literature on dance in the primary school.
Chapter three outlines a methodology of enquiry that I believe gave me the maximum opportunity to pay attention to and hear the teachers' voices. The constructivist philosophy, and methods of narrative inquiry and educational connoisseurship valued by the study are defined. Data collection methods of co-structured interviews, participant observation, and the making of a shared dance are outlined, followed by a description of constant comparative data analysis and the results of this analysis. This analysis directs readers' attention as they are introduced to the teachers and their narratives in chapter four. Teachers' voices, as recorded for this study, provide the focus of this research, and this chapter honours each teacher's narrative as we talked, observed and danced.

Chapter five presents a discussion of the teachers' narratives and the data from the constant comparative cross case analysis. This constructivist discussion theorises the emergent meanings of dance in the classroom through six relationships, drawing attention to issues that may create barriers and possibilities for teaching dance in the classroom. I offer my conclusions in chapter six noting some implications of this study and suggestions for further research. An epilogue gives a teacher the final word.
Chapter Two
Review of Literature

“We can all know what dancing is, and we all do know it” (Sparshott, 1999).

2.1 Introduction

The review of literature commences with a broad look at the ongoing debate, what is dance? It then moves on to review dance in education contexts and outlines what I believe to be the key dance and arts education theories that inform the teaching of dance in New Zealand primary schools. An overview of the New Zealand dance curriculum and dance curriculum rationales from around the world provides a current context for the teachers in this study. The review then turns to the teachers and their role in teaching dance in the classroom. Dance pedagogy research is outlined and the review then focuses upon dance pedagogy research within the primary school context.

2.2 What is Dance?

In Chapter One I boldly claimed that we all dance. I also indicated that there are many primary school teachers in New Zealand who are convinced that they can’t dance, leading to the conjecture that they cannot teach dance. These contrary assertions draw attention to a fundamental and oft debated question, what is dance?

Historians, anthropologists, philosophers, dancers, educators, psychologists, and children have asked ‘what is dance?’ and the question remains a source of much writing and debate. Copeland and Cohen (1983) acknowledged the key dilemma in defining dance when they asked, “Can we formulate a definition comprehensive enough to cover the wide variety of activities routinely referred to as dance?” (p. 1). The establishment of “mutual understanding” (Sparshott, 1999, p. 67) was proposed
by way of resolution, where shared, common yet flexible understandings of dance making procedures, customs, histories and institutions might be agreed upon. However, Sparshott was aware of the improbability of establishing a global notion of what dance is. He referred to Wittgenstein’s (1953) metaphor of ‘family resemblance’, where there is no one defining resembling feature as a more likely solution.

Dance historian Lincoln Kirstein (1935) wrote of the etymology of dance from Sanskrit (3000 B.C.) through to current usage, and noted its shifting meaning. Anthropological viewpoints acknowledge ‘pre-language’ dance of aboriginal (world wide) cultures, where dance is associated with “highly complex social structures, religious practices and art forms” (Kraus, Chapman Hilsendager and Dixon, 1991, p. 13; Warburton, 2003). Judith Lynne Hanna, American dance anthropology and education scholar, spoke of the communicative role of dance, and argued that individuals create particular, purposeful and culturally patterned movement that aims to tell and share (Hanna, 1979). Reliance upon “para-language” (Hanna, 1979, p. 26) symbols of movement requires shared meanings of dance semantics, that is, the use of dance as a signifier relies on another being able to read what it denotes.

Philosophers have debated dance as a language and symbol system (Goodman, 1968; Langer, 1953; Wittgenstein, 1953) and have pointed to the vital criteria of the existence of the establishment of shared meanings in order for a symbol system to operate. Philosophers in aesthetics, and more pertinently aesthetic education, have debated the role of sensuous perception in education (Eisner, 1998a). While aesthetic education is not limited to the arts curriculum and disciplines (Best, 1985; Smith, 1999), giving “form to sensuous and imaginative impressions and feelings-to perceptual experience” (Abbs, 1987, p. 26) is a unifying process amongst the arts. The arts attend to the histories and qualities of humanity, including qualities of knowing, that can neither be proved nor disproved (Abbs, 1987), but which are nevertheless powerful in evoking response and shared insights.

Concepts of formalism and expressionism (Hirst, 1995) have stirred the aesthetic and artistic debates, inclusive of dance, since the late eighteenth century (Copeland and Cohen, 1983). The expressive nature of dance was the motivating force behind many
modern dance artists’ work and theories. As Selma Jean Cohen (1983) described in relation to Martha Graham, the pioneering American choreographer (1894-1991), "For Graham, dance should be a revelation of experience, regardless of how unpleasant the result may be" (p.19). Expressionistic dance recognised the relationship between the dancer’s (individual) movement and the dancer’s personal experience and whole self. The influential New York critic, John Martin (1933) argued, “it is impossible for everyone to be taught to do the same type of movement. The ideal dance education, therefore, is that which trains the student to find his own type of movement” (p.15). Rudolf Laban (1879-1958), perhaps the most influential dance theorist within the dance in education context (Foster, 1977), was also an expressionist. Like Martin, he too valued the individual’s dance, and provided an analytical system that outlined the dance’s “living architecture” (Laban cited in Foster, 1977, p. 65). He also took a psychological perspective, recognising that the whole person danced, not just their body. John Martin emphasised the communicative role of dance, “it [dance] is not interested in spectacle, but in the communication of emotional experiences - intuitive perceptions, elusive truths - which cannot be communicated in reasoned terms or reduced to mere statement of fact” (Martin, 1946, p. 105).

Aesthetic theorists such as Kant (1966) brought the perspective of the viewer to dance, arguing that what is presented need not have any emotive beginnings and even so, may not communicate them in accordance with the spectator’s interpretation (Alter, 1996). The American philosopher Suzanne Langer (1953) distinguished the expressive potential of dance gestures or symbols from what the dancer actually felt. Langer separated the dancing body from the image created by the body and clarified that symbols created the illusion of feeling, not the dancer’s actual feeling. According to Langer, the choreographer transforms physical realities into an impression of “interacting forces...[that] move the dance itself” (Langer, 1953). Here ‘seeing’ or ‘reading’ the form as art relies on Kant’s theories of aesthetic attitude, wherein the viewer reconstructs the danced symbols as artistic images. It is the viewer or the individual reader that ascribes expressive meaning to the danced symbols. However, it is pertinent to remember Wittgenstein’s (1953) reasoning that communication arises from the community’s consistent and functional use of symbols that provide for shared meanings. More recently David Best’s (1982, 1999) philosophical propositions
suggested that the meaning of dance is revealed by the actual action in a particular context, not in some notion of ‘separate intent’. As Best stated, “It is rather that the thinking and rationality are implicit in, inseparable from, and spring from, the activity” (Best, 1999, p.116).

Returning the focus of dance theory to the dance form itself, Andre Levinson (1887-1933), the exiled Russian critic turned journalist in Paris, saw the dance for its academic purity (Koegler, 1982), inherent quality - beauty, rather than its representational, intentional or expressive concerns (Carroll and Banes, 1999). Formalists in dance honour the dance’s techniques, structures and patterning that give order and allow for the expression to occur, or as Susanne Langer (1953) argued, the craft of the choreographer is to create illusions of feeling through the structuring of the form. Placing dance’s value in its aesthetic, non-utilitarian nature, while appealing at a personal level, does not account for the diversity of dance that has specific ritual and social functions (Adshead, 1981; Hanna, 1999).

In my teaching I value ‘the dance’ that each individual brings to the classroom. I am determined in my pedagogy to include all bodies, cultures, abilities, and ideas, providing precise classroom and lesson structures that allow for learning in, through and about dance. I declare my empathy for the educational progressive movement and the expressionist philosophers that valued self-expression, individual growth (Abbs, 1987) and child-centred education (Dewey, 1938). I also recognise the limitations of these perspectives, which potentially disinherit children from their own and others’ culture, community, practice and history (Abbs, 1987; Burrows, 2002; Copeland and Cohen, 1983), and which may negate others’ roles, such as teachers’, in the learning/teaching process (Abbs, 1987). Reflecting on dance, and education in general, I acknowledge the role of the individual in relationship with their social context, as they make personal meaning.

Dance exists in a myriad of forms, contexts, cultures and histories. It is undisputed that humans dance and that throughout history peoples all over the world have valued it (Adshead, 1981; Alter, 1996; Brinson, 1991; Copeland and Cohen, 1983; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998; Fraleigh, 1987; Hanna, 1999; Jonas, 1992; Kraus et al. 1991; Williams, 1989). Yet, when we move dance into an education arena characterised by
structures such as schools, curriculum and teachers, the question arises, “Is dance a distinct body of knowledge?” (Hanna, 1999, p.9). Leaving historical (moral) charges against the propriety of dance to one side (Kraus et al. 1991), can dance claim time and resources comparable to other areas of the curriculum, other areas of knowledge? More importantly, does dance claim uniqueness and value in its contribution to a child’s education? Like all domains of knowledge, dance, in claiming membership to the ‘key learning areas’, must articulate its theoretical foundations and also the uniqueness of its offerings. As Williams (1989) stated, “Dance in education must be seen as possessing a theoretical basis from which any manifestation of dance could be approached” (p.182).

2.3 Dance and Arts Education Theories and Models

When commencing this study I identified myself as a teacher with a passion and expertise in ‘dance education’ as distinguished from ‘dance’ per se. Initially I was undecided over the use of the terms dance or dance education, as to my mind each term implied a different intent and emphasis on content knowledge and pedagogy. In resolving the issue of terminology, I took the lead from the curriculum documents in New Zealand that used the term ‘dance’, and also the teachers and children in this study, who referred to dance in their classrooms. Therefore, I have generally used the term ‘dance in the classroom’ throughout this thesis.

It has been my inclination in the past to use the term ‘dance education’, as the term I believe best describes the dance thinking that occurs in the school classroom (Warburton, 2003). Yet, within the literature, the terms dance (Shapiro, 1998), dance education (Kraus et al. 1991), dance in education (Smith-Autard, 1994), dance as education (Brinson, 1991), and dance and education (Hanna, 1999) all interchangeably referred to diverse dance activities that occurred in education and training contexts. I have found these terms to be inclusive of dance in the school curriculum (primary and secondary), pre-professional dance training at college (university) level, private dance studio training, and community based dance programmes driven by community interests. Similarly, throughout volumes of the
Research in Dance Education journal (UK) and the Journal of Dance Education (USA), the terms are interchangeable, with ‘dance education’ providing the umbrella term for topics as diverse as female ballet dancers’ nutritional education, to pedagogical issues in primary school classrooms. For the informed reader, terminology vagaries may be understood, but in the interests of including the wider public further clarification of the nomenclature may be desirable.

Janet Adshead in her influential text The Study of Dance (1981) stated, “Since the arguments put forward in this book relate initially to any and all forms of dance no attempt is made to define. It is sufficient to say that whatever is labelled ‘dance’, and accepted as such by those who do it and watch it, is regarded as ‘dance’” (Adshead, 1981, p.4). Similarly, the function of this review of literature is not to define dance, but to give an account of the diversity of thought that shapes the theorising of dance. In all of this, I find myself returning to Sparshott (1999), who emphasised the necessity to recognise each individual’s experience of dance and its educational potential, “an important part of what we learn is how to allow for the different ways our fellow dancers, with their different backgrounds and behaviour patterns and histories of learning, do and understand the things we share in” (p.75). Sparshott went on, “We can all know what dancing is, and we all do know it. ...No two of us know quite the same thing, and it is always good to learn what somebody else knows” (p.82).

Of particular interest to this study is the inclusion of dance within education curricula and the meanings of dance that teachers bring to that context. If one accepts that the curriculum has a degree of influence over what and how dance is taught (Doyle, 1992; Willis and Schubert, 1991), it is useful to review how dance has been theorised as knowledge and argued for in the curriculum. This may also provide insights and background to the question: ‘What is dance for primary school teachers?’

The following section of the review of literature provides a brief account of what I believe to be dominant theories/models that have shaped dance in primary school classrooms. It then scans dance curricula around the world for an insight into how dance has been argued for and conceptualised on behalf of teachers. The theories and
models that I regard as being influential, as determined by their use, longevity and impact, are Rudolf Laban's Modern Educational Dance model, Janet Adshead's Study of Dance model, Jacqueline Smith Autard's Midway model, Getty Foundation's Discipline Based Arts Education model, Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, and Somatic Education.

2.3.1 Modern Educational Dance

Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) is arguably the most influential dance in education theorist (Alter, 1996; Hanstein, 1999; Haynes, 1987). Laban's theories were derived from his direct experience in dancing, teaching dance and observing dance throughout Europe and finally in England where his theories were translated into the educational context and generically referred to as Modern Educational Dance (Laban, 1948). His analysis of movement led to the development of a descriptive vocabulary and a notation system (Laban notation) that allowed for the observation and recording of all dance. Importantly, Laban acknowledged the implicit connections between movement, feeling and thinking, rejecting the ongoing dualistic view of mind/body. This holistic view, that took account of the internal psychological impulse to move, and the physiological manifestation of movement, informed his categorising of movement and also laid the foundation for ongoing theoretical development in dance therapy. Laban identified and, more importantly, articulated movement within the components of weight, time, space, and flow. It would be hard to overstate the profound effect these four words have had on the practice of dance in education contexts around the world. In alluding to this import, Alter (1996) noted, "Essentially the dynamic variations of (all) movement can be analysed, described, and controlled by understanding these components" (p. 146). Laban's extensive classification of movement led to the development of "effort/shape graphs...[and] sixteen basic movement themes" (Laban, 1948, p. 25-84) and a comprehensive notation system.

Foster (1977) summed up the influence of Laban:
Fundamentally, Laban made an analysis of human movement and its meaning and application to art, education, therapy, recreation, and industry. The aim of his work was to assist the harmonisation of the individual through the Art of Movement by giving him insights and a heightened perception of consciousness into his physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual relationship and inter-dependencies (p.41).

Laban’s work influenced the provision of dance within curriculum in England in the 1940s where educationists such as Lisa Ullmann, Valerie Preston-Dunlop, Joan Russell, and Marion North refined Laban’s principles and advocated for and implemented dance as a discrete learning area in the curriculum, albeit within the physical education curriculum. Nevertheless, Laban’s modern educational dance theory was later criticised for its inability to relate dance to the cognitive and intellectual realms of examinable knowledge when dance became a subject in secondary schools in England in the 1970s, and then within tertiary education (initially within B Ed physical education degrees) (Haynes, 1987). Laban’s work, rooted in practice and experience, did not comply with the emerging conception of knowledge between 1965-1980 in England (Adshead, 1981). As Haynes noted, “By the early seventies, a number of influential writers had begun to argue that dance education should shift its attention from the psychological/therapeutic orientation towards the more formal and aesthetic conception as an art form” (Haynes, 1987, p.154). Such writers in England at the time included Janet Adshead, David Best, Peter Brinson, Gordon Curl, Betty Redfern and Louis Arnaud Reid.

Laban’s modern educational dance travelled the world through physical education curricula and teacher training programmes (Brinson, 1991) including New Zealand (Brinson, 1981; Burrows, 1999; Hong, 2001; Smithells, 1974). Both Burrows (1999) and Stothart (1974) described the dominating influences of the English physical education curriculum and teacher training upon New Zealand schools up until the 1950-60s. These accounts noted the emergence of Laban’s theories that coincided with the progressive philosophies that advocated for shifts away from ‘drill’ to ‘creativity’ in physical education (Haynes, 1987). Further to the above, my own physical education teacher training in Australia was underpinned by Laban’s theories.
2.3.2 The Study of Dance: Choreography, Performance and Appreciation

Janet Adshead (1981), a teacher and social scientist in England, informed by the work of Laban and his critics, went on to develop a coherent account for the study of dance. In doing so Adshead provided the theoretical rigour required to sustain dance in educational curriculum at all levels of arts education. Adshead argued for dance as a discipline comparable to any other within the curriculum. Adshead (1981) most succinctly argued for dance in respect to Pring’s (1976) criteria, being that a discipline must have:

- Central organising concepts.
- Principles of procedure, which are appropriate to the activity itself.
- Criteria of success.
- Common problems and interests informing inquiry.

Adshead clearly made an argument for dance within these criteria but more importantly, made the argument within the public and academic forum and knowledge debate. Adshead took up Best’s (1978) and Reid’s (1974) philosophies regarding the correlation and distinction between arts and aesthetic education and strongly advocated that the study of dance concerns dance in ritual, social and artistic functional contexts, all of which have aesthetic concerns. Her arguments also acknowledged the eclectic and diverse nature of dance. In arguing for the value of an aesthetic orientation to the study of dance, Adshead noted that it is within the arts curriculum that dance will be most ably be understood and explored in educational and academic contexts (Haynes, 1987).

In laying this foundation for the study of dance, Adshead articulated the structures and concepts that have identified her work as being crucial to the growth of dance in education in the 1990s (Haynes, 1987; Meiners, 2001). Adshead’s main thesis within the text The Study of Dance (1981) is that if dance is to be included in the curriculum then structures and concepts underlying all and any dance must be found and be articulated as appropriate to the study of dance itself.
Adshead developed a conceptual framework around the notions of choreography (making dance), performance (showing dance) and appreciation (reading and analysing dance). These concepts became the centrepiece for her framework that provided the focus for studying all dance within historical, cultural and geographical contexts. In Adshead’s (1988) subsequent writings on dance analysis she further articulated choreography, performance and appreciation, drawing attention to the spatial and dynamic qualities (derivatives of Laban’s initial analysis). Adshead (1988) developed a model for the analysis of dance that in essence is structured around describing the components of the dance, establishing the form of the dance, interpreting the meaning of the dance, and then evaluating the merit of the dance.

Adshead’s framework has been influential around the world, including New Zealand and Australia (Meiners, 2001; Osmotherly 1991). In 1989, several students from Adshead’s Masters programme at the University of Surrey (UK) returned to Australia and New Zealand, establishing careers in education. For example, Kristen Bell lectured at Queensland University of Technology and led the development of the Queensland Board of Secondary School Studies Trial/Pilot Senior Syllabus in Dance (Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, Queensland, 1990); Sue Cheeseman took up a position at the University of Otago in 1993, lecturing in dance studies; I took up a position within the Queensland Department of Education with responsibility for writing the Years 1-10 Dance Curriculum (Department of Education, Queensland, 1992), and then undertook the development of the dance strand within the Statement on the arts for Australian schools (Curriculum Corporation, 1994). These documents are informed by Adshead’s framework and some of these documents and their writers have been consulted (though not directly in every case) in the development of the New Zealand dance curriculum (Hong, Foley and Thwaites, 1998).
2.3.3 The Midway Model

Also in England, Jacqueline Smith (1976) (later known as Smith-Autard) articulated principles and procedures for dance composition based upon the contemporary western theatre dance traditions of the day. Like Adshead, Smith responded to the need for greater academic rigour in the study of dance in educational institutions. Smith also built upon Laban’s themes, putting emphasis upon dance as an art form, where students come to know dance as art through actively composing, performing and appreciating dances. Smith’s focus upon dance as art drew upon choreographic practices and traditions, pioneered by the likes of Martha Graham, Eric Hawkins, and Merce Cunningham, utilised within the professional dance arena. These practices informing dance in education were derived from a “professional model” (Smith-Autard, 1994, p. 4) and dominated by an emphasis on developing specific artistic skills and products, reflecting a kickback against the “free, open and child centred approach which has been labelled modern educational dance, creative dance, and the like…derived from Laban’s ideas” (Smith-Autard, 1994, p. 4). In 1994, Smith-Autard revisited her principles of 1976 and developed the Midway Model that “amalgamates some of the elements of the educational (Modern Educational Dance) and professional models” (Smith-Autard, 1994, p. 5). The distinguishing feature of Smith-Autard’s Midway Model is that it explicitly directed dance in education towards artistic education, aesthetic education and cultural education outcomes. The Midway Model (1994, p. 26) is outlined below.
The Midway model is intended to provide a balanced perspective of what is valued in dance. Brinson (1981), in his report on tertiary dance provision in New Zealand, noted the interplay between modern dance practice and education. While I support the development of movement vocabulary as a means for organising the body and its movements, and acknowledge the ongoing need to refine movement articulations within the secondary school context, I believe that in the primary school the emphasis should be on children creating their own meanings of dance and exploring the gamut of dance.

---

2.3.4 Discipline Based Arts Education (DBAE)

Discipline Based Arts Education (DBAE) is a model sponsored by the Getty Foundation in America and based upon visual arts education practice. DBAE was formed upon and characterised by “four art disciplines – aesthetics, criticism, history and production” (Greer, 1987, p. 227; Hanna, 1999; Ottey, 1996). Each of these ‘disciplines’ has a recognised body of knowledge content and mode of inquiry (King and Brownell, 1966) that is interconnected and provides considerable scope for the study of dance. Greer (1987) diagrammatically represented the content mode of inquiry of each discipline in the following diagram.

Table 2. Discipline Concepts for DBAE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT CONCEPTS</th>
<th>AESTHETICS</th>
<th>CRITICISM</th>
<th>HISTORY</th>
<th>PRODUCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Subject Matter</td>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>Originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work of Art</td>
<td></td>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Iconography</td>
<td>Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Provenance</td>
<td>Craftsmanship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td></td>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>Function</td>
<td>Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INQUIRY CONCEPTS</th>
<th>AESTHETICS</th>
<th>CRITICISM</th>
<th>HISTORY</th>
<th>PRODUCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of</td>
<td>Description of</td>
<td>Restoration of</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualities</td>
<td>content</td>
<td>Objects</td>
<td>(invention)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of</td>
<td>Analysis of form</td>
<td>Analysis of style</td>
<td>Analysis of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responses</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Attribution</td>
<td>problem/sketch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Creation of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Authentication</td>
<td>Exhibition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is argued that the drive behind the adoption of DBAE is the desire for the arts, including dance, to be seen as having “academic content” (Ottey, 1996, p.31) that may

---

be assessed and accounted for in a manner comparable to other disciplines in the curriculum.

DBAE successfully and strongly places dance within the academic curriculum and confirms its legitimacy. Yet, I fear DBAE may be a 'double edged sword' that, through its quest to legitimise the arts and dance in academic terms, has unintentionally distanced the teacher from implementing the dance curriculum. There is a gap between the experts’ vision, rationale, terminology and standards for dance, and the teachers’ practice and experience of dance, a gap that may be quite vast in many teachers’ minds and bodies.

Ottey (1996) talks of DBAE shifting the pedagogy of dance towards what Paolo Freire (1972) critically described as “banking” (p.46), whereby the teacher provides the knowledge to be learnt or banked by the student. Other concerns relate to DBAE overly formalising the dance experiences, thereby reducing the liberal nature of the educative experience (Fortin, 1991; Hanna, 1999; Trend, 1992); fragmenting arts practice (Dorn, 1993); undervaluing the relevance of teachers and children’s artistic values (Dorn, 1993); losing the holistic experiential qualities that may be accessed through dance; and, valuing achievement outcomes over the child’s creativity (Hanna, 1999). Broudy (1991), noted the major complaints against DBAE as:

1. it is too rigid, 2. it downplays production in favour of understanding and appreciation, 3. it threatens existing curricula and programmes, and 4. it over-intellectualizes art education by emphasising academic subjects, namely aesthetics, art history and criticism. According to many critics, it neglects or undervalues the emotional responses to making and viewing works of art (p.62).

Given the criticisms, Broudy (1991) supported DBAE in elementary (primary) school curriculum, because when “classroom teachers are given the opportunity to become familiar with it” (p.72) it functions as a useful approach towards overcoming aesthetic illiteracy.

The DBAE model has evolved and been adapted to meet the needs of various curriculum policies in different countries and its influence is evident in the American National Standards for Arts Education (Consortium of National Arts Education
Associations, 1994), the Australian Statement on the Arts for Australian Schools (Curriculum Corporation, 1994), and more recently the New Zealand The Arts: In the New Zealand Curriculum (2000). Although these documents have differences, their intent, structure, outcomes and terminology are essentially compatible. It is reasonable to assume that the DBAE model will be influential in determining the nature of dance in New Zealand schools in the next decade. Accepting the ‘curriculum territory’ gained by the arguments for dance as advocated for within the DBAE framework, it remains now to ‘close the gap’ between the curriculum intent and the teachers’ practice in the classroom.

Smith-Autard (1994) referred to the importance of teachers gaining assistance to help their practice and called for the development and use of resources that ‘close the gap’, and make connections between the teacher, the art form and the curriculum. The need to connect teachers with the curriculum was also acknowledged by Ottey (1996) who outlined strategies within critical pedagogical theory for achieving this, “it is possible for dance educators to see themselves as professional resources for their students and their colleagues, establish themselves as informed and active participants in the school-based environment” (p. 31). The need for resources and professional development is not in dispute, however, my own experience inclines me towards the view that long lasting change will be best effected through the empowerment of individual teachers to become their own resource, looking within and valuing what they know rather than referring to an external voice of authority or expertise (Gallego, Hollingsworth and Whitenack, 2001; Green, 2001). How this is done is yet to be fully explored for the generalist primary school teacher in respect to dance, yet I believe that as Ottey and others imply, the teacher is at the heart of education and this is where we start.

2.3.5 Theory of Multiple Intelligences

In 1967 at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, esteemed philosopher Nelson Goodman and colleagues across the behavioural and cognitive sciences, education and the arts, established Project Zero, “a first-of-its-kind think tank on the relationship
between the arts, cognitive development, and education” (Warburton, 2003, p. 9). The core view argued for by the Project Zero team was that artistic practice was cognitive, contesting the predominant view of the time that the arts were primarily emotive, mysterious, and intuitive (Gardner, 1989). In the 1970s this debate set the context for the two research teams at Project Zero: David Perkins directed research by the ‘cognitive skills’ group, and Howard Gardner led the developmental group that focused upon symbol using skills (Gardner, 1989). ARTS PROPEL was the name given to the subsequent phase of research in partnership with the Educational Testing Service and the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The practical implementation of theory in educational settings was studied.

Seeking clarification and understanding of human potential, Gardner questioned popular conceptions of intelligence (Gardner, 1983). In collaboration with anthropologists, geneticists, psychologists, neurobiologists and historians, Gardner synthesised children’s symbol-using capacities through his research on the cognitive capacities of individuals with brain damage. In short, the dominant outcome was his theory of multiple intelligences (M.I.) (Gardner, 1983) that articulated “seven candidate intelligences” (p. XI). These intelligences were named as: Linguistic, Logical – mathematical, Spatial, Musical, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, and Intra-personal. I have noted Gardner's expression ‘candidate intelligences’ by way of reiterating his view that intelligence is not a thing found or discovered, as he said, “These intelligences are fictions - at most, useful fictions - for discussing processes and abilities that (like all life) are continuous and with one another” (Gardner, 1983, p. 70). Since then, Gardner has articulated an eighth intelligence-Naturalist Intelligence (Gardner, 1999). Gardner described these intelligences as “forms of knowing” (Gardner, 1989, p. 74), and posited that all humans have some capacity in each, and that they may be developed.

Gardner has stressed that the multiple intelligences (M.I.) theory was not initially conceived for use in schools:

The theory of multiple intelligences was designed primarily for two purposes: 1) to synthesize a diverse set of findings about human cognition into a form which made neurobiological and cultural sense; and 2) to provide a way of thinking which contrasts with the wide spread belief in a single intelligence,
which can be adequately assessed by paper- and pencil ‘intelligence tests’ (Gardner, 1989, p. 74).

Undeniably, as worldwide practice reveals, M.I. theory has struck a cord of ‘truth’ with teachers (Gardner, 1995; Gardner, 2000) and dance educators (Green Gilbert, 2003; Sevilla, 2003; Warburton, 2003). The argument that there is no single way to ‘know’ (Gardner, 1983), and that there are multiple entry points into pedagogy (Gardner, 1999) resonates with what many teachers see every day. This is most apparent as teachers re-look at children’s intelligences utilised within the realm of artistic endeavour.

In respect to arts education, Gardner noted the predominant classroom emphasis upon producing art under a process of instruction relying heavily upon traditions of apprenticeship - watch and do as I do. In classrooms where the teacher was gifted or inspired, children’s work often reached a high level. However, there is consensus within the arts education fraternity that arts education is more than the production and mostly re-production of arts (Gardner, 1989; Hong et al. 1998). Based upon his cognitive theories, Gardner (1989) outlined an approach to arts education within ten points:

1. Children’s own production activities are central to arts education.
2. Critical, historical and contextual analysis should first be done in relation to the child’s work and then in relation to others’ work.
3. Arts curricula need to be taught by teachers with a deep knowledge of how to think in an artistic medium.
4. Artistic learning be organised around meaningful and motivating themes and projects.
5. A spiralling curricula will provide children with continuous exposure to artistic experience and problems at various developmental levels.
6. Assessment of learning is vital, and must be authentic to the art form.
7. Arts education is concerned with the expression of personal ideas as well as the mastery of skills.
8. Abilities to make judgements and evaluations may come through discussion with others who have differing and passionate opinions and taste.
9. Arts education is a cooperative activity that includes teachers, artists, children and communities.

10. Children need not study all arts forms.

Arts Propel condensed the above, focusing on the competencies of production (making art), perception (refining art), and reflection (looking to understand art). Implications of the ideas of Gardner and Arts Propel upon dance in schools may be found in their validation of dance as a way of thinking, and as a means for showing that thinking through the holistic self, an integration of mind and body. That there are many symbol systems presenting knowledge and experiences that require particular intelligence is well argued by Gardner and his mentor Nelson Goodman, and not doubted by myself in respect to dance.

Warburton (2003) discussed myths, pitfalls and criticisms of M.I. theory as it is translated into classroom practice. A concern regarding the characterisation of intelligence (and even the use of the term - intelligence) as a taxonomy of intelligences, is that M.I. can be mistaken as a substitute for existing means of measuring and ‘packaging’ children’s educational ability and worth. Noting that Gardner has not subscribed to this kind of use (Gardner, 1999; Warburton, 2003), nonetheless in my experience it is occurring, and may therefore inadvertently present a new way of reinstating hierarchies of knowledge and curricula.

Gardner’s theories of Multiple Intelligences particularly as applied to arts education are evident in New Zealand schools. By way of evidence, my own children’s school has made M.I. an integral component of the curriculum and has offered after-school introductions to M.I. for parents. The inaugural Learning Through the Arts conference for primary school teachers, Wellington, 1998, included several workshops that illustrated the use of MI in arts education. Several dance advisors implementing the Arts Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000) from 2001-2003 were well versed in M.I. theory and connect with classroom teachers through current and common use of M.I. theory. Suffice to say that the majority of teachers in New Zealand would be familiar with the notion of Multiple Intelligences.
2.3.6 Somatic Education

In the 1990s the movement philosophies grouped under the banner of somatic education increasingly informed tertiary dance programmes and professional dance practice (Fortin, 1998; Kovich, 1996). Somatic practices such as Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, Ideokinesis, Mind-Body Centring, and Yoga, while not new, have been contemporised by their increasing use in tertiary dance education programmes, within dance company training schedules and in the public arena. Somatics encompasses a holistic perspective of movement that Kleinman (2000) referred to as “kinaesthetic phenomenology” (p.98). Thomas Hanna (1983) described somatics as “the art and science of the inner-relational process between awareness, biological function and environment, all three factors understood as a synergistic whole” (p.1).

While I believe that somatic practice does not yet appear to be directly informing dance curriculum content in schools, there is increasing reference to self-awareness and holistic perspectives of the body/mind within curriculum rationale in the arts and in education at large (Eisner, 1998; Green, 2001). From an educator’s perspective, I suggest, as did Green (2001), that somatic practices reference an ideology similar to the liberal, ‘progressive’, personal, and felt dimensions of dance that were first espoused by Laban. Somatics would support a return to focus upon the child rather than the dance, and if educators have learnt from pedagogical swings of the past, this will include acknowledgement of the relationship between the individual and their contexts, provided by curriculum, teacher and community. As conceptions of knowledge broaden and academia responds to epistemological diversity, disciplines such as dance might then return to championing their inherent practices and rationales.

Somatics may shift dance pedagogy from an ‘outside-in’ phenomenon, where the body has been regarded as a relatively docile site for enculturation (Green, 2001), to an ‘inside-out’ process where the individual may “self fashion...our dancing body” (Fortin, Long and Lord, 2002). Within the primary school classroom such a process is desirable if diverse interests and bodies are to be respected and where the emphasis
should be upon learning through the dancing body, not training for a dancing body. Somatic practices acknowledge the relationship between the self and their body in the construction of their body and their dance. As noted by Green (2001), somatics is about affirming “what goes on inside the body rather than a sole focus on what the body looks like or how it ‘should’ behave” (p. 157).

Within New Zealand the number of tertiary courses, research and pre-professional programmes offering dance workshops, and classes informed by somatics is growing. For example, here at the University of Otago, during 2002-2003, three students completed Master’s research involving somatic practices in educational contexts. Undergraduate students also study somatic practice, with an emphasis on honouring the personal integration of mind and body. These courses are increasingly popular and given that a percentage of these students go on to teacher training, one can assume that these experiences may find their way into primary school classrooms. I expect that as pre-service teachers and artists gain greater exposure to somatic practice in their education, they will translate this into classroom practice, and curriculum will increasingly flex to represent and better account for the multifarious nature of the dance discipline.

In summary, I believe the above six theories inform dance curriculum and dance pedagogy practice in New Zealand. It is difficult to account for the influences of these theories upon teachers’ practice, and another researcher would most likely give a differing account. Nevertheless, the reviews of literature by Hong, Foley and Thwaites (1998), and Bolwell (1995) that underpinned the development of The Arts In the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) made reference to a range of these theories. The Education Review Office report on Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (1995), though not referencing theory, acknowledged the troika of creating, re-creating and appreciating as the three core aspects of arts education. As the above review of theory reveals, this troika is common to several theoretical models and undeniably informs curriculum development in New Zealand. I now turn to look at the New Zealand Dance curriculum and place the document in an international context.
2.4 Dance in the New Zealand and International Curriculum Context

Primary schools in New Zealand have all received the document, *The Arts: in the New Zealand Curriculum* (2000), “that orange one…up there on the shelf”, as a teacher said to me one day. This document is the latest and last of the seven new curricula developed within *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993) reform. Some teachers have found the arts curriculum confusing, admit it has not been a priority in their classroom or their school, and have left it on the shelf. Not all teachers have left it on the shelf, however: many use the orange book to enact their passion, their values and pursue change in education. Here, I briefly comment on the role of curriculum in general, and then discuss how dance has been described in the orange book and also the (red) Health and Physical Education curriculum.

### 2.4.1 Curriculum

Neither dance nor curriculum operate in a vacuum (Willis and Schubert, 1991), but are a product of the socio-cultural-economic community from which they emanate. Curriculum, being “theoretical models…and…idealised structures” (Eisner, 1991, p. 44), which are informed by research in the academic discipline, teacher research and teacher practice, are subject to debate (Rubin, 1991). Nonetheless, curricula in general share a common role in facilitating learning and aiming to change [educate] the child (Lortie, 1975; Newman, 1990), or as framed by Eisner (1991), “School curriculum is a mind altering device: it is a vehicle designed to change the ways in which the young think” (p. 42).

Various curricula, be they mathematics, science, languages or the arts, provide learning experiences in diverse forms that cater for a diversity of student interest and potential (Eisner, 1998). Creating a set of curricula that acknowledge the diverse ways that the self and the world can be known is as much a political exercise as an educational theoretical ideal (Brinson, 1991; Doyle, 1992).
According to their design, curricula can serve as ‘gateways’: inviting access to educational experiences within schools or obscuring children’s access to other experiences. The scope of the curriculum reflects and impacts on how we value diverse personal and social experiences and hence, how we imagine what kind of personal and social worlds are possible (Beyer, 1991). Translating the curriculum’s outlined ‘ideals and possibilities’ is in reality the teachers’ role. The curriculum relies on teachers to give it life, “no curriculum teaches itself. The curriculum is always mediated” (Elbaz, 1991, p. 43).

Hence, some educationalists avoid making distinctions between curriculum and the teaching of it (Doyle, 1992; Willis and Schubert, 1991). Clearly teaching and curriculum co-exist within an education system, but I hold that there is some value in looking at the curriculum separate from its enlivenment in order to see more clearly the role of the teacher and what the teacher brings to the curriculum.

2.4.2 The Dance Strand of The Arts: In the New Zealand Curriculum

Dance, drama, music and visual arts collectively form the arts curriculum, which is one of seven curricula offered in New Zealand primary schools. The following discussion of the dance strand (referred to as the dance curriculum) will examine rationales for the curriculum and the consequent conceptualisation of dance within it. Rationales for the inclusion of dance in the curriculum vary only slightly from curriculum to curriculum around the world, with dance advocates generally arguing along the same lines for the inclusion of dance in children’s education.

In New Zealand, dance is a component of the arts curriculum. Brinson (1991) strongly advocated for dance in arts curricula when he stated:

Dance had come into its own in education through the realization that it was an aesthetic discipline belonging generically with the other great arts disciplines. The primary concern of dance is with the expressive exploration and creation of moral meaning and spiritual power through the medium of the body – and this in no way is a central characteristic of PE (p. x).
The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) included dance, drama, music, and visual arts and was mandated for implementation in all New Zealand primary schools from 2003 (Hong, 2001). The key rationale for the arts curriculum at large focuses upon "literacies in the arts" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 10); expression and communication; individual and community awareness; and, awareness of the functions the arts fulfil in societies and histories. Dance is stated as offering "a significant way of knowing, with a distinctive body of knowledge" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 19), and offers 'personal' and 'social' benefits through the development of confidence in physical expression. Also, "Dance in the NZ curriculum promotes the dance heritages of the diverse cultures within New Zealand" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 19). Further rationales noted that dance is a holistic experience "that links the mind, body and emotions" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 19) and note was taken of the importance of developing critical audiences and fostering students' enthusiasm as viewers or creative participants. In summary, the New Zealand dance curriculum is focused upon developing:

- Students' literacy for engagement with dance practically or theoretically.
- Personal holistic knowledge of self.
- Knowledge of cultural and social diversity in New Zealand.

The curriculum has artistic and aesthetic concerns, yet is also orientated to personal development issues and socio-political issues specific to New Zealand. It is proposed that the study of dance may fulfil various educative and political functions, whereby the dance practice provides access to knowledge via artistic exploration, personal physical exploration and appreciation of diverse dance forms and functions.

I think it is noteworthy that the curriculum does not say 'promote awareness of', but is much more direct in stating: "promotes the dance heritages" of New Zealanders (Ministry of Education, 2000, p.19). In this way the document, supported by the Nga Toi Maori arts curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000a), aims to pro-actively encourage the recognition, maintenance and development of Maori and other arts traditions.
The study of dance as an arts discipline is directed by four ‘strands’ (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 20), those being:

- Developing practical knowledge in dance (use and explore dance styles, dance elements, and practices).
- Developing ideas in dance (explore and create choreographic processes).
- Communicating and interpreting in dance (share and perform dances in formal and informal settings and interpret dances meanings).
- Understanding dance in context (understand dance’s functions and contexts).

It would appear that these strands were mostly informed by Discipline Based Arts Education (DBAE) theory, and that this occurred in response to the need to articulate all four arts disciplines within the same conceptual ‘literacy’ matrix. The above four strands conceptualise the curriculum and draw teachers attention to specific learning experiences in dance and across the other arts areas.

The curriculum provides ‘achievement objectives’ for 8 levels that span over the child’s 13 years of education in New Zealand. The achievement objectives indicate the learning expected at each level and provide an assessment and reporting framework against which to align/evaluate students’ work. When seen as a whole, these are said to constitute an education in dance, albeit at various levels of understanding.

2.4.3 Dance in Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum

Within New Zealand, dance has been referred to in past and current physical education curricula. For example, the 1933 English Physical Training syllabus was taught in New Zealand up to the mid 1940s (Stothart, 1974). Stothart noted that the dance component of this syllabus was adapted to include folk dance for New Zealand children. Many physical educators trained in England brought Laban’s movement education to New Zealand (Smithells, 1974), but most came with Swedish Gymnastics and, more specifically, the Ling system of movement training, where the emphasis was upon posture and physical development (Burrows, 1999).
In 1942 the Thomas Report on the New Zealand secondary school curriculum included physical education as a core component of the school curriculum (Stothart, 1974). In response to this, all secondary schools received the English texts Recreation and Physical Fitness: for youths and men (Board of Education, 1937) and Recreation and Physical Fitness: for girls and women (Board of Education, 1937). The three-page dance chapter in the male’s book is limited to descriptions of set dances such as Morris dancing, and where dance “is a fundamental form of exercise” (p.216). This makes for an interesting comparison with the female version, where dance is covered in depth for forty pages and describes a vast range of dance activity in great detail. For girls and women, “The first aim of dancing is to learn to move with ease and rhythm, to enjoy moving and to gain a sense of power over the body” (p.155).

In the 1950s the influence of Laban’s theories were found in syllabuses such as the Physical Education in the Primary School (The Department of Education and Science and The Central Office of Information, 1953). In this document, exploration of movement, singing games and national dances provided the focus. However, as male teachers returned to physical education teaching, sport performance and human movement measurement ‘sciences’ overtook physical education. Dance became limited to folk and social dance. Learning steps and skills rather than problem solving and creativity was the focus (Burrows, 1999).

Within the current Health and Physical Education in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1999a) the overall focus is upon “personal well-being, the well-being of other people, and that of society as a whole” (Ministry of Education, 1999a, p. 6). ‘Hauora’ is a Maori philosophy of health and it is this holistic philosophy that underpins the document’s achievement objectives (Ministry of Education, 1999a) that are grouped into four strands, being:

- Personal Health and Physical Development – personal identity, health needs, responsibility for self-management at work and play.
- Relationships with Other People – effective relationships, interpersonal skills, socio/cultural inclusivity.
• Movement Concepts and Motor Skills – diverse movement skills, knowing participation choices, competition, individual and group activity.

• Healthy Communities and Environments – interdependence of individuals and communities, physical and social influences informing well-being, responsibilities and positive action.

From my perspective, it is clear how dance may be a part of each of the above strands, and yet it is only explicitly mentioned within the strand titled: ‘Movement Concepts and Motor Skills’, where it states:

Learning by participating in spontaneous play, informal games, cultural activities, creative movement, dance, sport, and other forms of activity enables students to strengthen their awareness of their personal identity, to experience the pleasure of physical activity, and to develop their awareness and appreciation of the diverse nature of movement (Ministry of Education, 1999a, p. 11).

Dance is stated in the achievement objectives of this strand up to level 6. It is consistently described as a motor skill option from levels 1-6 and is not explicitly included in the other strands. Given the history of dance within physical education, this curriculum continues to limit dance’s educational scope to that of motor skill development (Hong, 2001), albeit increasingly ‘complex’ and ‘sequenced’. In a curriculum context that promotes the philosophy of ‘Hauora’, dance has explicit potential to address social, emotional, and cultural values, concerns and attitudes. Yet it seems the achievement objectives neither account for, nor acknowledge, the nature of dance and its relationship to individual and social wellbeing. This document, like earlier physical education documents described by Stothart (1974), continues to include dance, while continuing to maintain an extremely limited perspective of it. Dance’s inclusion here, I believe, leads to confusion about the nature of dance and its role and place in the curriculum.

Historically within New Zealand, dance has been mostly associated with the physical education curriculum (Stothart, 1974). This has been the case in Australia (Buck, 2003), USA (Kraus et al. 1991), Canada (Fortin, 1991), England (Brinson, 1991), Hong Kong (Street, 2001), South Korea (Nam, 2001), and Singapore (Carino, 2001). By and large the connection between dance and physical education has been found in
the centrality of the moving body to both curriculum areas. While dance has been marginalised within physical education, it has also been protected and maintained, providing an ironic and influential context for the subject area and for many teachers today.

2.5 Dance in International Curriculum

Implementation of dance curriculum has followed a similar pattern around the world. Dance has been included within the physical education curriculum in all Australian state and territory curriculum documents up to the late 1980s and early 1990s. With the development of the Statement for the Arts in Australian Schools (1994), (initially intended to become a national curriculum and still widely though incorrectly known as such) (Meiners, 2001), dance was formally included with the arts and, under a ‘no double dipping’ policy, was limited to inclusion in only one curriculum, in this case the arts curriculum.

In America the National Standards for Arts Education (1994) articulated dance as one of the arts disciplines, and as of 1990, 15 states had developed dance curriculum guidelines within an arts framework (Overby, 1992). In Canada no national curriculum exists, however, curriculum development occurs within each province (A. Kipling Brown, personal communication, 3 October, 2001). Saskatchewan includes dance in the arts curriculum from years 1-9 (A. Kipling Brown, Personal Communication, 3 October, 2001). Quebec has had a dance curriculum from K-12 (Kindergarten-last year of secondary school) since 1981 (Fortin, 1991).

In Singapore, dance has been included in music curriculum, but largely “Dance in the school curriculum exists as a ‘module’ in the subject of Physical Education” (Carino, 2001, p. 88). Carino has noted the current drive to embrace dance as part of the arts in educational curriculum in Singapore. Similarly in Hong Kong and South Korea, dance education leaders are advocating for the development of dance curriculum as part of the arts, distinct from physical education (Nam, 2001; Street, 2001).
An alternative model is provided by Scotland, where physical education is housed within the arts curriculum (The Scottish Office: Education Department, 1992). Dance is subsumed in the physical education strand, yet the curriculum at large is conceptualised around an ‘arts’ structure, very similar to Adshead’s choreography, performance and appreciation model for dance. The curriculum further articulates physical education within terminologies more commonly associated with dance, such as “What is the body doing...space...dynamics...and relationships” (The Scottish Office: Education Department, 1992, p.57). This is a very interesting curriculum that could bear further analysis from both the dance and the physical education perspective.

England maintains dance as a component of the physical education curriculum. This remains a contentious situation with a good deal of debate revolving around the place of dance in that curriculum (Brinson, 1991; Jobbins, 1998; Lyons, 1998; Moore, 1997, 1998a; Paul, 1998). Irrespective of the placement of dance in physical education, it takes on the content and characteristics of an arts orientated curriculum. This is a confusing situation, albeit one where dance is compulsory in Key stages 1 and 2 (Lower and upper primary school) which is, one might argue, a very strong position from which dance might grow, or more importantly, a very sure way to ensure that all students gain a certain amount of dance education in their schooling. As several advocates in the UK implied, it does not matter where or how children gain dance experience, just as long as they get it. This is an argument I have also heard in New Zealand.

2.6 Dance Curriculum Rationale

Dance advocates in New Zealand support positioning dance in the arts curriculum. However, as has been indicated in this study, not all teachers are keen or confident to teach dance. The rationale for teaching dance in any curriculum not only has to appease the visionaries, but also appeal to the classroom teacher in such a way as to encourage the implementation of the curriculum. How dance is argued for in the curriculum provides an important link between theory and practice, and also a clear
As dance moves into the arts globally, its rationale for inclusion in the curriculum is building around common themes. In England, Brinson’s (1991) rationale for dance education included:

- Developing the full variety of human intelligence.
- Developing creativity.
- Education in feeling and sensibility.
- Exploring values.
- Understanding cultural change and differences.
- Developing physical and perceptual skills (p.84).

The Australian document *A Statement on the Arts for Australian Schools* (1994), advocated for dance along with all of the arts as “symbol systems which communicate in unique and important ways, as part of a broader framework of aesthetic philosophy or understood in terms of recent social and cultural theory” (p.3). Dance was cited as contributing to “Aesthetic learning…Cognitive learning…Physical learning…Sensory learning…[and] Social learning” (pp.6-7). Such rationale comply with Eisner’s theories of multiple literacy for reading and making meaning of the world and self, and acknowledge the multiple forms of representation utilised to mediate and communicate meaning (Eisner, 1994).

Encapsulating the 'big picture' perspective on the value of the arts, the American document *National Standards for Arts Education* (1994) stated:

The arts are one of humanity’s deepest rivers of continuity. They connect each new generation to those who have gone before. …For all these reasons and a thousand more, the arts have been an inseparable part of the human journey; indeed we depend on the arts to carry us toward the fullness of our humanity. We value them for themselves, and because we do, we believe knowing and practising them is fundamental to the healthy development of our children’s minds and spirits. That is why, in any civilisation – ours included – the arts are inseparable from the very meaning of the term ‘education’ (p.5).

It goes on to say that students studying dance gain knowledge and skills for:

- Understanding past and present human experience.
- Adapting to others and own ways of thinking, working and expressing.
• Learning artistic modes of problem solving and associated analytical tools.
• Understanding the influences of the arts in creating and challenging culture.
• Making decisions in complex, ambiguous, ephemeral and serendipitous situations.
• Analysing non-verbal communication and making informed judgements.
• Communicating thoughts and feelings in a mode that acknowledges the whole self as a medium for expression. (pp. 6-7)

A rationale for the inclusion of dance in the curriculum in Singapore was associated with Singapore’s future vision “as a cosmopolis in the next millennium” as referred to in the Renaissance City Report (Ministry of Information and The Arts, 2000, cited in Carino, 2001, p. 87). In brief, this report described Singapore’s economic and cultural future as being linked with its creative and artistic activity. Arts education is seen as fundamental to this aspiration. Wong, Senior Minister of State of Education, Singapore, reinforced this view, when she stated, “Arts education... plays a critical role in securing our future in helping Singapore develop its creative industries” (Wong, cited in Carino, 2001, p.95). The ongoing association of ‘economy’, ‘industry’ and ‘development’ is summed up by the “need to nurture creativity and innovativeness in Singapore’s education system as a key strategy to release our vision of a developed economy” (Ministry of Information and the Arts, cited in Carino, 2001,p. 91). Helen Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand and Minister for the Arts (1999- ), implied the same claim for the arts when she commented, “Welcome to the new New Zealand where culture counts” (Creative New Zealand, 2002, p.16).

The ongoing call for ‘creative thinking’ and ‘innovation’ is increasingly linked to government policy regarding ‘knowledge economies’, where knowledge is seen as the source of economic productivity (Creativenet, 2001). Commentary on education provision within this ‘knowledge economy’ context calls for change, “Rather than trying to increase skills levels through conventional qualifications, government should take a different approach to educating for creativity” (Creativenet, 2001, p. 2). Implicit here is a fostering of curricula that purposefully addresses and develops creative thinking and creative application of thinking. All curricula may do this, but the arts explicitly do this (Sylwester, 1998). Debate regarding the rationale of any education in terms of economic need is contentious and ongoing, but it is nonetheless an interesting intersection of minds and needs when educationalists and business
leaders both argue a place for arts education and hence dance education, in the curriculum (Barrett, cited in Stiegelbauer, 1999, p. 394).

Especially in today’s outcomes driven education system, parents, teachers, educationalists and politicians want evidence of the benefits to be gained from studying dance. It is fair to say that in the context of arts research, dance remains a very under researched discipline (Hanna, 2001). Nonetheless, Arts research that embraces dance exists, and reports such as, ‘Strengthening Communities Through Culture’ (Strom, 2001), and ‘Champions of Charge: The Impact of the Arts on Learning’ (Fiske, n.d.), noted dance projects and research along with the other arts. These reports have tended to focus upon assessing the value of the arts for their ability to develop cognitive skills and outcomes in other domains of theory and curriculum, especially language literacy and mathematics. They also highlight the contributions the arts make in developing children’s essential learning and life skills such as teamwork, leadership, problem solving, communication and critical thinking. While these values and skills are most publicly argued for in respect to their ability to support other curriculum areas, many arts educators, myself included, believe that the abilities and skills developed are an inherent part of arts education, with stand-alone value.

In sum, I see the rationale for dance in the curriculum in terms of artistic and aesthetic education, cultural education, self and social education, health and fitness, cross-curricular learning and pre-vocational education. This includes contexts where dance is both a discipline in its own right and a tool for accessing other curriculum. It accounts for social and recreational needs of individuals and communities with diverse needs, where intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), commonly recognised as fun, is deemed a valuable part of education. It acknowledges the career aspirations of children as they seek employment as artists, administrators or teachers. Mostly however, my rationale rests upon the fact that dance is a part of our world, and to know about it is to know more about oneself and how one can interact with the world. Implicit within the various dance curricula are differing arts and movement models that reflect different theories that skew and shape rationale, content, terminology, objectives, assessment, resources and pedagogy within dance education. Irrespective of the differences, the theoretical place of dance in the primary school classroom has been well stated (Adshead, 1981; Alter, 1996;
Hanna, 1999; Smith-Autard, 1994; Williams, 1989). The above theories, curriculum and curriculum rationale articulate dance within schooling contexts, with its own coherent theoretical structures, practices and history that distinguish it as a particular discipline of study.

It is yet to be seen what the generalist primary school teacher in New Zealand deems to be of value in respect to dance in the classroom, however, the above discussion presents a context for the teachers in the current study. The following component of this review of literature focuses upon research that has addressed issues around dance pedagogy and in particular, research that focuses upon generalist primary school teachers teaching dance in their classrooms.

2.7 Pedagogy

Curriculum and its enlivenment or pedagogical transformation have long been regarded as separate concerns wherein the actual curriculum and related institutions, ranging from government ministries to individual schools, construed their relationship in a linear hierarchical fashion (Doyle, 1992). Such a linear conception traditionally saw the creation and administration of the curriculum as being the source of teachers’ content knowledge and the basis for ‘power’, while the teachers of the curriculum were seen as mere instruments for implementing the curriculum (Clandinin, 1986; Doyle, 1992; Elbaz, 1983).

Research in curriculum development and pedagogy has moved away from the influence of psychological sciences as espoused by Thorndike and Judd (Doyle, 1992), where segmented activity analysis typified the fragmented, standardising, gendered, imperialist, de-contextualised, product-focused view of education (Doyle, 1992). Indeed this inquiry turns to the ‘progressive’ oriented views championed by Dewey:
The style of this [Dewey's] inquiry was naturalistic and observational, and the product was knowledge teachers could use in solving practical problems rather than the laws or prescriptions for controlling teacher practice.  

(Doyle, 1992, p. 489)

Shapiro (1998) shared this view in respect to dance in education:

A vision [of education] that validates difference, denies universal claims to truth, and seeks to empower people for social transformation is emerging out of this challenge to the western epistemological dominance in our educational institutions (p. 8).

I am averse to hierarchical power conceptions that distinguish the curriculum as being the ‘recipe book that we all cook from’ or a ‘how to’ dance book with footsteps marked on the page for everyone to imitate (Warburton, 2003). I align with research directions that value the pedagogical relationship constructed between the teacher, the curriculum and the learner, situated within the classroom context (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989; Doyle, 1992; Eisner, 1991, 1998; Green, 2001; Russell, 1997; Shapiro, 1998; Shulman, 1987; Stinson, 1991; Willis and Schubert, 1991).

I advocate for building partnerships between teachers, curriculum and children, that when negotiated create a living document and practice that has meaning for the teachers and the children. Within this “evolving construction” (Zumwalt, 1989, p. 175) of curriculum, or this “classroom curricula” (Mayers and Britt, 1995, p. 66) pedagogy is not seen “as a neutral pipeline for delivering content, but as a social context that has fundamental curricular effects” (Doyle, 1992, p. 492). Shulman (1987) argued that the teacher requires specific subject matter knowledge but also requires knowledge of how best to represent and convey that subject matter in the school context. He stated that pedagogical content knowledge is that which a teacher requires to, “transform the content knowledge he or she possesses onto forms that are pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations in ability and background presented by the students” (p. 15). I concur only up to a point with Shulman, the contention being around issues of how much content knowledge a teacher requires and around adaptability of generic pedagogical strategies within the dance context (Fortin, 1993).
The central interest of the teacher within “the pedagogical process through which knowledge is produced” (Lusted, 1986, p.2) is pertinent to this study and the subject of much debate. Significance of memory was used by Middleton, (2001) to stress the importance of the teacher, “When we think back about our own school lives we don’t remember a wonderful learning environment, or a particularly skilful use of resources, or the co-constructivist nature of a programme. We remember a teacher” (p. 16).

Lusted (1986) described the interaction between the teacher, content and learner. He argued that it is the dialogic interaction of these three agencies that defines pedagogy, and he did not place greater value on any one agency over the other:

Hence, for instance, it [pedagogy] denies notions of the teacher as a functionary (neutral transmitter of knowledge as well as ‘state functionary’), the learner as ‘empty vessel’ or passive respondent, knowledge as immutable material to impart. Instead, it foregrounds exchange between and over the categories, it recognises the productivity of the relations, and it renders the parties within them as active, changing and changeable agencies (Lusted, 1986, p.3).

In light of this description of pedagogy as an active process of exchange, the following diagram, after Lusted, may serve to illustrate the dialogic interrelationships between dance curriculum, teachers, and learners.

**Figure 1. Inter-relationship between teacher, children and dance curriculum**

Within this process oriented model, the dance curriculum, the teacher and the children are all integral to the process of producing an understanding of dance in the classroom. As such it “draws attention to the process through which knowledge is produced” (Lusted, 1986, p.2).
2.8 Constructivist Pedagogy

Throughout literature on teaching, learning and the school curriculum there is increasing reference to the ‘construction of knowledge’. Constructivism is the theory behind this principle, “human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it. We invent concepts, models and schemes to make sense of experience and we continually test and modify these constructions in light of new experience” (Schwandt, 2000, p.197).

Theories of constructivist pedagogy reference Piaget’s cognitive perspective and Vygotsky’s socio-cultural perspective (Chen and Rovegno, 2000; Dougiamas, 1998; Howe and Berv, 2000). The experience of teaching and learning movement in primary school physical education was studied by Chen and Rovegno (2000), and they described Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s theories as follows:

Piaget’s cognitive constructivist perspective stresses...individuals’ prior knowledge and experience shape the way new information is selected and interpreted and affect the way meaning is assigned to new knowledge. ...Vygotsky’s socio-cultural constructivist perspective, in particular, underscores that social interaction and shared discourse promote an individual’s deep understanding of information and making sense of the world (p.357).

Cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives are not mutually exclusive (Chen and Rovegno, 2000), rather their interplay allows for varied persuasions and applications (Schwandt, 1994). Given that there are several “faces of constructivism” (Dougiamas, 1998, p. 4) and ongoing debates concerning particular emphasis in educational research and practice, for the purposes of this study it is enough to acknowledge that I ascribe to the view shared by Gale (1995) that we “create meaning of the world rather than discover meaning from the world” (Gale, 1995, p.xii).

Constructivist pedagogy is concerned with the idiosyncratic nature of meaning-making that is socially, culturally and temporally connected (Chen and Rovegno, 2000), and allows for recognition that teaching and learning in the primary school is nested in the classroom (Gallego et al. 2001). The tenets of constructivist pedagogy acknowledge the learners, what they know already, the multi-directional flow of
communication and the building of new meanings that are ably shared, comprehended and critiqued within and by the classroom community (Bauersfeld, 1995; Chen and Rovegno, 2000; Dougiamas, 1998; Howe and Berv, 2000; Konold, 1995). Within constructivist pedagogy the teacher creates learning situations that promote children’s collaboration and problem solving. As Mayers and Britt (1995) outlined in relation to teaching maths in the primary school classroom, the teacher has the responsibility to, “create a problem solving atmosphere...facilitate mathematical talk...design appropriate tasks...stimulate mental activity...develop their own curricula...and to develop new approaches to assessment” (p. 62). The teacher’s role is similar in the dance classroom, though complicated by the necessity for building individual and group meanings simultaneously.

I suggest that constant dialogue is critical in the dance lesson, not only to check for individual understanding (Russell and Bullock, 1999), but also to establish collective understanding. Fosnot (1996) stated, “Dialogue within a community engenders further thinking. The classroom needs to be seen as a community of discourse engaged in activity, reflection and conversation” (p.29). Further to this, Anne Smith, arguably New Zealand’s leading researcher in the field of children’s issues, stated, “Out of shared discourse over joint activity with others, children construct their own knowledge” (Smith, 1998, p. 247). The teacher, children and curriculum, to return to Lusted (1986), are interacting, communicating and forming meaning continuously.

Constructivist pedagogy accommodates pedagogical uncertainty. Different ideas will arise, children’s dance responses will vary, teaching moments will appear and disappear quickly, strategies will need to vary and flex. Uncertainty will create moments of ‘well, what now?’ and ‘how will I proceed?’ which in turn require constant situational decision-making (Chen and Rovegno, 2000). To reiterate the point made by Dewey (1938), teaching towards democracy in the classroom is not easy. Nevertheless, I believe that such uncertainties in the dance classroom are to be cherished, as these are moments of disequilibrium (Fosnot, 1996), and it is in these moments that meanings are reviewed and new learning occurs. The teacher and the children become co-learners creating a shared understanding from their shared experience.
For me, part of the beauty of dance in the classroom is, as described by Stinson (2001), the spontaneity and associated uncertainty that is an inherent part of the teaching and learning process. Nonetheless, while I see it as a key component of the dance programme, I have observed that inexperienced teachers struggle with making sense of dance in the ‘constructivist’ classroom. Informing this response for many teachers is the traditional authoritarian conception of the dance teacher as the holder of knowledge that is transmitted to students (Bolwell, 1998; Green, 2001; Stinson, 1998), or conversely a totally unstructured view of teaching dance characterised by the statement ‘just let the children play’ (Zakkai, 1997).

I believe that the issue for these teachers is to learn how to enact the construction of knowledge alongside students in the classroom. Reflection upon the teacher/learner relationship is central to understanding how it is possible for students and teachers to jointly construct learning events in the classroom (Green, 2001). Constructivist pedagogy notwithstanding, classroom pragmatics must always be taken into account, for as Chen and Rovegno (2000) stated, “Hands on learning, does not mean hands off teaching” (p. 365).

This is not to say that in the practice of teaching we never utilise the full spectrum of pedagogical styles that range from command to self-teaching (Mosston, 1992; Russell, 1997). Reconciling this reality with the constructivist’s epistemological vision, Howe and Berv (2000) coined the term “thoroughgoing constructivism” (p. 35). Howe and Berv (2000) valued a dynamic conception of knowledge; utilizing a diversity of instructional methods appropriate to a context of shared meanings and openness to dialogue.

Returning to Lusted, it is the changeable relationship that needs to be valued between the teacher, the child and the curriculum as they constantly interact. Balanced interaction over time is the preferred aim, rather than investment of authority in any one aspect of the prism. Regarding dance in primary schools this is most pertinent, as teachers, children and the curriculum all bring their own meanings and uncertainties around dance to the classroom. The verbal and movement dialogue that ensues is what I regard as ‘dance education’.
2.9 Teaching Dance in the Classroom

In the following, I review literature that speaks of teaching dance in the classroom and where possible the primary school classroom. This review explores several key issues such as control, content knowledge, relationships between teachers and children and embodied pedagogy. These and further issues in the literature are also elaborated on in Chapter five.

As an experienced teacher of dance in diverse primary school classrooms I have developed a degree of confidence to engage with classroom uncertainties utilising ideas, strategies, lesson rhythms and lesson end points. I contend that generalist teachers, with their knowledge of their own teaching styles, plus their knowledge of the students and the broader curricular, are also well equipped to explore the uncertainties that dance in education may present. At issue for many is a crisis of confidence in the face of this dynamic subject area. I believe that teachers need to acknowledge what they already know in respect to the students, the school context, and their various teaching strategies, and be less concerned about what they believe they don’t know about dance.

“The model for the traditional dance pedagogue seems to be the authoritarian father” (Stinson, 1998, p.27), however, the research literature that focused upon dance pedagogy revealed a growing diversity of practice. Stinson found the theme of control was a common theme in education literature generally, and particularly in the dance literature. “Control is as much an issue in curriculum as it is in dance: we fear that institutions, as well as bodies, will not work without control” (Stinson, 1991, p. 190). Reflecting upon her own practice and philosophy for teaching dance, Stinson saw the alternative to control as flow and release (Stinson, 1991). She envisaged the relationship between the teacher and the child as being one relying upon teamwork rather than control and power, interaction rather than domination. In seeking a dance metaphor that best described her pedagogical philosophy, Stinson likened her teaching to dance improvisation where one is “creating as one goes along” (Stinson, 1991, p.191). Dance improvisation also implies qualities of giving and taking, shared
responsibility, risk, respect, acute perception and fun. This metaphor for teaching
dance is one I appreciate, as it values the individual qualities that the teacher, the child
and the dance bring to the teaching/learning moment, which can be serendipitous,
ephemeral and full of meaning.

Cognitive apprenticeship has a considerable history in dance pedagogy. Learning
from the ‘masters’ was and remains today a powerful means for what many regard as
learning the ‘best technique’ or the ‘practice of the experts’. Cultures and traditions
are passed on, both the good and the bad. Fortin (1998) cited dance studies by
Clarkson (1988), Gray (1990), and Myers (1989) that all addressed the notion of
conformity to traditions in dance pedagogy. Fortin (1993) discussed the common
situation within the dance world where a dancer with advanced technical skill –
content control, is assumed and expected to be able to teach. This problematic
assumption that content knowledge can then be transformed into pedagogical
knowledge was noted in her study of dance teachers in the studio setting. Fortin
observed the ‘transformation’ of content knowledge into knowledge for teaching as
involving much more than a knowledge base of dancing technique and control. My
experience is in accord with Fortin’s findings, and in the context of the primary school
setting I enter contentious ground and suggest that an in-depth knowledge of dance is
not prerequisite nor in some cases necessarily advantageous when introducing
students to dance education.

Linda Darling-Hammond’s (2000) extensive American study of teacher quality in
relation to student achievement noted that the teacher’s subject matter knowledge had
no consistent relation to student achievement, yet the teacher’s knowledge of teaching
and learning was shown to have consistent and strong links to student achievement.
The view that the teacher’s ability to interact and communicate with children is the
crucial skill informing dance teacher’s effectiveness was supported by Lord (1993).
With reference to dance, Zakkai (1997) stated, “you do not have to be a skilled mover
to be an effective facilitator of movement” (p.8). This is not to say that anything goes,
in fact my experience tells me it is quite to the contrary and I have said many times in
my practice, what is adamantly stated here by Zakkai, “Let’s dispel a myth about
working with movement and dance. It is not an unstructured experience” (p. 8). What
I do propose is that irrespective of their dance knowledge, primary school teachers must value their generalist pedagogical knowledge and apply it to teaching dance.

It is possible to regard the ‘teacher as learner’ within a paradigm that values the knowledge that they create rather than exclusively relying upon the knowledge transmitted to them by experts (Newman, 1990). It is important to clarify that I am not saying that teachers never need knowledge and experience of dance to be able to teach it. I am however, advocating that a primary school teacher needs to acknowledge their world, their beginning points, their tried and refined pedagogical expertise, and that this is valuable and suitable in commencing a dance programme. Once initiated, the teacher needs to look to the children and ‘the dance’ to reflect upon and further develop their dance knowledge and the dance programme. Through a reflective process, teachers may ask what works in their teaching, what they value, what do they hope for the children? Stinson (2001) spoke from a position of considerable experience when she advocated for teachers to “become wide-awake” (p. 28) to the choices they make when forming and teaching a dance programme and lesson. With considered and active reflection they will find what they need to know, or as Newman (1990) put it “Find our own way” (p.1).

It is the personal and conscious enquiry of the teacher that is crucial (Stinson, 2001). Holt (1964) stated in regard to children, “knowledge which is not genuinely discovered by children will very likely prove useless and will be soon forgotten” (p. 125). I believe the same holds true for the teacher. I value the generalist teacher’s personal experimentation; trying and re-trying as they establish what they need to know and discover how to find a ‘personal’ way to connect their meaning of dance with the children and the curriculum. I believe conscious enquiry is foundational to the teacher’s parallel role of being both ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’, simultaneously developing experience and understanding in both roles (Mayers and Britt, 1995). Holt (1997) suggested that generalist teachers know their children and asserted that it is this knowledge, rather than in-depth subject knowledge, that best enables their teaching of the arts.

Learning is in the experience and doing is at the core of learning (Russell, 1997). Following this logic, teachers learning to teach dance, irrespective of their prior
experiences, need to actually do some teaching of dance in order to gain a genuine understanding of what it entails. Such trial and error is part of the process of gaining the confidence to teach and is surely a characteristic of initial attempts by experienced and inexperienced teachers to teach any curriculum. This was found to be the case in Holroyd and Harlen's (1996) study of primary teachers’ confidence about teaching science and technology. Gaining experience and then the consequent reflection upon the experience provided the knowing, or as Schön (1983) stated, “Our knowing is in our action.” (p. 49) Practice lies at the heart of learning and this is refined as practice is reflected upon and assumptions and tacit understandings are revealed (Connelly et al. 1997; Dewey, 1938; Polanyi, 1958; Schön, 1983).

In respect to teachers learning to teach, Russell (1997) acknowledged the importance of the ‘situated’ experience. ‘Prac Teaching’, as classroom experience was called during my teacher training degree, has long been a feature of most teacher-training programmes around the world. It is not new, but what Russell and his colleagues at Queens University, Canada, initiated for teacher trainees was a programme of training that immediately commenced with actual in-class teaching experience. They argued that the situated, guided and authentic experience of ‘doing teaching’ alerted the trainees to realities they needed to learn about, and the ‘in classroom’ experience focused their consequent programme of study within the context of their own identified needs. This view finds resonance in the study by Hennessy, Rolfe and Chedzoy (2001), where they looked at factors influencing the development of trainee teachers’ confidence to teach the arts (dance, drama, music, visual art) in primary schools in England. They concluded that the actual experience in the classroom was the main factor that stimulated confidence to teach the arts. Hennessy et al. (2001) found that the hands on experience of teaching enabled the trainee teachers to improve their knowledge of the children, their learning styles, their needs and aspirations, and these were key factors characterising the benefits of their in-school placement. Interestingly this was found to be of greater value than knowing more about the arts.

This finding mitigates concerns regarding the impact on trainee teachers of the scarcity of teachers with knowledge and experience of teaching in the arts, particularly dance. A very real concern has been that trainee teachers have been relatively unguided in their practice and in their reflection of their own and others’
practice. The class teacher has traditionally been seen as a role model for the trainee in terms of “enculturation where, through authentic activities students are provided with important insights into professional thinking and practice” (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989, p. 56). In their study of trainee teachers’ school based training Green and Mitchell (1998) pointed out that a training culture that relies on situated cognition and cognitive apprenticeship relies upon teachers who are able to suitably model the teaching of the arts, and that even then, experienced classroom teachers were unable to assist trainees in developing subject matter knowledge in art education.

Resarching the impact of somatic practices upon the teaching of modern dance in academic and adult community dance classes, Fortin analysed three dance studio teachers’ approaches to their teaching practice. The study found that the teachers’ experience with somatics had a great impact upon their teaching. As Fortin (1998) stated, the teachers began to, “distance themselves from their ‘apprenticeship of observation’, develop a personalised dance technique that could be applied to any dance form, and question their own roles as teachers” (p.52). Closer reading reveals that the teachers had “critical awareness of their past dance experience as dance students…they integrated their various backgrounds to produce idiosyncratic ways of teaching…they used these [dance steps or somatic exercises] only when needed” (p.52). Critical reflection and recognition of personal experience informed these experienced teachers’ practice as they broke from dance pedagogy traditions.

Regarding dance in the classroom in a critical and ‘personalised’ way questions traditional dance pedagogy, where the teacher was seen as a ‘translator’ or ‘funnel’ of dance techniques or experiences, which as Stinscn (1991) referred to earlier is based upon values of control and tradition. As Shapiro (1998) described, “This shift from disembodied knowing to embodied knowing calls into question traditional dance pedagogy” (p.15), which in turn impacts upon intent and outcomes of dance programmes, so that “the learning experience moves from one of learning movement vocabulary for the sake of creating a dance to gaining an understanding of the self, others, and the larger world for the possibility of change” (p.15). Teachers may find that their own as well as the children’s concerns around body (Arkin, 1994, Brown, C. 1999; Green, 2001), gender (Bond, 1994; Brown, A. 1986; Burt, 1995; Cesan, 2003; Crawford, 1994; Lloyd and West, 1988; MacDonald, 1991; Thomas, 1993), sexuality
(Keyworth, 2001; Risner, 2002; Risner, 2002a) and ability (Cooper Albright, 1997; Hong, 2000), become less of an issue when dance is taught from this pedagogical standpoint.

There is little evidence in the literature of research into how primary school teachers experience the teaching of dance in their classrooms (Hanna, 2001; Moore, 1997). Moore (1997) completed a study in England that explored five primary school teachers’ experience of teaching dance as a component of the physical education curriculum. Stake, Bresler and Mabry (1991) took a broader look at the “reality of arts education in American public schools” (p. 1). The latter study looked at eight schools and discussed issues surrounding all of the arts, including dance. Both studies described the teachers’ experience as they came to grips with teaching dance, and as one would expect, the stories were diverse and unique. Harrison (1993) noted an expectation of teacher difference in her UK resource oriented text *Let's Dance: The Place of Dance in the Primary School*:

Teachers and schools will approach dance in the National Curriculum from many different perspectives. Some may already be reasonably confident and will only have to make minor adjustments to meet the new requirements. For others, the changes will be greater, especially for the generalist classroom teacher (p. 5).

While the teachers’ stories in both the American and English studies above were different, they both noted that dance was the least taught of all the arts. There were several reasons cited, including: no music, no time, no training and no expertise. Stake et al. (1991) noted, in respect to a Chicago elementary school, “Dance did happen but had a marginal role in the school, not because dance had lower status than the other arts, but because dance education had even fewer qualified to teach” (p. 115). The teachers’ sense of ‘inability’ or lack of confidence to teach dance surfaced in most studies (Hennesy et al. 2001; Jobbins, 1998; MacDonald, 1991; McBride, 1988; Moore, 1997; Paul, 1998). Stake et al. (1991) noted that the actual abstract qualities of the form were influential in limiting teachers’ access to dance, “as primary materials (space, time, energy) are inherently different from that of common language. Music and dance are accessible to relatively few” (p. 310). Hence, dance is taught the least and often seen to be a subject taught by specialists. In regard to the
dance elements, I believe that once the teacher acquires some familiarity with them, the scope of the discipline becomes apparent and access to participation is maximised for the children. As Stake et al. found, the teachers' perceptions of dance as including unfamiliar and obscure concepts and terminology created barriers to teaching dance. Hong (2002) commented in respect to implementing the dance component of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*, “The effectiveness of the new curriculum delivery will obviously be very dependent on the ability of teachers in schools to interpret the curriculum from the printed page” (p.65).

Teachers have most commonly integrated dance in the curriculum through ‘activity topics’ (Brown, 1986; MacDonald, 1991; Morin, 2001). This has largely been seen as the most time-efficient way of introducing dance experiences and finding a way to draw the students into dance. However, Moore (1997) raised the concern “that dance taught in this way is in danger of becoming merely an extension of other work being carried out in the classroom - more of a cross curricular theme - rather than a subject with its own distinctive structure and content” (p.161). Several case studies in Stake’s et al. (1991) study referred to the balancing of teacher-led activities and artist-led activities that both linked dance to the other activities and profiled dance as a discipline.

Irrespective of the involvement of artists in the classrooms, Moore (1997) and Stake et al. (1991) concluded, the future of dance in education rests with the teacher. As Charles Leonhard, Director of Research, National Arts Education Research Center, University of Illinois, stated in the foreword of the Stake et al. study, “Among the many lessons to be learned from reading the case studies is that in the final analysis the quality of arts education depends on the sustained efforts of teachers” (p.1).

Of note in the latter studies was the reference to the arts, including dance, as being distinct from the ‘academic subjects’. I draw attention to classification of the arts as ‘non-academic’ as it is common (Eisner, 1998a; Kaagan, 1990). Underpinning this perception is the view that the cognitive and the affective states of mind are separate and that the arts are concerned primarily with the affective: emotions, feelings, intuition, perceptions, imagination. Indeed the arts do draw upon the affective state, as
do the sciences, social studies, languages and mathematics. The arts are also equally, if not more so, concerned with cognition. As Dewey (1934) stated:

Any idea that ignores the necessary role of intelligence in production of works of art is based on the identification of thinking with use of one special kind of material, verbal signs and words. To think effectively in terms of relations of qualities is as severe a demand upon thought as to think in terms of symbols, verbal or mathematical. Indeed since words are easily manipulated in mechanical ways, the production of a work of genuine art probably demands more intelligence than does most of the so called thinking that goes on among those who pride themselves on being ‘intellectuals’ (p.46).


Dance within the arts curriculum has in theory moved beyond this debate, yet in practice teachers continue to value dance ‘as a break from academic subjects’ or as ‘fun’ (Stake et al. 1991). I don’t deny these qualities of dance. The imperative remains, however, that teachers and children see and investigate both the ‘thinking’ and the ‘fun’ of dance (Kahlich, 2001). Fox and Gardiner (1997) researched the impact of the arts on achievement in other curriculum areas, finding that in the early years of primary school, achievement in maths and literacy improved when children were engaged in the arts. Other results revealed that the arts fostered ‘insight’ into problems and fostered solutions, and that the arts were fun, stimulating positive learning, as well as behavioural and attitudinal changes in the classroom. In light of their findings and my belief that a happy classroom is a productive one, I value fun as a rationale for teaching dance.

Notions of fun and fear are wrapped up with participation in dance, tied to exposure of one’s body and ideas. Shapiro (1998) focused upon the role of the ‘body’ in developing a philosophy for pedagogy in dance education. Drawing upon her personal experience of dance, she initially described the body as “a tool, an instrument objectified for the benefit of the dance” (p. 9). She then countered this with a critical view of the body as subject “that which holds the memory of one’s life, a body that defines one’s racial identity, one’s gender existence, one’s historical and cultural
grounding indeed the very materiality of one's existence” (p. 9). As a result of Shapiro’s personal reflection, she began to ‘own’ her body, and see it less as an object to perfect for the aesthetic pleasure of others and her ‘disembodied self’, and more as “a rich source of knowledge” (p. 9). At the heart of Shapiro’s educational philosophy was the focus upon “embodied knowing” rather than “disembodied knowing” (p. 15). Shapiro described a continuum “moving from a technical language [disembodied knowing] to one concerned with human liberation [embodied knowing]” (p. 11).

Within the classroom context, Shapiro advocated for recognition of the students’ diversity and the need to “relate movement vocabulary to the students’ experiences whether in pre-school or senior grade levels” (p. 11).

The importance of establishing an inclusive dance classroom was noted by Musil (1999), especially one that acknowledges different perspectives and involves the student’s active creation of meanings around dance. Implicit within such pedagogy is the dialogue between the teacher and the child, where the teacher and the child both draw upon their personal experiences. I believe when teachers teach dance they need to make a connection between their own movement and their life, in the same way that they expect this of the children. In doing this myself, I am aware of the personal risk that it requires, and the trust one places in the often un-stated vow of classroom respect and privacy. But having made the risk, I have more often found the rewards, as seen in the children’s subsequent contributions, equal in all ways to the initial risk.

2.10 Children’s Perspective of Dance

Unlike this study, which focused on teachers’ ideas about dance, other research has focused upon children’s meanings of dance in their schooling. I sketch some of these here to provide further indication of the literature surrounding teachers, and to recognise the relationship between teachers and children in the dance classroom.
Bond and Stinson (2000/01) began looking at children's meanings of dance using multi-modal evidence such as video tapes of children dancing, interviews, poetry, and drawings collected from their own prior research into children’s dance experiences, and data from others' studies that had described the nature of children’s dance experiences. “We ultimately collected material from approximately 600 young people between the ages of three and eighteen from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, Saipan and several states in the United States” (Bond and Stinson, 2000/01, p. 54). This material/data of student’s experience of dance was categorised into several themes:

- Competence (having to do with student learning and motivation toward achievement or mastery).
- Environment (having to do with relationships with peers, teachers, or family, or aspects of the physical and learning environment).
- Arousal (having to do with awareness of the body, energy, and affective states).
- Self (including issues of freedom and choice as well as creativity, self-expression, and aesthetic values).
- “The unnamed” (later called “The Superordinary”) (experiences that go beyond the ordinary and everyday).

(Bond and Stinson, 2000/01, p.55)

The above study is of interest to me for its introduction of ‘environment’ as a factor informing children’s meanings of dance. One might draw from this a supposition that the teacher and the child provide a formative and interactive context for each other. A constructivist interpretation of the above categories notes the interplay between personal and social meanings negotiated by the child in specific contexts.

Sansom’s (1999) study of dance in early childhood revealed that children saw themselves as dancers and were strongly influenced by pop culture music and its associated dance. McSwain (1994) noted in respect to 105 adolescent high school children (aged 11-17) in Australia that perceptions of dance were largely limited to those of the dominant youth culture, that boys’ attitudes “were more positive, tolerant and inclusive than expected” (p.259), and reflected an “exclusive perception of dance
which revolved around performance rather than participation” (p.257). McSwain (1994) attributed this skill-dominated perception as an outcome of dance with in skill-orientated PE classes and males’ predilection for physical activity. However, given males’ competitive and success orientation, McSwain noted, “fear of failure at a physical activity such as dance is a potent negative motivator for male adolescents” (p. 257). Williams (1989) observed primary school children’s predominantly product- and skill-orientated perception of dance, and in part attributed this to dance’s long association with skill-driven physical education programmes housing dance in the UK. Lindqvist’s (2001) Swedish study of the relationship between play and dance for 6-8 year old children noted dance’s link to drama that has its beginnings in play and children’s fictional imaginations in action. Bond (2000) wrote of children implicitly knowing more about dance than teachers and encouraged teachers to “receive the dance of the child” (p.4), a view supported by this researcher.

Lloyd and West (1988) wrote about elementary school boys’ participation in dance from 1925-1935 in America. Their study revealed that approximately 70 years ago “dance became identified with women” (p.48), although some dance was considered to be only suitable for boys. Lloyd and West (1988) found that dance between 1925 and 1935 was taught within the physical education curriculum and mostly by female physical education teachers. They noted that these teachers advocated for dance, yet in practice, when the boys lost interest in dance they allowed them to do sport as a substitute for dance.

It is relevant to question whether boys favour sport, and whether teachers encourage this partly because they don’t know how to help them relate to dance, with its historical overtones of femininity. The conventional association of dance with physical education may be in part responsible for the perpetuation of limited perceptions of the dance discipline, leading to its reduction to skills and steps, an alternative sport. Whether or not these issues and practices remain true in 2003 is unclear. Further research into children’s relationship with dance may serve to clarify these issues.
As Bond and Stinson (2000/01) stated, "Very little is known about how young students experience the educational activities designed by adults or construct meaning from them" (p.52). Given the influential role of the children in the dance classroom, I concur with Bond and Stinson, and would hope in the future to continue research that looked at the primary school child's view in tandem with the teacher's view, the focus in this study.
Chapter Three
Methodology

"There are multiple ways in which the world can be known: artists, writers, dancers, as well as scientists, have important things to tell about the world" (Eisner, 1998).

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of the present study and also the journey I took in refining the methodology. Phenomenology is briefly outlined as my starting point and then the chapter focuses upon the constructivist approach taken. The research methods of narrative inquiry and educational connoisseurship are outlined, and the subsequent data collection strategies and data analysis processes are described. Considerations of trustworthiness conclude this chapter.

3.2 Phenomenology and Constructivism

The aim of this research was to better understand nine primary school teachers' meanings of dance in their classrooms in order to understand what supports or hinders teachers' implementation of dance. In exploring this question I sought a methodology that provided opportunities to enter teachers' classrooms, interact with teachers and explore their experience of teaching dance. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) outlined two broad positions, "Positivism and phenomenology are the two overarching perspectives that shape our understanding of research" (p.3). I identified with and adopted the phenomenological position as it provided "a focus on understanding the meaning events have for persons studied" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.3).
At the daCi international dance conference, Sydney, Australia, 1994, Eeva Anttila of Helsinki, Finland, stated, "One research method that seems to be particularly suitable for studying dance education is phenomenological research, where the goal is to understand the perspective of the other as clearly and richly as possible" (1994, p.3). Phenomenology initially directed the present study towards research methods and strategies that allowed me to holistically look at the teaching of dance in the classroom; to value and notice relationships; and, to use a variety of data sources.

The present study sought to understand meanings that events, experiences or phenomena had for the teachers (Patton, 1990), and focused upon their "words and actions in narrative or descriptive ways more closely representing the situation as experienced by the participants" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.2).

Phenomenological research within educational inquiry allows the researcher to "get in touch" (Eisner, 1998, p.11) with particular teachers in their contexts. In this study the initial phenomenological position provided for research processes that gained "direct, intimate contact" (Eisner, 1998, p.11) with teachers teaching dance in their classrooms.

Phenomenology drew attention to the relationship between the researcher and the research participants, and the qualities that both bring to that relationship (Dewey, 1934; Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Crotty (1998) commented, "Because of the essential relationship that human experience bears to its object, no object can be adequately described in isolation from the conscious being experiencing it, nor can any experience be adequately described in isolation from its object" (p.45).

The intention of this study in returning to the classrooms was to ensure that the research process did not isolate teachers from their classrooms, or their teaching practice and dance experience. Eisner (1998) highlighted the importance of identifying and declaring the research intent and researcher connoisseurship when entering classrooms, noting that the relationships created and valued have an impact on school dynamics and culture. Notwithstanding the maintenance of the 'health' of a research site, the dynamics and interplay between teachers and researcher profoundly informs the research process and meanings made (Crotty, 1998).
Phenomenology appeared to provide the philosophic position I required to seek an understanding of teachers' meanings of dance in their classrooms. Patton (1990) referred to phenomenology in terms of an umbrella covering areas of inquiry such as ethnography, naturalistic inquiry and hermeneutics. When reading Lincoln and Guba's (1985) account of naturalistic inquiry, I was introduced to constructivism. As my reading deepened and the present methodology was refined I found an increasing affiliation with constructivist theory, which reasons that our understandings of the world are our constructions, apprehended in multiple forms, and socially and experientially based (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism strongly resonated with my beliefs and values as a teacher and as an advocate for dance in education contexts. In particular, constructivism supported my methodological interest in researching with teachers as partners, valuing their 'voice', practice, lived experience and their dance.

My experience, bias, expertise and values as I served as the research instrument could be openly acknowledged within a research process that explicitly respected the role of the teachers as research participants and collaborators (Beer, 1997). So finally, it was a constructivist methodology that directed the 'action' of the present study. The study is now outlined in terms of the constructivist paradigm. The ontological and epistemological postulates and characteristics that provided “the bedrock” upon which this research was conducted (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.10) are now discussed.

3.3 A Constructivist Ontology

Taking cognisance of constructivist arguments for the dialectical relationship between researcher and research participants, constructivism emerged as the dominant theory that directed the present research. It also allowed for multiple forms for representing understanding and accommodated my valuing of diverse perspectives. Constructivism is based upon a relativist ontology meaning that there are multiple realities created by individuals around a consensus of social experiences, rather than a single reality waiting to be discovered (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Further to this, Goodman (1978)
suggested that meaning making is in constant flux. Following from these assumptions, multiple meanings of dance were not only seen as possible but as being re-constructed by the teachers in this study at any given time. As Goodman (1978) stated, “World making as we know it always starts from worlds on hand: the making is a re-making” (p. 6).

Teachers’ realities are diverse and individual. Teachers may share common experiences about their work, but their ‘truth’ is relative to their perspective of these experiences and, as such, it is their personal construction of their reality that is important to understand (Schwandt, 1994). Implicit in the term ‘individual’ is the created interaction between self and social contexts (Dewey, 1934). The assumption that follows from this position is that meanings of dance in the classrooms are constructed in dialogue with others, events and phenomena (Crotty, 1998; Eisner, 1998; Goodman, 1978; Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Schwandt, 1994).

Constructivist ontology supported returning to the teacher as the source of information, "Practitioners in fields such as education, counselling and social work...are concerned with individuals, not aggregates, and, for them, questions about meaning and perspective are central and ongoing" (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 197). The present study aimed to gain and honour the individual teacher's perspective so as to gather insights into potential assumptions, generalisations and stereotypes surrounding dance in nine primary school classrooms.

Moving from the position that meanings of dance in the classroom are multiple and constructed, it could be construed that a teachers' constructions are most credible when considered in light of their individual cognitive, emotional, personal, and professional contexts (Guba, 1990). Eisner (1993) asserted “Humans do not simply have experience; they have a hand in its creation, and the quality of their creation depends upon the ways they employ their minds” (p.5) There are many possible meanings of dance in the classroom and they are relative to the individual’s values, context and interests.
The constructivist approach taken acknowledged that a teachers' reality in the
classroom is comprised of a complexity of variables that may not be fragmented in
order to be independently understood (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The present study
did not aim to find or test a hypothesis or a truth, nor to predict or control independent
variables or the setting, as would a positivist study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The
research aimed to increase understanding of teachers' meanings of dance in the
classroom by reflecting upon teachers' practice in the context of their own classroom
experience, and to value and include their wider lived context because this knowledge
is assumed to impact upon their teaching and, therefore, has a place in educational
research.

3.4 A Constructivist Epistemology

The epistemology that shaped the character of the present methodology is outlined
below as I discuss dialectic partnerships, perspective and reflexivity, the interplay
between personal and social constructions of knowledge, and the multiple and tacit
ways humans construct versions of the world.

A constructivist epistemology argues that the relationship between the researcher and
the research focus is “interactively linked so that the ‘findings’ are literally created as
the investigation proceeds” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p. 111). The process of the
present study involved the dialectical interaction of the researcher and the teachers
sharing and co-constructing understanding of dance in their classrooms. I related to
Crotty (1998) “The image evoked is that of humans engaging with their human world.
It is in and out of this interplay that meaning is born” (p. 45). I proceeded from the
position that multiple realities exist and our understanding is built around “individual
re-constructions coalescing around consensus” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.112),
which as Maykut and Morehouse (1994) noted, invites sharing of diverse
perspectives. I believe that in this study the notion of perspective allowed scope for
the teachers and me to value the diversity of our experiences and the meanings made in regard to those experiences.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) commented upon the connected and interactive nature of the inquirer and the “object of inquiry” (p.94). Tolich and Davidson’s (1999) descriptions of reflexivity reverberated with Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) account of the interaction between the observer and the observed, wherein interaction cannot be absent or eliminated. Interaction occurs, we are participants in the research along with those we are studying. Eisner (1998), Tolich and Davidson (1999) and Wolcott (1992), presented arguments that supported Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) account, that rather than seeing interaction as an “intrusion leading to error” (p.101) as might a positivist study, the interaction is more usefully regarded as “an opportunity to be exploited” (p.101). Lincoln and Guba reasoned that interaction provides the means for dealing with the indeterminacy of knowing, the emergent and changeable nature of studying the social world, the use of and uniqueness of personal judgement, the contradictions in findings, the authentic relationship between the researcher and the researchee, and the realistic and adaptable expectations placed upon the research relationship.

The ‘dance partnership’ presented a pertinent epistemological metaphor for this constructivist study of teachers and dance. Implicit within dance partnerships (partnered dances) is the vitality of the interrelationship between the dance partners. Communication is important and it is a two-way process. Traditionally there is a leader and a follower, yet both rely on each other for the completeness of the dance. In this study the term 'partnership' acknowledges that the study has been initiated by one of the partners. It also acknowledges the essential co-operation and interaction that is required from both parties for the dance (research) to be ‘smooth’, ‘in time’, ‘as one’ and to feel good from both participants’ perspectives.

Tension, both positive and negative, may inform a partnership and be present in dialogue and interaction. An exciting dance partnership has ‘an electricity’ between the partners. In my experience, such performative tension does not come from compliant ‘weak’ partnerships where the dance looks more like a ‘just follow me routine’. A dance, like a relationship between a researcher and research participant,
lives when there is dynamic interaction and negotiation occurring during the very act of the dance. Scheurich (1995) noted the reality and vitality of interaction when there is some resistance “The concept of resistance emphasises that individuals are not simply acted upon by abstract ‘structures’ but negotiate, struggle, and create meaning of their own” (Scheurich, 1995, p. 247). The dialectic nature of constructivist epistemology invites and accepts diversity and allows for negotiation.

Researchers usually embark upon their research with prior views and interests. According to constructivist theory this should not be denied nor negated but certainly managed. In the present research I had a certain degree of dance experience and expertise, indicated by my role as a university lecturer. My connoisseurship (Eisner, 1998) had potential to be both a strength and weakness of the study. I acknowledge that my expertise and experience informed perceptions and interpretations of teachers’ lessons, silences and nuances. I was conscious that my perceived ‘expertise’ might serve to weaken the study through inadvertent domination of discussions, lessons and the research partnerships. Throughout the research process I worked at developing positive and trusting partnerships that encouraged our conversations about dance in the classroom, and which would allow for debate, so that resistances and interactions could be acknowledged.

I acknowledge that I came to this research with unique strengths and experiences that directed this study and provided views, descriptions and interpretations that were mine. My view has been valued because it brought a critical perspective (Eisner, 1998) informed by my experiences of life and dance in education contexts. Acknowledgement of perspective is an epistemological characteristic of qualitative research that Tolich and Davidson (1999) refer to as reflexivity. They described reflexivity as being “the idea that social researchers always remain a part of the social world they are studying. Consequently, their understanding of that social world must begin with their daily experience of life” (p.37). I agree, and also support Eisner’s (1998) suggestion that by allowing the researcher to contribute their sensibility and their judgement throughout the research process, the study is strengthened.
This study strove not to objectify the observed teacher about whom interpretations would then be made (Gergen, 1985; Schwandt, 1994). Understanding was gained by the cooperative interaction of myself as the researcher alongside the participating teachers, together constructing experiences, meaning and understanding (Ernest, 1995; Mishler, 1986; Schwandt, 1994).

It was inevitable that the teachers and I influenced each other, given that the purpose of the study was to 'enter into the teachers' world' rather than be an outside observer of it. In the sharing, re-telling and analysis of the teachers' stories, I aimed to remain alert to the idea that we each had an impact on how we participated (Heshusius, 1994), how we listened, how we continued various themes in discussions or negotiated understandings. Neither the teachers nor I could dismiss our own perspective as we probed each other's understanding and experience.

Perspective reveals and implies an interplay between the personal and the social. Nelson Goodman (1978) argued that each one of us makes different versions of the world in accordance to our own perspective of the interplay between self and the world on hand. Goodman's constructivist philosophy acknowledged diversity and the active role of the individual living in and shaping social processes (Schwandt, 1994). Within constructivist philosophy, the interplay between the individual and social perspective appears in various persuasions (Schwandt, 1994) and presents a range of epistemologies (Chen and Rovegno, 2000). Dougiamas (1998), Ernest (1995), and Von Glasersfeld (1995) further distinguished constructivist epistemologies as trivial constructivism, radical constructivism, social constructivism and social constructionism. It is not my intent to elaborate in detail upon this typology of constructivism, but to note their differences and focus upon the social-constructivist approach of this study.

Trivial constructivism was described by von Glasersfeld and rests upon the principle that the learner actively constructs knowledge, and not passively receives it (Dougiamas, 1998; Ernest, 1995; von Glasersfeld, 1995). Radical constructivism builds on trivial constructivism and emphasises the individual's construction and
ongoing adaptation of viable interpretations. Von Glasersfeld (1995) stated, “Any description is relative to the observer from whose experience it is derived” (p.8). The idea that there is one truth or an objective reality is replaced by the notion of the viable solution, or view, that meets that person’s needs. The focus for both trivial and radical constructivism is upon the individual. Neither satisfactorily account for the interaction of the individual with their environment (Dougiamas, 1998).

Crotty (1998) distinguished the social-constructionist perspective from constructivism:

Constructivism...points up the unique experience of each of us. It suggests that each one’s way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other. On the other hand social constructionism emphasises the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things...and gives us a quite definite view of the world (p.58).

Both constructionists and constructivists draw upon the principle that knowledge is created, however, constructionists suggest that the individual’s personal ‘endogenic’ perspective is subsumed by the world ‘exogenic’ perspective (Richards, 1995). The focus of constructionism “is not on the meaning making activity of the individual mind but on the collective generation of meaning as shaped by conventions of language and other social processes” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127).

This study had a social constructivist focus. Social constructivism presented an argument for the relational dialogue between personal perspective and social contexts that remain within the realm of an individual’s experience and interpretation. Schwandt (1994) stated, “Constructivists are deeply committed to the contrary view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective... they emphasise the pluralistic and the plastic character of reality” (p.125). Dance in respect to social constructivism may be seen as a socially constructed human activity. It has histories, traditions and cultural contexts within which each individual creates and re-creates his or her dance.
In respect to cognition through social symbol systems, the constructivist view is that "we create many versions of the world in the sciences, the arts and the humanities" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 126). Accepting that knowledge is a human construction, it follows that humans may represent their knowledge in their practice and in diverse mediums or forms (Ackermann, 1995; Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1993; Gardner, 1983; Goodman, 1978). Hence the teachers’ practice and dance were valued as much as our discussions. Polanyi (1958) noted that in some professions such as teaching, practitioners know more than they say, and that it is their practice that reveals often un-stated knowledge and meanings. As Connelly and Clandinin (1987) stated in regard to the purpose of narrative inquiry, it is “to outline an epistemology of practice in which the starting point for the inquiry is a practical event rather than a working theory" (p.131). Welcoming the teachers’ practice acknowledged their classroom connoisseurship. The use of different symbol systems provided for a greater range of expression and interaction, which in turn multiplied access and insight into the teachers’ perceptions.

3.5 Research Methods

An epistemological concern underpinning the methodology within the constructivist study is that of valuing personal practice knowledge (Carter, 1993; Connelly and Clandinin, 1985; Connelly et al. 1997; Elbaz, 1991). The research methods of narrative inquiry and educational connoisseurship allowed for the teachers to reveal their personal experiences and beliefs, and allowed for the teachers’ and my observations of classroom interactions and our reflection upon a shared dance activity. The methods value the teachers’ experience as the starting place for constructing understanding. Johnson (1987a) noted that, "personal practice knowledge…encompasses every dimension of understanding by which a person organises and interprets experience in ways that make more or less sense to him or her. …It is a knowledge embodied in and manifested through practices, routines, spatial orderings and aesthetic dimensions of experience" (pp.466-467).
3.5.1 Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry was used to examine how teachers constructed their understanding of dance in the classroom and it allowed for "entering into" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991, p.260) and partaking in the phenomenon. Narrative inquiry was particularly pertinent to this constructivist study of teaching as its broad and open structure made room for the complexity of the teachers' lived classroom experience and the place of this experience within a larger context 'landscape' (Connelly, et al. 1997) outside the classroom. It supported my intent of constructing an understanding of dance in the classroom in partnership with the teachers using "personal practice knowledge" (Connelly, et al. 1997, p. 674) as our starting point (Carter, 1993; Elbaz, 1991). Schön (1983), like Connelly and Clandinin (1987), valued narrative inquiry as a means for examining teachers' practice, claiming practice rather than theory is the most useful starting point in understanding teacher's reality. Connelly and Clandinin (1987) commented, "practitioner thinking contains its own rationality" (p. 131) that is embedded in the daily practice of the teaching act. Teaching practice is 'concrete' and is in response to 'real' conditions, and attention to the everyday reality of classroom practice was in the foreground of this study. This study aimed to better understand what informed the teaching of dance in the classroom by looking at what teachers do and by listening to their stories.

Through reflection on the detail of practice, the teachers and I noted biographical experiences and interpreted these (Connelly and Clandinin, 1987; Schön, 1983; Schwab, 1978) and throughout this process several sub-stories emerged. Connelly and Clandinin (1987) noted, "We can see within the history of an individual a number of narrative unities" (p.131). A narrative unity may be described as a theme or plot (Berk, 1980) of which there are many within the reading and interpretation of personal history.

Time and consideration for the development of mutual trust was allowed for, so that our constructed understandings could bear the brunt of our examination and criticism (Connelly et al. 1997; Eisner, 1998). Consequently, sharing of histories, mutual
construction of understanding, and projection of future visions for what 'could be' in the dance classroom emerged within the context of the collaborative research relationship. Understanding was gained through collaborative research partnerships, which welcomed and valued the different knowledge claims (Polanyi, 1958) that each partner brought to the study.

Narrative inquiry allowed for mutual construction of understanding to be continually appraised with any change coming from the mutually discovered 'new ways of doing things'. Within a narrative theoretical framework, the unfolding narratives are both research outcomes and part of an educational experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991). While narrative inquiry commences with sharing personal experience, the consequent interpretation and construction of understanding leads to an altered way of looking, of seeing personal practice afresh, which in turn lead to “new ways of doing things” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1987, p.135). Connelly and Clandinin (1987) pointed out that “the reconstructions that occur in the act of research lead to changes in practice. That is, research itself is an act of school reform quite apart from any possible uses of the products of research” (p.135). While change may be an outcome of the present research, the intent remained to 'understand' rather than to 'change'. There was not an agenda at the outset to initiate change of teacher practice in order that it aligns with the researcher’s assumptions of better practice (Green, 2001).

3.5.2 Educational Connoisseurship

Falling within the constructivist paradigm is Eisner’s theory of connoisseurship which is based upon the discriminate perception of qualities of the environment or event (Schwandt, 1994), and making critiques or informed judgements about those qualities through what the inquirer considers the most appropriate form (Eisner, 1998). Teachers in this study interpreted their own knowledge and beliefs about dance in their classroom and represented some of these perceptions through a dance activity. The teachers’ words and actions provided the data for analysis. When stating actions I
am referring to gestures and mannerisms, as well as the teachers’ dance making and teaching.

At the core of educational connoisseurship are the acts of ‘seeing’ - perception, and ‘saying’ - criticism (Eisner, 1998). Eisner described perception as “a function or a meeting or congruence of the environment and what the individual/viewer brings to these qualities” (Eisner, 1998, p. 63). ‘Seeing’ therefore became our first connoisseurial task as we attended to the classroom environment, taught dance and participated in the dance activity. The teachers’ and my tasks as research partners were to perceive and reflect upon the “subtleties of form” (Eisner, 1985, p. 28) in order to perceive the phenomena, their dance and their teaching. With the teachers’ intimate knowledge of their classroom context and my intimate knowledge of dance education, we aimed to “attempt to make sense of or to interpret experience” (Schwandt, 1994, p.129).

The other key component of educational connoisseurship is 'saying', or making public what was 'seen'. Eisner (1998) referred to the notion of “criticism” (p. 82) as discriminate, reasoned interpretations and evaluations that provide critical insight. Criticism involves telling others what was seen. As with any criticism, it is always contestable, but its value is in its ability to share and inform within the public arena. Identification of issues and meanings of dance arose through our re-looking and reflection upon our practice and experience.

Guided by Eisner’s description of ‘connoisseurship’, the teachers and I critically reflected upon our experiences of dance and teaching dance, “The inquirer as connoisseur-turned-critic reconstructs or transforms his or her perceptions into some representational form that illuminates, interprets, and appraises the qualities that have been experienced” (Schwandt, 1994, p.129). Similarly, for the shared dance activity, our reflection on and discussion about the dance making process and product revealed further insights that assisted in answering the research questions.
Eisner viewed the form in which knowledge is constructed as critical to the knowledge represented and the perceptions gained. He stated, "forms through which humans represent their conception of the world have a major influence on what they are able to say about it" (Eisner, 1998, p.7). Implicit in this statement is recognition that humans choose to express ideas, views and notions of what it is to be human through diverse means. Activities such as mathematics, sculpture, music, written and spoken prose, geometry, dance and art all involve symbol systems and conventions that have been created and used to say something (Dewey, 1934). Diverse forms of representation exist and continue to evolve through their constant use. Each form provides a way to represent and engage with 'our world' and evolved because it fulfilled meaningful purposes (Goodman, 1978). Dance exists. People do it and some people, indeed a vast number of cultures throughout history, utilise and regard dance as a vital means for representing and communicating conditions of life. Dance is a way of experiencing and sharing/communicating experience. People make dances, using their intelligence to create dances that communicate intent. It is acknowledged that not everyone, or every culture, regards dance or mathematics, or singing, or physics in the same way or with the same importance. Nonetheless, my point is that dance is one way of knowing. It offers by its very nature a unique perspective for exploring and representing experience. Some people exalt it, and are publicly acclaimed for being skilled at it.

At the heart of this inquiry and its method was the premise that by giving teachers an opportunity to reflect upon and articulate their meanings of dance through dance itself, as well as through words, the study would gain deeper insights into teachers' meanings of dance in their classroom. Dance offered a means to feel and reflect upon personal meanings of dance. It provided opportunities to see subtleties, differing opinions and contrasting accounts. Dance, like any other form of representing experience, is capable of making 'connections' with individuals and groups, 'connections' that are transformative or simply enjoyable. "The selection of a form through which the world is to be represented not only influences what we can say, it also influences what we are likely to experience" (Eisner, 1998, p.8). Different forms of representation offer different opportunities to see and experience the self and the world (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998).
### 3.6 Data Collecting Methods

Access to teachers and schools was achieved by utilising a case study design. Carter (1990), Donmoyer (1990) and Stake (1994) all stated that a key strength of case studies is that they can capture a richness of information from various sources, such as documents, participant observation, interviews, artefacts, and archives. Further features of a case study were outlined by Merriam (1988) “A case study is an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used” (p.23). This study utilised co-structured interviews, shared dances and participant observations as the means for collecting data, which are outlined in this chapter.

#### 3.6.1 A Case Study Design

A case study design was in keeping with the aim of this research and allowed for a focus upon nine teachers’ contemporary practice in the context of their classrooms, with the view to gaining a depth and variety of information from several sources (Patton, 1990). The teachers were all experienced primary school teachers but were purposefully selected to represent a range of interest and experience in teaching dance in their classrooms (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Initially, the selection of the teachers rested upon their interest as volunteers in the study. Next, ongoing selection was shaped by the typicality of the teachers, that is, their representation of a range of interest and expertise in teaching dance. Finally, their selection was affected by their relative closeness to Dunedin, my home and place of work. As it turned out, more than enough teachers wanted to participate, the greater problem was limiting the sample size.
When studying any phenomena it is necessary to look for or establish opportunities in which to observe the focus of interest (Stake, 1994). Case studies provide flexible access to situations not usually available to everyone. As Donmoyer (1990) stated, “case studies can take us places where most of us would not have an opportunity to go” (p. 193). Adoption of a case study design allowed for the inclusion of the complexity of the classroom and did not demand simplification of the research site nor distance the relevance of the study from the participating teachers. I was cognisant of the warning made by Clark (1990):

Researchers of every tradition systematically under-complicate the educational settings under study. To fit the constraints of research design, time, language, theory, expectations, convenience and pre-ordained forms for reporting our work, we find ourselves studying cleaned-up, stripped down caricatures of reality. Small wonder, then, that practicing educators rarely find realistically helpful support, enlightenment or guidance from the research community (p. 334).

This study therefore endeavoured to keep the research process grounded and real for the teachers in the study, and real or recognisable for teachers reading the study.

A common theme throughout this study's theoretical framework and the data collection methods was that of ‘partnerships’ between the teachers and myself. The co-structured interviews, shared dances and participant observations used in this thesis were not static. The data collection process allowed for and encouraged partnerships that were alive and complicated by our human interactions. Hence space was allowed for spontaneity, chance, personality, ambiguity and emotions, in other words, the things that imbue partnerships with life and make them unique and cherishable.
3.6.2 Co-Structured Interviews

The perceptions and experiences of both the teachers and myself within this study were valued and shared through extensive interviewing. Beer (1997) noted, "Qualitative interviewing, when it acknowledges and capitalizes on the presence of human interviewers and of so-called interviewer effects, opens itself to capturing and comprehending such phenomena as perception, meaning, and experience" (p.110). My aim was to respect and record teachers' views, ideas, arguments and stories as they knew and told them. The interview design aimed to establish a balanced 'power' relationship and partnership that would blur distinctions between the interviewer and interviewee (Limerick, Burgess-Limerick and Grace, 1996; Oakley, 1986; Tripp, 1983). Schratz and Walker (1995) argued, "who the researcher is can no longer be left out of the account" (p.5). Further to this, as stated by Heshusius (1994), "Don't we reach out (whether we are aware of it or not) to what we want to know with all of ourselves, because we can't do anything else?" (p. 16).

Partnerships between the teachers and myself were sought as the research method of co-structured interviewing relies on honest dialogue and respects that we each have something to talk about and share. The notion that there is no "unidirectional flow of information" (Limerick, et al. 1996, p.449) is implicit in the use of dialogue as a mode of inquiry. Dialogue is by its nature a shared construct. As Beer (1997) commented:

Interviews are not precise, definitive, objective, clear, predictable, measurable or repeatable. They are full-blown human interactions, unique speech events with affective experience, cognitive struggle, verbal and non-verbal messages, in which human beings strive to construct: together and understand together explanations, stories, definitions, descriptions and ideas about the world (p.114).

Interviews are not tidy and the participants in the interview are not 'books' from which we extract information. Dialogue and interaction are core to the interview and the meaning making process. Within the present study, the relationships sought between the teachers and myself could best be described as "symmetrical" (Limerick et al. 1996, p.449) or, as I suggested in this dance context, 'partnered'. The teachers and I
developed trusting partnerships where we had opportunities to ask each other questions, lead the discussion, probe and prompt. The very act of inviting the teachers to take this role, offering them the respect of being active partners in research, immediately involved them and was intended to give them ownership of the research process and the product. In my work with teachers and students over the years, the issue of ownership and consultation has been vitally important and I see it as necessary for establishing trusting and congenial relationships that reduce hierarchical implications of power.

By consciously establishing a co-structured interview format I endeavoured to minimalise ‘power’ hierarchies that might be communicated through research roles, careers and gender. This potential issue informed my design as I recognised that most primary school teachers in New Zealand are female, and as it turned out seven of the nine teachers in this study are female. I was also conscious of the social context in which dance is often regarded as a ‘feminine’ activity and that males who are involved are sometimes vested with unwarranted importance (Keyworth, 2001), mainly as a result of the rarity of their involvement and the subsequent desire to prolong that involvement. Any notions of power associated with masculinity might also have been exacerbated by my position as a university lecturer.

My relevant classroom teaching experience played a key role in fostering the partnerships with the teachers and maintaining the grounded nature of the study. Within each interview partnership I was quick to convey my teaching background, and the fact that I too had experienced teaching dilemmas and issues. In other words, I was able to empathise with the teachers’ views and thereby note subtleties of meaning offered verbally and non-verbally. Beer (1997) commented on the usefulness of such an awareness, “that the interviewer be grounded enough in the life world of the respondent that she or he can properly understand the meaning of utterances about the subject at hand” (p.112).

A further issue that informed the interview design process was the emergence of dance as a new arts curriculum area and teachers’ consequent thirst for information,
professional development and assistance. Even though some teachers’ involvement may have been prompted by their desire to gain professional development, I did not intend the giving and flow of information to be one-way. The teachers were giving me a "gift" (Limerick et al. 1996, p.449) of their knowledge, and so it was equally important that I offered a gift in return.

For these reasons, the interview design in this study adopted a co-authored, negotiated approach, identified as being “co-structured” (Tripp, 1983, p.33). Co-structured interviews are “more akin to a discussion than to a traditional interview. Both participants can make an equal number of assertions and ask an equal number of questions, and both possess equal rights to challenge the other’s viewpoint” (Tripp, 1983, p.33). Co-structured interviews allow for both the interviewer and interviewee to fulfil listening and interpreting roles that foster rich 'owned' discussions. Beer (1997) highlighted that “The ‘data’ of interviews are not inside the head of the respondent waiting to be ‘picked’, but are created, in the sense of being organised out of existing knowledge and experience, during the interview” (p.112). An interview relationship of the like inferred by Beer creates opportunities to identify and criticise underlying assumptions by both parties. The co-structured format permits examination of assumptions and therefore may more clearly “reveal the existing opinions of the interviewee in the context of a world-view” (Tripp, 1983, p.34).

Within the present study the teachers and I aimed to identify assumptions about dance in the classroom, revealing similar and conflicting values and experiences that might tell of what supports or hinders the implementation of dance in the classroom.

As the relationship between each teacher and myself progressed, assumptions were explored in greater depth and meanings made and re-made (Burgess-Limerick, cited in Limerick et al. 1996). The relationships were fostered and protected, not only during our tape-recorded conversations, but also when re-presenting the discussions during the process of writing the thesis (Tripp, 1983). Maintaining a co-structured process required that the teachers be involved in the reporting and reading of the data. Reading and checking transcribed notes, and interpreting my written comments with
the right to reply, provided for a fair and rational presentation of our discussion and strengthened the value of the written text.

Our ongoing negotiation rested upon respect for each other's views and also an acknowledgment of the intent of the research and the audience for the research. Beyond transcribing discussions accurately, an issue for negotiation was "what the participants want written about what they said" (Tripp, 1983, p.35). I believed this was particularly pertinent when translating oral discussions between trusted parties into written text for the digestion of unknown readers, as well as known readers with whom one may relate on a daily basis, such as fellow teachers. Ensuring fair and rational presentation of the conversations and creating the record of the teachers' and my dialogue required negotiation and sensitivity to the teachers' ongoing working relationships.

Within co-authorship, there are the concerns that information will be lost as a result of the individuals changing their mind or vetoing the use of some data (Tripp, 1983). There is also the issue of how much negotiation is useful before it becomes a drain on time and resources (Tripp, 1983). In the present study, the teachers and I agreed on a negotiation process. Firstly, each teacher did not have access to any other teacher's text or case report. Respecting the 'everyday work relationships' that the teachers in this study must maintain during and after this study was an important consideration. Secondly, we agreed upon a number of negotiation cycles established at key stages. In adopting Tripp's (1983) model for negotiation, the negotiation stages suggested and consequently agreed to by the teachers and myself were: negotiation stage 1 - at the completion of the transcription of co-authored discussions; and, negotiation stage 2 - at the completion of the first draft of the results and findings within the thesis.

Adoption of this approach allowed for, as Tripp (1983) noted, "The original co-authored statements could thus be used without further modification, and the participants could moderate their impact by commenting upon the report as one written by the researcher from the co-authored statements. The comments were included in the final report" (p. 39). Tripp recognised that a study belongs to the
researcher, and therefore responsibility for key decisions rests with the researcher. In respect to the present study, I provided the teachers with the opportunity to "blame the researcher for the reporting of their views, and so to live with one another after the study" (Tripp, 1983, p.39). While it was certainly not the intention to create a situation where the effects of the information being reported would create problems for the teachers, it was advantageous to anticipate differences of opinion, and to have in place 'face saving' strategies should they be required. Notwithstanding these precautions and negotiation phases, Tripp (1983) and Scheurich (1995) noted that the final interpretation and analysis is the researcher's, and that this is inevitable.

Another aspect of the research process that allowed for the establishment of trusting environments and shared understandings included the teachers reading participant information sheets and signing consent forms that outlined the nature of their expected involvement. Prior to approaching teachers and schools I applied for ethical approval from the University of Otago, Ethics Committee. I went through this process twice. The first ethics application gained approval to enter schools and seek expressions of interest from teachers who might then volunteer to participate (see Appendix A). The second ethics application described the process of the study and the nature of the teachers' involvement should they be a part of the study (see Appendix B). Further to the teachers' consent, I also sought permission from their Principal in association with each school's Board of Trustees. This process was invaluable in clarifying the commitment required from the teachers and their school. It also ensured that the teachers and their school were clear about the focus of the study and the procedures for protecting their privacy (Adler and Adler, 1994). The ethics approval procedures also gave assurances about my suitability to enter classrooms to teach and to observe children and teachers (Eisner, 1998). From the outset teachers and their principals knew who I was. The teachers were clear about the study and their role as partners within the co-structured interviews, the shared dance and observations in the classrooms.

The discussion style of data collection created a fertile environment for sharing experiences and stories, and further, as Maykut and Morehouse (1994) argued, "We
achieve meaning through shared accounts" (p.38). I believe that the co-structured discussions sought in this research process yielded useful information, which helped to establish an understanding of the teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms.

3.6.3 A Shared Dance

This research is based on the assumption that there are multiple ways in which we construct meaning and share those accounts. Eisner's (1988, 1993, 1998) writings regarding educational connoisseurship and forms of representation affirmed this study's use of dance as a means for gaining further insights into teachers' meanings of dance in their classrooms. Eisner (1993) stated:

I believe there is much too much practical wisdom that tells us that the images created by literature, poetry, the visual arts, dance, and music give us insights that inform us in the special ways that only artistically rendered forms make possible (p.7).

In this study, a dance activity was valued for its potential to explore and communicate teachers' experiences, beliefs and tacit knowledge (Eisner, 1998; Polanyi, 1958). I believe that the addition of the kinaesthetic discourse more fully represented the holistic, integrated nature of the knowledge in question (Schwab, 1973). Yinger (1987) asked in respect to the dilemmas of codifying and reporting upon teachers' non-articulated practice, "What would become of efforts to codify this knowledge, to write it down? Would the form of written language distort and destroy its character, stripping it of its meaning and vitality?" (p. 309).

This study utilised dance as an abstract expressive communication medium relying on the body's movement in space and time as a means for articulating knowledge. I believe that utilising another medium for articulating tacit knowing and professional practice allowed further personal meaning to be presented. As Eisner (1993) stated, "Since forms of representation differ, the kinds of experiences they make possible also differ. Different kinds of experience lead to different meanings, which in turn, make different forms of understanding possible" (p.6). Looking to another form of
representation provoked further understanding and provided alternative means for capturing ambiguities, feelings and expressions that are not so easily accessed through verbal dialogue. Scheurich (1995) noted the value and potential of artistic forms of representation as perhaps being more able to fully capture the indeterminate nature of realities.

Within this study, teachers worked through a particular dance education process. This process involved the teachers choreographing and performing a very short sequence and then analysing it. I led this activity and assisted the teachers throughout the process. We then analysed their dance together, through further discussion. The analysis, based upon a video of each teacher’s dance (as approved by them), utilised a method of movement analysis described by Brennan (1999) as "word descriptions" (p.285), which relies on the use of common-use words and terms rather than a unique technical system or vocabulary. The analysis proceeded through a process of observing and describing the movements and form of the movement sequence, which then lead to interpretation and evaluation (Adshead, 1988). The co-analysis probed issues or revealed un-stated values about teaching dance in the classroom.

Providing the teachers with a diversity of media in which to communicate, share, and construct meaning was an important epistemological foundation of this thesis and diversified opportunities for constructing and sharing knowledge. The research process benefited from the further source of data, another opportunity to gain rich insights into teachers’ meanings of dance. Eisner (1993) said, "We exploit different forms of representation to construct meanings that might otherwise elude us" (p. 6). Stinson (1995) supported this view when she referred to her lived experiences of dancing as being most influential in her educational research, commenting, “we can think only with what we know 'in our bones'. And that attending to the sensory, followed by reflection, is essential in research” (p.52).

I believe that by kinaesthetically sensitising teachers to their thoughts and their feelings, further insights into their meanings of dance may have been elicited. As Eisner (1993) stated, “As sensibility is refined our ability to construct meaning within a domain increases” (p.6). Moreover, the kinaesthetic experience further sensitised my
(the teacher, researcher, observer) ability to see and recognise qualities (Dewey, 1934) with more precision. Stinson (1995) supported using diverse symbols (dance) to represent experience: “it will allow us to perceive more clearly, understand more deeply, the embodied others who are subjects if not participants in educational research” (p.53). It is safe to assume that the physical engagement in dance itself sensitised the teachers and myself to danced information, and I believe it also alerted us to assumptions about dancing and personal contexts that informed our movement. Brennan (1999) proposed that all movement has its own meaning which “can only be understood in context. The significance of a movement lies in what is done, who does it, where and when it is done, and why” (p.301).

The teachers and I agreed on a simple dance education activity based on one I had successfully carried out with many teachers in the past. We also agreed that the activity would be carried out after school in their own classroom with the furniture moved to one side. I started by spreading out a collection of approximately 50 photographs (Cooney and Burton, 1986) that depicted people, objects, abstract patterns and scenes from everyday activities. The teachers and I agreed on a focus question or statement that would be the topic of our dance. The focus mostly was – ‘for me dance education is?’ We then looked over the pictures aiming to select 3-4 photos that summed up or represented aspects of the topic. We then sat and discussed our photographs in relation to the topic and our personal experience. This led to the writing of words that captured some of the discussion and then to the finding of movement. The teachers were encouraged to continuously refer back to the pictures and the words if they needed to. Once we each had a collection of movements, I asked the teachers to manipulate the movements using the choreographic elements of space, body, time, relationships and energy (as noted in The Arts Curriculum for New Zealand Schools, 2000) and then we ordered our movements into a sequence. We then looked at each other’s movements, noting the use of the elements and the images. At this stage we taught each other our movements and rearranged them in an appropriate order to successfully communicate the topic of the dance. We then fine-tuned our dance by attending to the overall form of the dance. We utilised choreographic devices and structures to reinforce the intent of the sequence and its aesthetic interest to ourselves. We then noted performative issues such as where we would like to
perform it, where we would situate an audience, whether we would use music, would we need costumes and so on. We performed our sequence to our imagined audience, which for our own reference and analysis was the video camera.

Analysis of the activity occurred throughout but was the renewed focus at the end as we re-watched the dance and discussed it. Firstly, we discussed the overall process of choreographing the dance and how it was or was not successful in exploring our topic. Secondly, we described the majority of movements and moments in the dance, and then described the dance's structure. From this, interpretations and evaluations of the dance were made. This process of analysis mainly served as a process of reflection that helped the teachers and me to see and recognise the qualities of the dance. It also aided the translation of the dance into words for the purposes of this study. Throughout the dance activity, the teachers and I were collaborating with each other, as would be the case with students if I were to teach this activity in a typical classroom situation. Often it is the negotiation in the making of a dance, the reasoning that argues for an idea to be heard and included, that reveals differing opinions or reinforces ideas and feelings. In my years of teaching such activities, I have found them to reliably and successfully facilitate discussion and the creation of art works (albeit modest and underdeveloped). As a strategy for gaining further insights into teachers' meanings of dance in their classrooms, I trusted that here too the activity would prove to be useful.

Utilising dance itself as a research method provided opportunities for the teachers to reflect on their thoughts and feelings. Dance within the arts curriculum context provides the potential to arouse images of feelings (Langer, 1942) and, as Stinson (1995) noted, "not only heightens our awareness of [others]...but also what is inside ourselves. It allows us to notice what we are feeling in our own interior" (p.44). Given the aesthetic, emotional, physical and affective involvement required when teaching dance, it would seem reasonable to account for this through a dance activity. A shared dance as a data collecting strategy provided scope to see, feel and comprehend dance in the classroom and reflect upon what we thought it means.
3.6.4 Participant Observation

Repeated, systematic and purposeful observation has been regarded as “the bedrock source of human knowledge” (Adler and Adler, 1994, p. 377). Observation has been utilised as a means for data collection across the spectrum of research activity and can vary according to the research focus, the researcher, the research site and conditions. Participant observation is a distinct data collection method that recognises the value of researchers gathering data “from their subjects while interacting with them” (Adler and Adler, 1994, p.378). Tolich and Davidson (1999) described participant observation as, “participating in the actual research setting as much as possible, dealing with people who live in these settings” (p.6). Throughout the research process I sought to observe and inevitably participate within the “phenomenological complexity” (Adler and Adler, 1994, p. 378) of teachers’ classrooms where I could experience and witness dance being taught.

By utilizing participant observation as a data collection strategy, I had to declare and invite my own perspective and experience. As stated previously, I acknowledge that my experience is therefore part of the study. Tolich and Davidson (1999) stated, “if social researchers always remain part of the world they study, they must have an influence on the things they study. If we accept that, then all social research takes the form of participant observation, to some degree or another” (p. 38). Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) reiterated, “All social research is a form of participant observation” (p.249).

Participant observation allowed opportunities for authentic interactions between the teachers and myself that were meaningful and powerful in the context of this study, and provided opportunities to collect rich data. Moreover, the frequent, comfortable, and consistent participation with the teachers helped establish and maintain a healthy, quality research interaction. The observation activities with each teacher varied, however the following provides an overview of observational activities and interactions, and of how observations were recorded.
The teachers and I were not static in our observational roles. At times we were sitting and watching with a detached interest, and at other times we were participating in each other’s lessons. Gold (1958) described four modes that draw attention to and account for the different research roles within observational fieldwork, “the complete participant…the participant-as-observer…the observer-as-participant…and the complete observer” (p. 217). Gold’s delineation of four modes may be seen as somewhat outmoded in respect to the fourth mode, ‘the complete observer’, which made claims for non-interventional observation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Eisner’s (1998) reasoning about the interaction between the observer and the ‘observed’, corresponded with current thinking that some degree of intervention is inevitable. Nonetheless, the other three modes in Gold’s typology drew attention to detail that I found interesting.

During my initial observations of teachers teaching dance in the classroom, I was an ‘observer-as-participant’, where the emphasis was upon observing casually and non-directly (Adler and Adler, 1994). During my first ‘in classroom’ observations I did not consciously shape or direct the teachers’ teaching. I sat in the corner of the classroom and took observational notes. I concede that when 'sitting in' on another teacher’s teaching it is impossible not to be influencing the teacher in some small way. As such, the term ‘observer-as-participant’ described my role in this situation.

The role of ‘participant-as-observer’ is typified by co-operative and collaborative dialogue, where there is an interaction and "reciprocity of perspectives" (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994, p.256). This role confers partial membership within the group being studied. My involvement as ‘participant-observer’ was the dominant observational role in this study, and was most apparent during the co-structured discussions and informal staff room conversations.

Further into the research process, when I taught the teachers’ students, I was certainly accepted as an “insider…in the setting” (Adler and Adler, 1994, p.380). In this instance, I was the teacher giving myself the opportunity to self-reflect, but also giving the classroom teacher the opportunity to take the role of ‘participant-as-
observer' as they watched me teach. As the research partnership between each teacher and myself progressed, we increasingly became 'participant observers' of each other, and 'complete participants' within the research process.

While I roved across several of the observation roles described above, the interactional focus remained with managing and balancing the relationship or partnership between each teacher and myself. As mentioned earlier, a trusting relationship was essential to establishing a rapport wherein values, beliefs and needs were discussed. Furthermore, co-ownership of each discussion and exploration of detail within the discussion would be more likely to evolve within a carefully managed collaboration that was mindful of issues such as familiarity and strangeness, closeness and distance, involvement and detachment (Adler and Adler, 1994; Gold, 1958).

Throughout the data collection process, the teachers invested considerable energy into thinking, watching, reflecting, teaching and dancing, most of which was on top of their full-time job and often at the end of a tiring day. For several teachers, the area of dance was not a subject in which they were confident. Allowing someone to observe, question, and probe their constructions of dance in the classroom involved taking considerable risks. The consequent stress and disruption to school and after school routines were issues that they and I needed to manage. As the 'leader' in the research partnerships, I endeavoured to be alert to the teachers’ need for space and time, their need to think and be involved comfortably. I aimed to be flexible to their needs, and attempted to plan all classroom visits and activities well in advance, minimalising disruptions and surprises.

Time is a factor that needs consideration during participant observation data collection (Janesick, 1998). Time is an issue in respect to the pragmatics of collecting the data, gaining sufficient data and managing observational relationships (Adler and Adler, 1994). The length of each discussion, timing of my sitting in on lessons, and time of the day and week in which discussions and observations occurred may have all had an impact upon the data gathering process. Most of these issues were related to the quality of the teacher's day, whether it was a 'busy day', 'tense day', or perhaps a
'messy day'. The teachers also wanted a time limit placed upon their involvement. Each teacher wanted the data collection process to fit within the ten-week school term structure. I consequently managed each teacher's involvement to suit this. Fitting in with the teacher's reality was important and consequently the time spent with each teacher varied. With these considerations in mind, I prompted and supported teachers as they invested as much time as they could (and as I could) within the research process, up to the point when we thought that no more information could usefully be gained from any more observation (Patton, 1990).

Each teacher's own classroom was the core site for observations. In some instances, observations occurred in a school hall or activity room. The selection of site was always the teacher's choice. Having established a comfortable presence (from both the teacher's and my perspective) in the classroom, a further consideration was what to observe? Eisner (1998) noted that you observe with a "prefigured focus" or an "emergent focus" (p. 176). In this study I aimed to understand teachers' meanings of dance in their classroom and as such the study had a prefigured focus on the curriculum area of dance. I was observing teachers' teaching dance, talking about dance, dancing and watching dance and any other instance or activity that involved dance in their classroom. Dance was my focus, but with each teacher in each classroom setting I allowed the situations to reveal themselves without any pre-determined observational schedule that specified variables to be observed (Eisner, 1998).

Within this study's research design, the data collecting strategies of co-structured interviews, a shared dance and observations intermingled. Each strategy informed the other, sometimes strategies occurred concurrently, and the role of the teachers and myself shifted often. The case study structure allowed for this 'messiness', the intimacies and shifting perspectives to occur. Not only did this research design complement the constructivist framework of the study, it also respected the complex reality of the teachers’ classrooms and the complex nature of exploring meanings of dance in their classrooms.
3.6.5 Recording the Data

My records of observations were mainly in note form that I kept in a journal created for each teacher. Further to the tape-recorded and transcribed co-structured interviews, I took mental field notes that I expanded upon immediately after each interview (Tolich and Davidson, 1999). During lessons that I observed and participated in, I made considerable notes that recorded my observations. These observations were primarily chronological, following the flow of the lessons observed. Within these notes I highlighted observations that I found interesting in their recurring or contradictory nature. During the shared dance activity, the process and the dance were videoed. When the teachers observed my teaching they took notes that then fed back into our discussions. The teachers were given a personal diary at the very beginning of the research collaboration. I encouraged teachers to note in the diary any observations, thoughts, images, and questions. I explicitly stated that I did not want to read any notes they made in their diary, but encouraged them to refer to it during our discussions if they wanted to. The immediate response from the teachers when they were given the diary was very positive, and they were appreciative of the respect given to their private thoughts.

3.7 Data Analysis

This research was directed by the questions, 'what are nine primary school teachers' meanings of dance in their classrooms? and 'do these meanings support or hinder their teaching of dance?' By way of answering these questions, the teachers' views, stories, dances and teaching provided the data collected through co-structured interviews, shared dances, and participant observations. Analysis of the collected quantity of data required systematic and rigorous analysis that did not impose pre-determined hypotheses and that also respected inherent qualities in the data. An inductive analysis process accepts such diversity and breadth of data from the field and welcomes the emergence of meaning rather than the testing of given and pre-determined meanings.
As Maykut and Morehouse (1994) stated: "What becomes important to analyse emerges from the data itself, out of a process of inductive reasoning" (p.127). With an emphasis placed upon the teachers' and my constructions of meaning and the need to 'stay close' to the teachers' feelings, words and actions, the constant comparative method of data analysis as refined by Maykut and Morehouse (1994) was utilised in this study. The constant comparative method provided a clear procedural pathway for the analysis of a substantial quantity of data collected from a variety of sources.

An implicit phase within data analysis, that in itself is also a form of analysis, is communicating or 'writing' the data (Richardson, 1994). In the present study, meaning categories found from the constant comparative analyses were woven with my interpretations into nine narratives. These narratives evoke the individuality of the teachers in this study and invite the reader into their classrooms.

Figure 2., modified from Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p.135) illustrates the procedural pathway undertaken in this thesis.
Prior to outlining the above constant comparative analytical pathway, I briefly discuss
my 'researcher' role in 'seeing' the data.

I came to this research with my experience, expertise, values and assumptions that
informed this thesis and shaped the analysis of data. The study foregrounds the
teachers' constructions of meaning, yet in describing and interpreting the data my
perspective was also present. It can never be absent (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998;
Heshusius, 1994; Limerick et al. 1996; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Tolich and Davidson, 1999). As the data analysis proceeded, I was attuned to the teachers' experiences and meanings but also more aware of my own. A task during the analysis was not to discount my perspective but to sensitise it: to use my knowledge sensitively and 'see' meanings in the data where I thought they existed. Notwithstanding my experience and supposed expertise, I aimed to maximise opportunities for the data's meaning to reveal itself for what it was rather than what I wanted it to be. Dewey (1934) commented on this very issue:

Every critic, like every artist, has a bias, a predilection that is bound up with the very existence of individuality. It is his task to convert it into an organ of sensitive perception and of intelligent insight, and to do so without surrendering the instinctive preferences from which are derived direction and sincerity (p. 324).

My educated perspective and critical experience hopefully strengthened the data analysis. For better or worse it also branded the analysis as mine, irrespective of the analytical procedure employed.

3.7.1 The Constant Comparative Analysis

The distinguishing feature of constant comparative analysis is the ongoing comparison of smaller units of meaning as they are categorised (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) into larger groups of meaning. Sifting the data for meaning initially involves unitizing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) the data into stand-alone units of meaning that relate to the focus of the research. The comparison and subsequent grouping of units of meaning allows for continual refinement of categories. The ongoing sorting and grouping consists of re-visiting the units of meaning and constantly reviewing categories as relationships, patterns and characteristics emerge.
3.7.2 Collecting and Transcribing the Data

Collecting and transcribing the data occurred over an eleven-month period from November 2000 to October 2001. Most interviews were recorded on audiotape. Some playground, classroom and staffroom conversations were not recorded, however, I made entries in my journal after these conversations. The shared dance sessions were videotaped for each teacher's own reference and reflection during interviews. All transcripts were typed and returned to the teachers for their approval prior to coding the data.

3.7.3 Initial 'gut' Observations

Prior to coding the data I took time to reflect on my overall impressions gained from the interviews, dances and observations over the nine months of data gathering. I did not dwell on the detail but on 10 October 2001, I drew on a white board a diagram that included the themes or categories of teacher, children, dance and education system. The diagram, as shown below represented my response to the interconnected nature of these themes as discussed by the teachers.

Figure 3. Initial Observations of Related Categories
Having drawn this diagram it made a lot of sense to me, and I remember being very excited about it and showing it to a colleague. I sketched this drawing, cleared the white board and continued with the next stage of the data analysis.

3.7.4 Coding the Data

Coding the data began by coding each page of the transcribed notes. At the top of each page of transcript was a code that identified the source of data, interviewee and page number. The code key is as follows:

Data Source
I - interview
O - observations
S - shared dance

Interviewee
L - Lola: Oysterbay School
K - Kate: Oysterbay School
G - Gessie: Oysterbay School
E - Ethel: Oysterbay School
J - Joe: Oysterbay School
M - Mick: Sandy Track School
P - Paul: Sandy Track School
H - Helene: Monks Hill School
B - Bella: Bach Ave School

A typical code looked like: IL/20.11.00/2, which meant Interview with Lola, date, and transcript page 2. The identification of the school within the code was not necessary as it was assumed within the name code. The constant comparative method
offered the potential for units of meaning to be shifted and re-assessed within different categories. Being able to identify the original source of the unit of meaning relied on a data coding system that allowed for tracking each unit of meaning to its original interview or observation journal entry. This was an important detail during the later process when categories were reviewed in the context of the transcripts.

3.7.5 Chunking the Data

I photocopied all the data and then commenced coding 1,400 pages of transcribed interviews, inclusive of notes made of observations and shared dance reflections. The original data was stored safely and the copy was used in the cut-and-paste process of unitizing the data. Marshall, cited in Maykut and Morehouse, (1994) described the unitizing of meaning process as finding the “chunks of meaning” (p.128). The units of meaning varied in size, ranging from a sentence to several paragraphs. Each unit of meaning had to stand on its own and be self-explanatory. The units of meaning had to make sense to me in the context of this study, and particularly in the context of the relationship established between the teachers and myself throughout the interviews. The units of meaning were seen as ‘chunks’ of information that evolved from the conversations and observations with the teachers that related in any way to the research question.

Each unit of meaning was ruled off on the transcribed page and identified in the left hand margin by the page code and a key word or phrase that summed up that unit of meaning. These units of meaning were then cut and pasted onto data cards by Sam, a research assistant and postgraduate student familiar with my study. During this 10 day process, I sat in my office coding the data and Sam sat in an adjoining office pasting and stacking the cards according to the descriptor I wrote on each card under the code. This process found 45 initial meaning clusters.
3.7.6 Noting Initial Discoveries

The ensuing analysis of the data cards was carried out in what Sam and I called the ‘card room’, an empty office with plenty of bench and wall space. In following Maykut and Morehouse's (1994) inductive procedure, the next step in the analysis involved returning my attention to the focus of the study, noting this on a white board and then identifying any initial discoveries (ideas, thoughts, concepts, themes) that emerged during the data collection process and the unitizing process. My initial ‘gut’ observations recorded prior to coding the data, my observation journal, and the process of ‘chunking’ the data prompted this mind-mapping exercise. The discovery themes, as I called them, were written on another white board. This ‘Discovery’ chart was written on the white board next to the ‘focus of inquiry’ question and next to the listing of the initial data clusters.

3.7.7 Refining Discoveries

The ideas and concepts recorded on the ‘discovery’ chart were reviewed and refined into prominent themes. A prominent theme was then written on a card and taped to a space on the table. This card was called the “first provisional category” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.135). I then referred back to the unitized data cards to find cards that aligned with the concepts within the first provisional category. Each new card found was compared to others already categorised to establish similarity or suitability of fit within that category. Lincoln and Guba (1985), in describing this process, coined the terms “look-a like” (p.203) or ‘feels like’. In working through this process, the data were inductively sorted into categories. Data cards that did not fit with the provisional category were checked against other themes identified on the discovery chart. If a match was not found a new provisional category was established. Each card was now checked against the cards in the initial provisional category to check for similarities and differences. This process continued with the creation of new categories to accommodate the units of meaning.
Maykut and Morehouse (1994) noted three additional issues at this stage of the process. Firstly, some cards may fit into several categories. This was an ongoing issue for me at this stage in the analysis. I decided to follow the rule of 'best fit' and placed each card in only one pile. This was in contrast to the approach of Maykut and Morehouse, who suggested that you copy the card and place the data in two or more piles. I considered this, but in the end felt that, had I done this, I would have not been able to manage the repetition of data as I aimed to find the essence of the distinct categories.

Secondly, the data analysis process may prompt the researcher to remember moments, discussions not yet noted on a unit of meaning card. I made new cards as this occurred. Maykut and Morehouse noted a third issue wherein not all data is relevant; some is outside the focus of the study. However, I decided that no card was irrelevant and took the approach of valuing everything, as this would be consistent with the unstructured approach taken in the interviews that allowed for the narratives to take an organic course. Consequently, as new data presented itself, I continued to make categories.

3.7.8 Refinement of Categories

By re-looking at the cards in each category, the characteristics of each category were identified. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) noted that the process here is to "distil the meaning carried in the cards, and write a rule that will serve as the basis for including or excluding subsequent data cards in the category" (p.139). Stating this inclusion rule as a propositional statement reflects the collective meaning in the cards. The propositional statements may be seen as "statements of fact" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.140) tentatively proposed and based upon the data. When establishing the propositional statements for each category, each data card within the category was re-read to check suitability. This resulted in categories merging, new categories evolving and some cards being shifted from one category to another. In the process of
developing the propositional statements, I read and refined all the cards twice more. This process was consistent with the ongoing comparison and distillation of meaning that Maykut and Morehouse described. Refinement of categories occurred according to the data card's 'fit' with the rule of inclusion or propositional statement rather than the 'looks like, feels like' criteria initially used. At the completion of this process the dominant categories were evident.

3.7.9 Exploration of Relationships and Patterns across Categories

"The focus in this step in analysis is to closely examine the many propositional statements that have emerged" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 143). The propositional statements were examined with a view to reveal any patterns or groupings or, conversely, any 'stand alone' statements. Statements that continued to 'stand alone' and those that connected with other statements were then regarded as "outcome propositions" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p.144). The outcome propositions identified the major categories that came out of the data and provided the focus for the discussion of teachers' meanings of dance in their classroom. In examining the propositional statements I arranged the data cards into larger connected groupings. I identified these large groupings as: Teacher, Children, Dance and Curriculum. In charting the journey of the data analysis and the 'findings' at each stage, it became apparent that my initial 'gut' observations made in October 2001 were similar to groupings made above as of 16 February 2002.

3.7.10 Reviewing

At this stage I consulted with a dance education peer who reviewed the whole process, listened to my ideas and discussed the outcome propositions. Sharing the research gave me the opportunity to air ideas and field questions from someone who had
knowledge of the field and insights into teaching in the primary school. This process prompted further examination of the outcome propositions and analysis of connections within the data.

Following this discussion, I unintentionally met with one of the teachers in the study with whom I shared the meanings categories. The teacher and I discussed the propositions and the categories. This teacher could relate to most of the categories and propositions, and recognised the issues and their own reality of teaching dance as described by the propositional statements. This meeting, though not a planned component of the study, confirmed the appropriateness of the meaning categories. It was at this point that I decided to commence the writing of the teacher narratives.

There comes a time in the process of data collection and analysis when you have to decide that you have enough information. Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to a “saturation point” (p.188) where no further data is adding new information. Lincoln and Guba (1985) made the point that during the analysis process you reach a stage when any further data collection and analysis is redundant. Further to this, I was conscious of the teachers’ time and energy given to this study and I did not want to ‘overstay my welcome’. I too had time and resource issues that required me to accept that I had reached a point of adequate data collection and analysis.

3.7.11 Writing the Analysis

Upon completing the above process, I chose to further interpret the data through nine individual narratives that honoured the teachers’ individuality and simultaneously alluded to the meaning categories. With the meaning categories displayed on a whiteboard, writing the teacher narratives allowed me to communicate the depth of the material gathered, but at the same time enliven the study with the teachers’ stories and our voices. In writing and re-writing the narratives, I was honing the analysis (Richardson, 1994) but I was also reaching for a form that revealed the richness and
interrelationships within the data, the humanity of the teachers and the relationships that the teachers and I had developed.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Validity

Within qualitative studies such as this, there is no validation of a truth, or ‘finding the answer’ in the right way (Wolcott, 1990). There are many ways of making sense of any one ‘reality’ and there will always be multiple interpretations of objects, events and phenomena. This study was about nine primary school teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms. The descriptions and interpretations of the data and the ensuing analysis were ours. We made the meaning, and as such the notion of validity is in regard to how the teachers and I have made sense of the information. Through our interaction, critical elements were identified and plausible interpretations made. Wolcott (1990), in discussing validity, stated, "What I seek is something else, a quality that points more to identifying critical elements and wringing plausible interpretations from them, something one can pursue without becoming obsessed with finding the right or ultimate answer, the correct version, the truth" (p.146). Notions of validity are not associated with true or valid interpretations, but are better regarded as useful, fulfilling, rewarding interpretations - to us (Crotty, 1998). The validity of the study for other readers is again dependent upon those readers' engagement with the thesis and the meanings they then construct. Donmoyer (1990) reiterated this issue:

Rival interpretations often reflect the use of alternative theoretical languages, and languages are not true or false, only more or less adequate. Even adequacy can only be assessed in terms of particular purposes in particular contexts, and ultimately it must be the reader who decides whether the principal's interpretation of his interactions with the staff serves the readers' purpose in the readers' particular situation (p. 194).

This position that there is no one truth, no one valid interpretation, fits the constructivist approach of this study. This is not to say that the interpretations made cannot be further refined or discussed. The more interpretations are discussed and
made available to the research consumer, the better. Indeed it is hoped that the research design and the interpretations made in this study are discussed and perhaps even used as starting points for further research. Kvale (1996) noted, "readers [may] envisage possibilities to expand and enrich the repertoire of social constructions available to practitioners and others" (p.235).

This study was not guided by a quest for validity in terms of dependability and generalisability. These terms imply some kind of standardisation where the study can be replicated with a different sample in order to confirm or disprove any findings. While interpretations made or methods used may prompt further research, replication is not really tenable chiefly because the implementation and interpretation of methods and findings were the teachers and mine at this time in our histories. We all brought considerable conscious and unconscious baggage to each moment of the interviews, observations and dances (Scheurich, 1995), and it was we who negotiated the meanings within these contexts. The ownership implied here is supported by Wolcott's position regarding the uniqueness inherent in any one piece of social research, "I personalise the world I research and intellectualise the world of my experience" (1990, p.144).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that rather than look for the validity of a study in terms of its "truth value" (p.296), the qualitative researcher needs to show that records are represented accurately and are credible. In this study I did wish to build an argument for my interpretations and base any 'new knowledge' upon sound, relevant, descriptions of the teachers' practice in this research (Kvale, 1996). Trustworthiness relates to how the study can persuade the reader that the study's process and findings are worth paying attention to (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Within this study trustworthiness was established through transparency of method, triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing.
3.8.1 Transparency of Method

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) noted that research credibility is initiated by providing detailed descriptions of process and product. Transparency of the procedures used to collect and analyse data allows others to look closely at the evolution of the study. The detailed account of the methods used in this study, as outlined in this chapter, provide the reader with opportunities to follow the theories and design utilised in this study and their rationales. Merriam (1988) also commented upon transparency when she expressed the need for researchers to articulate “protocols” (p. 56) that outline procedures used when working with several case studies in several sites.

Protocols place a focus on the procedures used that assist the researcher in collecting data. Having a clear set of procedures is particularly useful in multi-case and multi-site case studies (Merriam, 1988). Moreover, when the collection of data involves several sources over varied time frames, the potential to lose focus is ongoing. As I was the sole investigator in the present study, a protocol helped in keeping a constancy of focus and alerted me to potential problems. A protocol also articulates procedures for others who may want to know how the case studies were established. This transparency aids in developing trustworthiness. The following protocol is brief yet was useful as an overview and procedural guide during the various stages of the study.

3.8.1.1 Case Study Protocol

Aim:

The purpose of this study was to establish nine primary school teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms and better understand teachers' views of what inhibits or supports their teaching of dance in the classroom.
Rationale:

Dance is set to be a compulsory subject area implemented in primary schools as part of the arts curriculum in 2003. Currently there is an air of anxiety from teachers regarding the teaching of dance in their classrooms. New curriculum, teaching resources and in-service packages are set to determine what dance in the classroom is supposed to be about, but what do the teachers mean by dance in their classroom, and what do they believe is hindering or supporting their teaching of dance? This study explores these issues that may impact on future curriculum development, resource development and in-service provision in New Zealand.

Theory:

Constructivist theory acknowledged the plurality and plasticity of knowledge that was valued in this study. Narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991) and educational connoisseurship (Eisner, 1998) provided the methodological frameworks for gaining teachers' views. A case study research design (Stake, 1994) provided access to the teachers and their classrooms.

Procedures:

Procedures for establishing the case studies are outlined below.

A. Initial contact with schools

1. I telephoned school principals to introduce myself and the study, and then planned an after school dance in-service session that would further introduce the study and me.

2. The principal either made a time for the in-service on the phone, or consulted with staff and got back to me, or made a date to meet with me at which time an in-service time was arranged.

3. I presented the after school dance in-service:
   - I introduced the study and purpose of the in-service.
   - Teachers completed a survey (See appendix A).
   - I outlined the content of the in-service and my role-play as the teacher.
   - Teachers participated in the in-service.
• Teachers who wished to volunteer as case studies completed the Further Participation form.

• I phoned the principal after the in-service and expressed gratitude for their support.

B. Selecting the Sample - the Teachers

1. The teachers completed the Further Participation form and self identified their degree of experience and interest in teaching dance.

2. I noted the teachers' experience and attitudes as shown during the in-service.

3. Having gained many responses expressing interest in further involvement, I referred to the surveys and selected teachers that:
   • Represented a diversity of experience and confidence.
   • I felt would be sources of considerable information.
   • Were accessible in terms of time and location.

4. I contacted the principal and discussed my interest in involving the relevant teachers.

5. I then spoke with the teachers on the phone and visited the school at an arranged time where they signed the consent form that formalised their participation (See appendix B).

6. I re-explained the study to each teacher and the data collecting activities that they would be involved in and the time frame.

7. I asked the principal to ask the Board of Trustees to approve the teachers' and the schools' involvement.

8. I wrote a letter to each teacher formally acknowledging their involvement and noting when they agreed to commence the data collection activities.
C. Commencing Each Case Study

1. The teachers and I agreed to an after-school meeting at a mutually suitable time.

2. The teacher and I discussed their comfort in being audio and video recorded during discussions and while teaching in their classroom.

3. The teacher and I discussed the scope of questions for each other, such as, past experience, beliefs, expectations, needs and aspirations.

4. We arranged a timetable of visits.

5. I gave the teacher a personal journal in which they could record their own notes and ideas that could be used to prompt their thoughts during discussions.

D. Analysis and Writing

1. All conversations were transcribed and returned to the teacher for member checking.

2. Key issues and themes extrapolated through constant comparative method of analysis.

3. Teachers’ narratives written as discrete case studies.

4. Teacher’s personal narrative shared with each teacher for further comment.

3.8.2 Member Checking

A further feature supporting the credibility of the present research pertains to its ability to accurately represent the study from the teacher’s point of view. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified the crucial importance of checking data, interpretations and conclusions with the stakeholders in the study from where the data originated. Member checking confirms accuracy of the data and also confirms the use of the data in respect to its intent. While the teachers in this study were informed about the aim of the study before all data was collected, member checking re-affirmed the point of the
research, the importance of their voice in it, and the potential audience that might read their comments. As stated earlier in this chapter, teachers needed to have a right of reply so as they could represent their view, but also in order to protect themselves and their work relationships.

The teachers in the study were given the opportunity to provide two member checks. I requested the first check once the interviews were transcribed and prior to the inductive analysis of the interviews. The second check was requested once I had drafted the teachers’ narratives as presented in chapter four. The teachers were invited to comment upon what I had written and were able to include comments if they felt that a point needed to be made that explained their views or reaffirmed the text (Tripp, 1983).

The teachers were informed of the opportunity to check the material before the collection of data commenced. In all cases the teachers were happy about this. One teacher in particular expressed a genuine interest in providing comments in the discussion of results chapter. In addition to member checks serving as a ‘checking’ strategy, they were also a means for including the teachers in the study and valuing their input throughout the study. This reduced the possibility of teachers feeling ‘used’ by the researcher. The member checking process also aided management of the research site and departure from it. Eisner (1998) referred to the importance of “leaving the site clean” (p.175). Eisner specifically referred to the affective state in which the researcher leaves a school, so that the teachers feel good about their work, their contribution to the research and that teachers’ working relationships have not been compromised. This was a genuine concern in this study, particularly where five cases came from the one school.
3.8.3 Triangulation

As outlined earlier, a characteristic of case studies is the collection of data from a variety of sources. While the variety adds depth of data, it also strengthens the design of a study. Triangulation is a term used to find a secure point of reference from which further references will occur. It is achieved by finding an agreed position by converging on that position from different points. The multiple points can be grouped into four modes (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), being: different sources, methods, investigators and theories. Of these, this study drew upon a variety of sources of data obtained through co-structured interviews, observations and shared dances. It also valued the analysis processes offered within the constant comparative method and then the ongoing analysis in writing and re-writing the narratives (Richardson, 1994). The data from these multiple sources and analyses were used to support interpretations made.

Of interest to me was Richardson’s (1994) contestation of the term triangulation and her reference to “crystallization” (p.522). Richardson queries whether secure two-dimensional points of reference are tenable given that we accept multiple views and diverse constructions of reality. The crystal metaphor presents an image that alludes to diversity, change and perspective. As Richardson stated, “What we see depends on our angle of repose” (p.522). The image of a crystal appeals as it maintains notions of structure, as in triangulation, yet expands on this and acknowledges multiple viewpoints, refractions and reflections.

3.8.4 Peer Debriefing

Throughout the study I regularly de-briefed with a post-graduate student who was an experienced primary school teacher and dance educator. With this peer I discussed all aspects of the study. Being an experienced dance teacher and research student, this peer was able to question methodological strategies as well as data analysis and
interpretations. Such peer debriefing was invaluable. Further to this, I met regularly with my two supervisors who were also experienced educators and intimately aware of the primary school context. These meetings were vital in clarifying and challenging my oft passionate beliefs and interests, as sometimes one’s own passion causes narrow vision and limits the emerging meanings within the data (Eisner, 1998). I also consulted with a professor in dance who visited the University of Otago over several years for short periods of time. I gave each chapter to her for comment and also walked her through the process of the research. Thus, an audit trail was maintained and articulated for different peers and supervisors (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994).

3.9 Methodology Summary

In summary, the peer relationships sought with the teachers, as outlined above, strongly informed the methods employed in this research which sought to describe nine primary school teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms and the implications these have for the implementation of dance in primary schools. The study aimed to capture the teachers’ stories from their lived perspective, and at the same time acknowledge the reality that the researcher has a history and social context as well. Valuing the stories and experiences told in this study involved valuing the tellers of the stories. The teachers were not just ‘sources of data’; they were people with an interest in what this study aimed to understand. They gave their time, access to their personal histories, access to their classrooms and their profession. These were not lightly given and certainly not lightly received. As a teacher myself, I know how intimidating it can be to have others watch your teaching, but then to allow for in-depth discussion of the teaching and then to dance about it – well, it almost seemed impossible that any teacher would want to participate. Nine teachers agreed to participate and they have my absolute respect. I believe that they respected what I was attempting to do in this study and felt confident that the methods employed would reveal information that in the long term would benefit other teachers in New Zealand.
Chapter Four
Teachers’ Narratives

"The potential of dance, the joy and the fun" (Lola).

"Your input is as important as the other person’s input no matter what experience you bring to the dance" (Bella).

4.1 Nine Teachers’ Stories

This chapter presents nine narratives that tell of teachers’ meanings of dance in their primary school classrooms. Each narrative draws upon data gained through co-structured interviews, participant observations, and a shared dance activity. The following narratives evoke issues and circumstances that maintain the richness and individuality of each teacher’s story, yet also variously include the meaning categories distilled through the constant comparative analysis.

The teachers and my interactions were ‘conversational’, prompting and responding to each other’s interests and ideas equally. Joint ownership (Mishler, 1986) of our conversations and dances encouraged trust and comfort, which in turn nurtured genuine discussions and sharing of personal experiences. After a process of describing, interpreting and analysing the data, I have re-told our stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 1991) and experiences (Eisner, 1993) as closely as possible to the way they emerged during the interviews, observations and shared dances. The following narratives present the journeys of the teachers and myself as we came to know each other and understand dance in their classrooms.

Prior to writing the case study narratives, I completed a cross case analysis utilising Maykut and Morehouse’s (1994) constant comparative method. Approximately 1260 pages of transcripts collected from almost 50 hours of interviews, 18 hours of creating
shared dances’ and 54 hours of observations were unitised onto data cards. Throughout this data categorising process I sifted and sorted 2700 ‘units of meaning’ (data cards) six times, finally settling upon 31 meaning categories, each characterised with a propositional statement. Table 3 below records the names and propositional statements of the meaning categories that were further grouped into the four larger categories of teachers, children, dance and curriculum.

Table 3. Meaning Categories: Teachers, Children, Dance and Curriculum.

Table 3. Meaning Categories: Teachers, Children, Dance and Curriculum.

Teachers
1. Teachers’ Danced Stories: Teachers’ analysis of their own dances revealed that their dance was full of personal meaning.
2. Teachers’ Personal Comfort: Feeling comfortable with self and then with others informed the teachers’ willingness to teach and learn dance.
3. Knowledge and Confidence: Increased knowledge and confidence to teach dance came from personalised talking, sharing and doing.
4. Teachers’ Barriers: Anything could be seen as a barrier, including dance itself.
5. Teachers’ Dance Experience: Experience in dance during childhood, young adulthood and teacher training informed teachers’ meanings of dance.
6. The Teacher is the Experience: Teachers had individual personalities, strengths, interests, styles and needs that informed their teaching.
7. ‘Do it, feel it, try it, start it’: Dance itself provided the intrinsic motivation to teach dance once the teachers accepted that they knew something of dance.
8. Teaching Strategies: How the teachers taught dance provided insight into their meanings of dance in the classroom.
9. Process and Product: The potential and purpose of dance in the classroom was most apparent when the teachers and the children had a shared understanding of the priority given to the processes or the products.
11. Teaching Resources: The teachers wanted resources yet were unclear about how to use them. (Once the teachers identify their aims and needs then they are more able to use resources)
12. Teachers’ Views of Education: Education involved offering diverse opportunities and experiences, dance being one of these.
Children

1. "Making it alive for children" (Control and Creativity): When there was balance between children's ownership of ideas and teachers' lesson direction and with understood behavioural expectations, the classroom was "alive".

2. Valuing the Children: When the children were valued as partners in the classroom they were more likely to support the teacher's vision.

3. Knowing the Children: Teachers acknowledged that knowing the children as diverse individuals was vital.

4. Children Achieving Success: Positive dance experience provided for success that in turn enlightened teachers' perceptions of dance and in some cases their perceptions of the children.

5. Influences Outside the Classroom: Values and attitudes held within the children's home and community influenced how they valued dance in the classroom.

6. Classroom as Text: The classrooms were constructed learning environments that provided a text that was read by the parents and the children.

Dance

1. Dance Offers a Fun Way to Learn: Teachers believed that enjoyment was an important component of education and that dance offered a fun way to learn.

2. Dance Builds Confidence: Teachers valued dance for its ability to develop children's self esteem and confidence.

3. Dance as a Vehicle: Dance in the classroom was able to combine and motivate learning in a variety of other curriculum areas.

4. Life Skills: Life skills were developed through a dance programme.

5. Understanding People and their Dance: Teachers wanted the children to value a diversity of dances and their functions for those people.

6. Dancing to Learn: Dance provided opportunity for physical, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic and intellectual challenges and engagement.

7. Creatively Moving: Creatively exploring ideas and feelings through movement was the essence of dance in the teachers' programmes.

8. Ephemeral Pedagogical Challenges: The ephemeral and the abstract nature of dance provided intellectual and pedagogical challenges for the teachers and the children.

9. Diverse Thinking: Teachers valued dance as it allowed for diverse thinking and responses from the children.
Curriculum

1. **The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum**: The curriculum's value was seen only when it related to the teacher's classroom 'reality' in respect to terminology, ideas, and planning.

2. **Elements of Dance**: Teachers wanted to know more about the elements of dance and once they did, felt more confident to start and extend activities.

3. **"How do I know he is exploring"**: Learning what to 'see' and how to report it was difficult, time consuming and predicated by outcomes' statements.

4. **Reconciling the Curriculum with the Classroom**: Once the aims, structures and expectations of a lesson were established, the teachers were more able to reconcile the curriculum's outcomes orientation and expectations.

The above meaning categories sat in the back of my mind, as I returned to the original transcripts and commenced the writing process of re-storying the data into nine narratives. The meaning categories identified above, and the process of creating them, provided 'a map of the terrain', a useful guide during the writing process of each teacher's story. The process of establishing the meaning categories through the constant comparative method produced a familiarity with the data and awareness of dominant issues. Presenting the detail of the data as nine narratives maintained the presence of each teacher, the qualities of their teaching and our rich interactions as we came to understand our practices within this study. It was intended that the narratives would also invite the reader into the study, offering the reader a more holistic view of the complex relationships between teachers, children, dance and curriculum.

### 4.2 The Teachers

The teachers have been introduced in the same order as I met them. Each narrative charts the evolution of our interactions, from the initial meeting with each teacher, the classroom observations and dances, to the final interview. All teachers' names are pseudonyms and were selected in order to protect themselves, students and schools. The narratives introduce the teachers and also introduce many issues within this study that are further discussed in Chapter Five.
Extensive use of quotes in each narrative presents the diversity and richness of the data collected. I have endeavoured to quote the teachers exactly, however, in several instances I have included clarification words in parenthesis in order to provide either a sense of the context or to avoid ambiguity. I have also edited conversational habits such as ‘yeah’, ‘you know’, and rambling conversation from some quotes. I have indicated this with ... between phrases and sentences.

Having teachers from the same schools was not intentional or a focus within the study. The first five teachers, Lola, Ethel, Gessie, Kate, and Joe were all from Oyster Bay Primary School, and the next two teachers, Mick and Paul, were from Sandy Track Primary School. These teachers presented a range of interests and experience in teaching dance, and were accessible in terms of travel and time. When it came time to create the ‘shared dances’ with these teachers, I asked how they wanted to work, either solely with me, or in a group with their peers. Some opted to work solely with me and some with their peers. This option was provided so as not to disturb the work environment and the established peer relationships. I was extremely careful in every case to minimalise disturbance to the ‘staff room ecology’ (Eisner, 1998). Data was collected from four school sites between November 2000 and October 2001.
4.3 Lola

"The best way to learn is to do it."

"Dance education ... to think through movement, allows participation all the way through from idea to process to product."

Lola was enthusiastic about being a part of this study. As soon as she knew of it, she wanted to participate. As a very experienced ‘leading’ teacher with a passion for education in general and a new-found interest in dance, Lola saw her involvement as a way to “self educate” and share her developing views about dance in the classroom. Lola had been trialling the implementation of the dance strand in the new Arts curriculum, and consequently was quite familiar with the document and the realities of teaching dance in her classroom at Oyster Bay School. Lola was also quite experienced in teaching art and drama.

Lola taught a group of 25 boys and girls, 6-8 years old in a composite class, where the students ranged across grades 1, 2 and 3. This composite ‘junior’ primary class was one of four junior composite classes in this 10-teacher school within a lower/middle socio-economic community. Oyster Bay School is located within an older city suburb. The school has a playground disproportionately small for the population of the school, new playground climbing equipment, a double classroom activity space and a library. Further to Lola’s teaching role she was the assistant principal, responsible for curriculum and staff development with her fellow staff.

During the first interview, Lola declared her belief that dance acts as an active contributor to children’s education by extending thinking, making education enjoyable, developing life skills and encouraging individual diversity:

Initially I taught it because it would be a fun thing to do. ... You notice kids doing things not otherwise seen (in the classroom). They think more deeply when showing things in movement that they have never said before ... they try to show really complex ideas which they would not attempt in other subjects ... it involves personal and interpersonal discussion ... everyone can have their own ideas ... movement shows emotions a lot more than through words ... it allows for group and independent work, a mix is important.
When pressed as to why dance was so important in her classroom, Lola replied:

Because it allows you opportunities to relate things that you learn in your head with things that you feel. It links the emotional feelings and thoughts as well as the academic thoughts, but you have to think about them, and once you have thought about them that deeply inside, you don’t forget them, you don’t forget the feeling.

Throughout our conversations Lola referenced dance from this holistic perspective. She promoted the notion that she was educating the whole child, and was trying to avoid compartmentalising the body, the mind, and the emotions. In valuing these connections Lola foregrounds the learner, her children, within the classroom. She valued dance as it allowed children to:

move their ideas...to move what we feel...and explore doing it in different ways...we’re going to look at what we do and sort of refine...it’s like we had an idea and we thought about moving it, and no, that’s not quite what I wanted to show, so we’re going to change it and refine it.

I speculatively asked Lola about the distinction between dance and dance education, or dance out of the classroom and dance within the classroom. Lola emphasised that dance in the classroom was about “refinement of your thinking...and...it’s much more of a conscious thing.” She went on to compare dance education to writing in the classroom:

Dance education is that process, ...of constructing meaning together. Because it’s like when we are writing, when we are learning to write, one of the things we do is shared writing and the other thing we do is conferencing... I mean we could just do writing everyday at school and it could just be an activity. And the children could do a lot of writing. But if we are looking at the writing process, then we want children to become more informed about what they are doing and why they are doing it and how they are doing it, and to be able to make conscious decisions about how they do it... I guess dance is what has been done in schools for a long time. The children come in and they learn a folk dance, every year they have a three week session on folk dance- and well, they learn more dances and become better dancers- the ones who really enjoy it, or they develop an attitude problem about dance, like the teachers who teach it...and that’s just dance. Then dance education is realising the purpose of dancing and the potential of dance, the joy and the fun.

It was quite apparent that Lola had experience in teaching dance and had thought about the purpose of dance in her classroom. In establishing her approach to dance
Lola acknowledged the children’s role in sharing and building dance understandings. She described the classroom as a “community” – a place where these shared understandings are formed. In general, Lola equally valued the boys and girls contribution in the classroom, but in relation to dance noted:

(dance offered) an easy way for everyone to participate at once – everyone engaged...boys tend to be much more creative and lateral thinkers, girls neat and good.

This value judgement may indicate a bias; nonetheless, Lola noted the different ways that boys and girls participated, emphasising that they were different, not better or worse. However, she did focus the discussion on the boys’ work, as she was surprised by her observations that:

Dance education caters for the boys. The less emphasis on verbal language and more emphasis on visual movement – to think through movement, allows participation all the way through from idea to process to product.

The phrase “to think through movement” encapsulated Lola’s meaning of dance for her classroom. It was a view that I shared, and in extensive conversations we began to reflect upon each other’s lifetime experiences informing our views.

Lola spoke of her childhood and had strong memories of dance in her early school days:

I think dance, probably folk dance, is the only dance I remember from primary school. I loved folk dance. I think it was the only time of the day when you actually did things that weren’t sort of sitting down. (We) worked pretty much on our own...but it (dance) was like the first time it was like, oh my goodness we get to hold hands with other people and you get to change partners and I loved that. It was the only time that links were made between the children in the classroom.

Lola enjoyed folk dance, which was memorable for allowing movement and social mixing. Childhood experiences within Lola’s family were also mentioned, Lola noted her mother as being most influential:

I don’t think I’ve ever struggled to be a teacher. I think of the things I did as a child, the way...(mum) related to me, read to me. I can remember that she
allowed us room to be ourselves, but at the same time there were always lots of exciting things happening... We were allowed to build huts under the kitchen table, to build and leap all around the kitchen and the environment would be allowed to stay like that...I had three brothers and we basically did everything together...she nurtured that, she allowed us to have space.

Lola also spoke very fondly of “exploring with the family...at the beach...at camp” in the rural New Zealand of her childhood. Lola used words such as “adventure, communicating, play, imaginative, shared interests, freedom, and social” and summed it up as “shared richness” and of being “shown a multitude of paths”. After observing Lola’s teaching these are the very words that I would use to describe her classroom. When speaking of her teachers, Lola had positive and negative memories:

I remember my first year teacher. I loved her... I can remember my little word tin...I can remember how much she praised. I remember other good teachers too. There were classes where I absolutely thrived. Then I got into a class where there was a male teacher and for some reason he identified me as a really bad kid. We were always going out to play really badly organised sport activity. Where you’d wait in line with 30 kids and get perhaps one turn of the bat...your interest in the game was pretty low 'cause you weren’t in it for much. He didn’t share any of the interests I shared which were drama and you know dance and singing and things. We just clashed.

Lola had strong childhood memories of the teachers and of key experiences. As a teacher herself, Lola articulated the importance of relationships between teacher and child, and children with each other:

I think there are lots of things I do in my classroom that actually help the dance teaching, you know what I mean, like the things you start up right at the beginning of the year until you’re building a little community of learning. The children support one another, encourage one another and nobody laughs at each other. So you develop all those group working skills.

Lola’s earliest memory of dance was at a wedding when she was 5 years old, “I can remember this situation of being waltzed around all night...with my feet dangling.” She could also remember going to country hall dances with the family when she was older. Irrespective of many positive dance experiences, Lola said:

So I just think, because of my earlier experiences I just didn’t see them as dance experiences, there was some sort of negative experience. I just actually did get the idea from a really young age that I wasn’t a dancer and I gained a stereotype view of what a dancer was and it was the pink, the soft pink leotard
or tutu and the little dainty ballet shoes and the hair, you know and floating. It wasn’t me, so my first dance class experiences weren’t anywhere near the fun I thought they were going to be. And when I tried to make them fun with my friend I could tell that it was not appreciated.

This ‘dance class’ experience stands in contrast to other experiences. Lola, having had many exciting and happy dance experiences in her childhood nonetheless learned from her experience in a “dance class” that she was not a dancer. The very environment that could nurture a love of dance for Lola became the place where she learned firmly that what she did was not dance, and that she was not a dancer. Of interest is that Lola’s individual meaning of dance as a child was overridden by a socially dominant stereotype of dance – ballet, which left Lola frustrated and disappointed. Her perceptions of what dance could be were invalidated by the experience offered by this particular teacher.

An experience during Lola’s teacher training had a large impact on her, not in regard to dance specifically, but in regard to gaining a positive teaching experience. She remembered one placement where her model [associate] teacher “gave me complete freedom, and I felt safe. I didn’t feel threatened at all...I had total control. It was my class, it was my programme... and that was the best year ever.” This placement appears to have offered Lola a taste of the rewards of teaching, of having a personal and direct impact on others’ lives. I felt that this and many other experiences shaped how Lola approached her role as a teacher.

Our conversation returned to teaching as Lola asked me about my philosophy. My first comment in reply to Lola was “I think my teaching philosophy is (about) ‘comfortability’, in just being you...on the day, in the moment.” In response to this, Lola raised the issues of balancing life with work, and in particular the ongoing demands of teaching. She said, “To be a good teacher you have to give so much of yourself and you don’t know where to stop.” We talked at length of the personal costs when that balance or limit is not found. Our conversation returned to our teaching philosophies, which we found were remarkably similar. We both acknowledged ‘inclusion’ as being core to our practice. Here we spoke of structuring activities that
maximised access. Another point of agreement was on the value of diverse activities that provide opportunities for children to know themselves and others. We both thought that dance provided such an experience.

In regard to the philosophy of teaching dance, Lola commented, "You need to experience its (dances') power and potential in order to develop a philosophy on teaching it." Throughout our conversations, Lola returned to the importance of "doing it" in order to know it. As we talked around our respective teaching practice we began to speak of how we taught dance, of strategies that we used to initiate a dance class and keep it rolling. We both spoke of humour and fun, of children owning the process and the product, having clear purposes and expectations and then being able to "dump" it all and go with a child’s new idea and direction. As Lola said, "they might come up with better alternatives that achieve the same goal." This led to the ability to "ad lib", to improvise while teaching, in order to go with the flow of the children and the moment. Here Lola commented:

And that's the thing that curriculum documents don't allow much any more, or they don't while the documents are still new and unfamiliar to people. Until you carry those contents of the curriculum around inside you...you know them...you can recognise immediately when something happens and you can, 'oh we are achieving this, we have covered this'. The curriculum documents and the curriculum delivery plans that schools have set in place to cope with the new curriculum and to make sure everyone is teaching to them is stopping those things (improvising, going with the flow of the moment) from happening.

As a leading teacher and someone trialling the new arts curriculum, Lola felt comfortable with this curriculum and was able to:

Look at it more critically and think, 'well I'm not going to teach (content of the curriculum that) I know to be beyond them, I'm going to teach what I still believe...is going to be a good speed (level) for the children.

We went on to talk about the role of the curriculum and its use by the teacher:

The big picture runs on, I mean if you are still working at the level where you are trying to fit a document that doesn't match the children’s needs, I mean they are just words on the page. Somebody's trying to define something in a fair way to give an indication of a level of understanding, in some cases they have achieved that well and in other cases it is not so good. If you were the
kind of teacher who always looked for the direction from above and thought that someone knew better than you so you just followed that model? In all the time I was trying to make my teaching match the AO’s (Achievement Objectives) my teaching was horrible and my teaching was not comfortable, it didn’t sit right.

Lola admitted (as did I) that when teaching she didn’t follow the curriculum in the first instance. She taught from where she and the children were at, and then looked to the curriculum to note the children’s achievements and to find teaching progression ideas. Lola reflected on “dealing” with the new science curriculum and remembered the feeling of not knowing:

I mean at the time that you are dealing with a new document you are thinking ‘oh my goodness, I thought I knew quite a bit about science, but maybe I don’t’. But you get the point from working with it, and with experience, you say ‘yes, I know what I’m doing’. Knowing the document is a powerful thing, knowing what they contain it’s a very freeing thing, because you can start to look at them more critically and put them into your own philosophy, your own big picture.

Lola goes on to highlight that the dance curriculum contains “really good things” but is at times unclear. Lola had the teaching experience and confidence in her knowledge of her children to ‘critically’ read and use the dance curriculum and keep a firm view on maintaining the ‘big picture’, which was the education of the children rather than the implementation of the curriculum. Lola knew the dance curriculum, she knew what worked for her when teaching dance and how to match this with the curriculum, yet even so, when she referred to the dance curriculum for guidance about relating dance across the classroom themes, for example, volcanoes:

I looked at level one in the dance curriculum and there was nothing (learning examples) that looked like (our volcano activities)…I thought there is nothing that affects what I was trying to do with my students.

Her response was “am I on the right track?” Lola still sought assurances that what she was doing was appropriate. Lola empathised with other teachers when:

She doesn’t even understand the words you (the curriculum) have used to describe that objective that she is supposed to be heading toward. She understands the next level and all the other ones but that one has been worded
in such a way that it just puzzles her and confuses her and she thinks that it's something she doesn't know or understand.

Lola and I agreed on positive and negative impacts the curriculum can have and the usefulness of such documents to provide direction and change in education. Lola strongly advocated for the need to support teachers to use them effectively and for documents that meet the teachers’ needs:

I’m a curriculum fan too, but they do not automatically increase teacher knowledge or understanding of a curriculum area. In fact, without professional development programmes that challenge and support teachers to become familiar with the new documents and up-skill themselves, there may be no change in classroom practice at all. During the consultation process (re the draft curriculum) most teachers said that the terminology was too specialist and therefore inaccessible to the primary school teacher. This clearly indicates the limited level of knowledge, skills and experience in this learning area. The document does not build knowledge and experience. It only points out to teachers what they do not know, and therefore probably knocks confidence. What they need are well-written handbooks and resources that support their own growth and learning as they explore and develop their dance teaching.

Lola, in stating the need for help, places the emphasis upon the teacher’s personal growth and learning. Lola has made the distinction between the teacher as learner and the teacher as teacher. She points out the importance of teachers’ self development as an enabler, providing them with the confidence and the knowledge required to teach dance effectively. Lola believed a part of this self-development relates to critical reflection and the development of personal philosophies:

But I think it is really important that teachers, while we have curriculum documents, are critical readers of them as well and I don’t think all teachers are. I don’t think all teachers have really strong philosophies about what children should learn, how children should learn, and why they should learn.

Our conversations continually returned to the teacher, not just focusing on us but other teachers with varying experience in teaching dance:

What do you do when you are a teacher that doesn’t like dance/dancing? It is interesting. Can you be a good teacher if you have never danced and do not know what it feels like to dance? Do you know what I mean? Or can you, it’s like, can you teach kids to swim and not swim yourself? I have heard people say that you can be a good dance teacher and you do not have to be a good dancer. At the same time, there is the philosophy that to be a good teacher of writing you have to understand the writing process. You have to have been a
writer enough to have known which bits are difficult and what it is all about, that writing is not just a school activity that you do... but the reality of writing is that every time you write something it's a giving of yourself or a sharing of who you are. The teachers, who think that the most important thing is to mark the spelling and correct the full stops and capital letters, are missing the big picture about why you write which is to communicate ideas, thoughts and feelings. So to be a good dance teacher or a good anything teacher, if you don’t sort of understand the whole process - like if you are not a risk taker yourself.

Lola raised the issue of experience in dancing and its relationship to teaching dance. In doing so, Lola outlined a distinction between feeling/knowing the process and being good at the actual craft. The issue as she defined it is not whether you are a teacher who is a good dancer, but whether you are a teacher who has an appreciation of the totality of the process of attempting the craft of dancing/making dances and who can highlight for the children where it can lead if they choose to pursue excellence in practice. Lola answers her question about having to be a dancer to be a teacher of dance in the negative with the qualifier that you do need to have felt the process, ‘the difficult bits’ and be able to place the dance experiences in a wider context where the child can see the role of dance for different people.

Lola also mentioned ‘risk taking’ in regard to taking the effort to participate in an activity and a process that you are not initially comfortable with. Lola felt that this was a common scenario for many teachers in respect to learning to teach dance. Nonetheless she stated:

Yes, things like risk taking is the more...you force yourself to take risks the more you realise that it is not as scary or as negative as you think. The more you push yourself to take risks, the more you realise how quickly you can learn more things...the way of challenging yourself, you just say ‘this is hard and I feel very anxious and nervous about this, but it is going to be good for me and I may even enjoy it’.

In discussing what we felt the teachers were risking, we agreed that it was about revealing the private self and teaching practice in your own classroom to others, to the public. Conversation revolved around the notion of the classroom as being your own private world for the day, and of how opening that out to others, including ‘experts’ such as researchers, other teachers, and parents can be very threatening. Associated
with the risk of teaching dance was the issue of security, of moving from the known to the unknown, where private ideas and feelings within a private body are revealed through that same body as a public medium. Lola asked:

Why when you dance creatively with someone else watching, you worry about it? When you just enjoy it when nobody else is watching.

In respect to the initial insecurities of teaching dance and dancing in front of others, Lola mused:

I wonder if that is sort of almost like a necessary process for teachers to go through, that they just start off, that they have to start, that they have never had any dance in their life, or limited dance, they have to just start, well everybody has to start just where they are at... see the potential and just dabble a bit, but also exploring and questioning for yourself, what is dance? Because when does a physical movement become a dance, and when does a dance stop being a dance and just be a physical movement.

Lola continually related the larger philosophical issues such as ‘what is dance’ to the classroom situation. Lola provided her own insights to these questions, saying “Teachers can only teach from their own knowledge and experience, which may be limited”. Lola encouraged teachers to accept personal ‘limited knowledge and experience’ as the starting point in becoming confident to teach dance, and then to move towards seeking new understandings by reflecting upon and questioning their own and others practice. Lola recognised the reality of not knowing all the answers or all the ways to teach dance, and the sheer discomfort of initially doing dance in front of others. Nonetheless, she saw her experience as her beginning point for teaching dance rather than a conclusion for not teaching dance.

In respect to developing personal confidence to teach dance, Lola thought “the more I teach dance, the more I want to, actually I feel the need to have space and time or a place where I can dance myself to explore the ideas I have.” We went on to discuss the notion of small groups of teachers in her school going into the activity room and dancing together, playing with movement, being silly in a non-threatening environment with friends, and getting feedback from each other about what works, what looks good and trying out ideas before doing them with the children. Lola
remembered when she began teaching she did a similar thing, though by herself, with the visual arts:

So I really taught myself about the visual arts when I got out teaching. And the way I did it, was every time I had an idea about an art project, I would actually work through the idea myself. ...I broke it down into these steps that makes it manageable for children – manageable in terms of my giving instructions – and it’s thinking through some of the possibilities as a way of opening your mind. It’s like giving yourself a bit of challenge...when you haven’t got experience yourself to know where to go next by exploring some of the possibilities...its almost the best way to learn...if you’re coming to terms with the elements of dance.

In reflecting upon her teaching experience, Lola concluded, “The best way to learn is to do it.” We discussed “do it” as being to feel it as a learner and then to translate this experience when you are teaching it. The duality of the teacher role as learner and teacher is further complicated by the teaching practice of being the leader and the follower within the classroom. Lola commented in respect to her drama teaching experience:

(to) direct children enough to make it easy for them to start thinking of a response...(then) the children take control, and its only through experience that you learn that just because the children are giving you ideas and taking control of the direction of the thing (lesson), you have not lost control. Do you know what I mean, as the teacher? ... There are very simple and effective ways for taking the control back without spoiling or damaging what’s happening in the drama, but you need to have had the experience, or you need to have the knowledge of how to do that.

Lola returned to the theme of gaining experience, teaching dance, ‘doing it’, as being the best way of gaining the knowledge. Lola also conceded that each teacher has their personal style when teaching dance, their own way of balancing the children’s ownership of ideas with the teacher’s direction, and with behavioural expectations. Nonetheless Lola was speaking from her observations of children over many years when she stated:

It can be very difficult, because once children have had that model (independence in learning) its really hard for them to go back to the (teaching) style where “I’ll show you’ and ‘I’ll tell you how to do it, just copy’, because teachers can never keep up with the potential of the student.
Lola laughed about the many mistakes and happenings in finding strategies for establishing the pedagogical balance between teacher control and children’s creativity. However, it was apparent when watching Lola teach that her relationship with each child was crucial in teaching the group.

For me not having to give too much input, it was leaving the problem, leaving the situation to the children. They all have ideas, I’ve seen that, when I leave things really open, I’m blown away by the different types of things they do. The way they will work so hard to negotiate – because the stakes are higher for them, because the ideas are their own, they are more willing to work hard at those group skills.

Her attention to the individual, not necessarily in her role as a teacher, is important for Lola:

That’s something that I have taken from my own life – that just acknowledging the way somebody feels about something makes them feel like: I’m not unusual, this is alright.

Lola was attuned to the learning needs of individuals and the choices teachers can make in enhancing learning situations in their classroom:

Children who just need a different way or a different style of learning. So basically as a teacher I have a choice, whether I make it easier for that child to fit in and learn things well, by varying the task so that it suits that person, or just accepting that their behaviour isn’t going to be exactly the same. I can create the discipline moment by not recognising that the child needs a different way, by demanding that the child fit the one path that I’ve set. In that way the teacher creates the discipline moments by not acknowledging the differences.

Issues of conforming to one way of teaching and one way of learning were raised several times by Lola. This was in regard to the children in her classroom but also to herself as the teacher. These issues informed her dance teaching, as she felt that there were expectations of what a teacher does, or is, that limited her freedom to teach as she wanted to:

It’s difficult because sometimes it’s those external things. Those external judgements of what a teacher is that make you try and conform or behave in a certain way.
Lola went on to describe her awareness that “a group of parents are watching you behave in a certain way ... maintain control ... judge who is in control ... judging the noise level”. Also, having “student teachers observing ... college tutors visiting” impacted upon how she wanted to be seen as a teacher. Ironically, this differed with how she “really” was when no one was watching:

When someone is watching you start to feel that you want to be in control anyway, rather than just allowing things to happen in a really natural way.

Lola noticed that these teaching expectations were compounded by dance stereotypes that “they look at it (dance) in a very narrow way – ballet” Also, that there are teachers “who are really quite anxious about the airy-fairy, ethereal, creative type dance. And he was asking about gay men and dance.” Lola also recalled, “I’ve been labelled an exhibitionist if I get up and dance”. Lola noted that it was not her problem that she wanted to dance, it simply reflected “the limitations that people put on themselves.” For her personally, one reason why she valued dance in the classroom was because “it’s like you’re challenging society”, challenging others, the parents and the children to “pull them out of their little bubble and try and do it (dance and learn) in a different way.” She noted that her school’s inclusion of Samoan dance, and dance from other cultures, has been a good starting point for not only connecting to the community by inviting parents in as guest teacher ‘experts’, but also in acknowledging the diverse nature of dance for the children.

When Lola and I created our ‘shared dance’ we again realised the importance of having established trusting relationships within the dance classroom. For me this was most clearly born out when a teaching peer of Lola’s wanted to participate. Over our four meetings Lola and I had established an excellent rapport, which was not sustainable in the presence of a third party, and the session was awkward up to the point when she left. Lola and I went on to work happily with much laughter. When we reflected on the dance and the process, Lola and I established words that summed up our dance about what dance was in the classroom: “nurturing, exploration, togetherness and risk, free exploration, and shared understandings.” When I asked if these words represented the experience and dance in the classroom, Lola confirmed “They are very good words.” Lola commented that the actual process of creating the
dance and then the reflection on the dance, “helped in a way that just talking might not have, because it was the imagery, the feltness.” Lola also spoke of the ephemeral nature of dance positively, in regards to the freedom to change and manipulate the movements. She also commented on qualities of meanings that elude verbalisation, “it means something inside that you want to be said, but you don’t quite know what it is...It’s almost like you already know something inside, that you don’t even know that you know it.” Nonetheless, when we reviewed our dance, Lola noted, “our dance is not as ambiguous as I thought it might be to an audience.” The experience also revealed to us some differences in how we go about teaching dance, particularly in finding the initiating point for the movement, for example, using an image or metaphor or an actual movement idea.

We finished our shared dance session discussing and laughing about our actual physical ability in accessing movement and the mental training in remembering movement. We thoroughly enjoyed the session, Lola commenting “As an adult when do you ever get the opportunity to express yourself through movement, to use images such as an albatross.”

My observation of our dance and the way Lola participated, prompted memories of our earlier conversations about the importance of process, enjoying learning, thinking and feeling with the whole person, recognising the individual’s contribution, and refining ideas. Our shared dance not only raised extra issues, it also served to confirm what we had talked about.

On several occasions Lola made the statement “dance is the barrier” to her teaching of it, yet “dance education was the enabler”. Implicit in this is the focus on what the child is learning and the strategies employed to emphasise the process of engaging all the children in an educational and enjoyable activity. A comment Lola made near the end of our conversations highlighted Lola’s perspective and reveals something about how she has found her way to teach dance:

To be a good teacher, I think you need to be sort of innovative, and responsive to the child as well. I think you have to be able to read almost what is going
on. Observe so carefully and read what is going on with the child, so that the
cue or the prompt for the next step that you provide is as close to the right one
as you can really get it.

Lola and I finished our interviews in a café. Here we went over the previous
conversations and discussed any new ideas. Lola commented on how much she
enjoyed the process and how helpful it was in furthering her understanding of dance
in her classroom. As was so often the case, Lola honed in on a specific teaching issue.
She spoke about the dance facilitation process she observed me employ, where
students' ideas are gathered and used in such a way that there is not only a dance
product but a dance that the students feel they own. We coined the phrase “ask, use
and pattern” as a summation of that particular process. ‘Ask’ for the children’s ideas,
then actually ‘use’ them, albeit perhaps only some of them, and then ‘pattern’ the
movements into a structure. We both liked this and Lola thought it was a good catchy
way to help teachers in their role as choreographer or pattern maker with the children.

The session finished and we hugged each other and promised to keep in touch.
4.4 Ethel

"I do not think you have to make them (the children) good at it (dance). I think you have to make them feel good about it."

"You never know (what you need) until you've tried it."

Of all the teachers in this study Ethel had been teaching for the longest period of time. Ethel was pragmatic in streamlining classroom planning and had learned what the "system wanted". Ethel had a wealth of local knowledge, and she noted, "I'm now teaching the children of some of my first students". She was certainly an identifiable personality at Oyster Bay School and understood the local socio-economic mix and issues that informed the school. Ethel taught years 1, 2 and 3 (6 – 8 year olds). This composite class had 20 boys and girls.

With the advent of the new Arts curriculum and her school's involvement in trialling it, our initial conversation focused on the curriculum and in particular on planning dance lessons and programmes that reflected the curriculum's learning outcomes. Ethel talked of the place of dance in relation to the physical education curriculum and then to drama and music.

During our conversations Ethel’s initial comments about the planning of dance in her classroom indicated her predisposition towards steps and having dancing skills:

Your learning outcomes that you wanted them to be able to do at the end. It might have been certain steps- you might want them to Polka. That sort of thing. It might have been a step… a particular dance. (And) Like if you said to me originally when the curriculum came out that we had to do dance… I’d have said: probably folk dance. That type of thing.

Near the end of the interview process Ethel indicated that her view of dance had changed over the course of our conversations:
So for me now it’s more, its more a whole range of movements whether they be large body or small body... like to me dance would have always been using your feet... but now I know its not.

Ethel’s prior experience in dance informed her approach to dance in her classroom. We talked about her childhood and early adult experiences. Ethel couldn’t remember any dance or arts in her primary years:

Reading, writing and arithmetic. Forget about the arts. Forget about music...you didn’t do any of that.

In contrast to Lola, Ethel was warned by the nuns about being ‘too social’ when they were learning dance in high school. Ethel remembered that in her all girls school no one learned the boy’s part in the dance. It appeared that boys were taboo:

But that was the Catholic nuns for you, for years I thought you got pregnant holding hands behind the Post Office. Because we’d been told so often. It’s true. They used to get up there and they used to tell you ‘oh so and so is pregnant’.

Irrespective of the ‘warnings’ and ‘protective measures’, Ethel did learn some dance at high school:

Like when I was at school, some people hated dance...we learned ballroom dancing, and some people absolutely loathed that. Maybe because you’re not good at it I suppose.

As one of 8 children in her family on an isolated farm, Ethel remembered very little socialising, yet she liked dance and sought it at “Mr Joe Brown’s dances at the Cultural Hall”, yet even here she was chaperoned by one of her brothers. Dance was about socialising and yet participation was controlled in light of dance’s ‘suspect’ relationship or role within courtship. The issues illustrate the social function of dance in Ethel’s rural New Zealand community as a means for enabling ‘controlled’ female/male meetings. In this context, being able to dance -‘do the steps’ had notable social community value.
In light of this social dance experience, when asked what the main benefit of dance was for her children Ethel noted:

I’d like to think that they were a little bit more uninhibited, you know. Because some of them are still sort of quite – they draw back from doing things. Like you’ll get some children who will write a wonderful story, but don’t really want to share it.

Ethel did not want the children to feel negative about learning anything when they have been trying their best. She stressed: “it’s got to be an experience you enjoy, or people hate it.” She made reference back to her experience again remembering her fellow students who could not dance and how they “loathed” it. In asking her do you have to ensure that the children are good at dance to get the success and enjoyment? :

No. I do not think you have to make them good at it. I think you have to make them feel good about it. Feel good about it. So you give lots of praise for the kid’s effort. Not the good job. It’s always the effort I like. Boys in particular – and I could be wrong here – I think they might sort of be less enthusiastic than the girls, I don’t know.”

It seemed apparent that Ethel preferred this positive, process-orientated approach to the skill based ‘right and wrong’ approach that she experienced in her school days. The issue of boy’s participation arose and led us to discuss strategies for involving boys and girls in dance. I spoke of the need for the teacher to have an aim and then to break down the aim into bite sized do-able activities, in much the same way that you introduce the steps in learning to write. Ethel firmly agreed with this process, again reinforcing the need for positive learning experiences. I said, “I think it’s your job to have the children leaving this classroom loving to learn”. To which Ethel replied, “Yeah, and it doesn’t – to me it doesn’t matter what subject (curriculum area) it is.”

We went on to talk of integrating dance across the curriculum. We discussed folk dance as one part of the dance curriculum that connects strongly with cultural studies:

If you are doing it (a unit) based on a country, you can do some dances based on that country... you look at the culture. If we were doing a country we would normally look at costumes, the dances, the music.
Ethel related this view to studying Samoan Culture and Maori Culture. She also noted that through this kind of programme it’s possible to connect with the local community in developing understanding and valuing their expertise. Ethel orientated the conversation to the theme work that she is currently doing on ‘water’ and began to discuss the creative dance possibilities:

You can also be creatures of the water. So there’s another part...we’re doing conservation and creatures that live in the water.

We moved on to speak of what supports or hinders her teaching of dance:

Well what supports you? I think the things that support you are colleagues who have a bit of knowledge. Even if they haven’t got a bit of knowledge, if they are enthusiastic. I think that helps... But also somewhere you need to have resources, you know to give you some ideas.... A video tape like in drama...something that gives you ideas, something more or less like this: introduction-feet activities, warm-up -follow the leader, introduce the elements of dance...”

Ethel wanted ideas and lesson recipes that she could use and adapt. She felt the need for outside support, particularly ideas, which she thought were missing from the new arts curriculum.

She also mentioned space as being difficult and felt that they were lucky to have an activity room to move in. In relation to space she spoke of the weather and the need to do fitness indoors when it is raining, “Sometimes its wet and you’re not going to do fitness, you can do dance instead –10 minutes of movement”. I asked if she invites children to do some ‘dance’ or some ‘movement’? Ethel replied “I don’t think I necessarily call it dance...I might just say: OK can you move...yeah, I don’t bring in the dance bit probably.” Ethel is shying away from the word dance, maybe because of her assumptions of what the children will think about dance or of what expectations the word dance implies for herself and the children. She also returns to associations with physical education, the curriculum area from which she first taught dance.

In respect to the new arts curriculum Ethel noted the similarities between dance and drama:
When you look at it there’s very little difference between the drama and the dance...a lot of the drama, if you did the same things, you could actually marry them along together.

We talked around the topic of curriculum content, where Ethel noted the continual expansion of curriculum areas within the documents, the arts now being:

four things (dance, drama, visual art and music)...It’s the same with Health and Physical Education...you’ve got to pick out the element of the health part and when you are doing your phys ed part, you’ve got to pick out the phys ed part from the health.

Ethel also spoke of the expansion of the number of curricula, “add to that technology and science technology – so I mean you’ve got five new topics that we didn’t used to have to teach.” Underpinning this discussion was not the fact that these “topics” or curricula are new, but the reporting and assessment of all the areas as distinct curricula is a new requirement. As Ethel stated:

All the topics must be covered, and they must be seen to be covered. They’ve got to be assessed and you’ve got to have the results if somebody comes in looking for them.

We went on to suggest the impact of this on Ethel’s teaching:

Yes it is restrictive. A lot of work writing up work... You had teachable moments. Like if your social studies topic was say the bakery, and then suddenly across the road a builder arrived, there was no reason in the world why you wouldn’t stop doing the bakery and do the builder. But nowadays you can’t do it. No and sometimes you get into a topic – like when we got into bread, and the kids were really involved, they would have loved to have found out other things, but you’ve got to move on because you haven’t got enough time. I find the time constraints (impinge) in your own time.

Ethel finds planning and reporting burdensome and very time consuming. Ethel went on to show me the planning that she does in maths and reading. As noted earlier planning was an issue for Ethel, and she looked to the curriculum areas to provide guidance and content. However, Ethel now feels the impact of the curriculum, as the expectations on planning and reporting have changed. This frustrates her teaching where she misses her past freedom to find spontaneous ‘teachable moments’.
For Ethel, the biggest implication of increased paperwork in her classroom is that of prioritising her time and her curriculum:

Like some things I cannot leave out and have to have their specific time, one of them is written language, the other is reading and the other is maths. Leave out other things if you have to, but you cannot leave out these.

In delving into Ethel’s reasoning:

I feel this way because I think that children, who achieve in those areas, have high self esteem. I don’t think that children perceive great artists, or that you can draw particularly well as particularly wonderful. They may perceive that slightly more about people out in the playground, like good sportsmen, good runners, but apart from that no.

I asked Ethel whether other activities like the arts and, for example, dance could also develop self esteem and confidence, and whether it might be equally valuable as maths and reading in developing self esteem? Ethel replied:

Yes. I would give it equal value. I’d be quite happy to drop my theme time and devote it to dance, if I thought it would help the children’s self esteem. It would not worry me at all. But I would not forgo my maths, my reading and my language.

Ethel went on to outline the school’s commitment to the arts, for example being a trial school for the new arts curriculum. Nonetheless, the place of the 3 R’s – reading, writing and arithmetic dominates Ethel’s curriculum. For me as a parent of children similar to the age that Ethel was teaching, and a researcher, I share Ethel’s dilemma. The 3 R’s provide essential and basic skills that provide access to much learning throughout life. However, how much time in the day must they command and can other curriculum areas provide optimal means for providing those skills? Is this a hangover from past practice where the 3 R’s came first, as it was in Ethel’s childhood, and do the 3R’s remain an ongoing concern for today’s parents?

Turning back to teaching dance in her classroom, Ethel noted that “I start with the learning outcomes”. I perceived that this threw up the problem of finding the ideas
and the “right music” that would make the connection between the outcomes and the students. We spoke of our expectations of music. I felt that for Ethel, music was important in suggesting movement to children, that the rhythms inspired the action.

I mean I think you do it better for a rhythm and a beat. But, I don’t think it is necessary, but some sort of rhythm, yes.

Ethel was concerned about her knowledge of music resources:

but you see my knowledge is just about non-existent...but I don’t even know what music is available to help me.

It was ironic that Ethel then went on to describe the most wonderful dance lesson that built upon her visual arts knowledge about patterns, and how this extended into connecting body parts and making patterns in space, all of which made no reference to music at all. Music was a recurring barrier for Ethel. In discussing some of Ethel’s lessons in detail, Ethel described her activity:

Well I want them to use locomotive and non-locomotive movements. That’s really the aim. Yeah, and I suppose exploring – its really exploring body shapes isn’t it. Like use different parts of their body to create shapes, but what you’re really looking for is them using different parts of their body to create those different movements.

Ethel explained the lesson in detail and we talked about the ideas and progressions for the children. The detailed talking through of one lesson appeared to reassure Ethel that what she was doing was OK, and in a way reinforced for her that her ideas were as good as those provided in any resource. Upon reflecting about Ethel’s comfort with her ideas and planning she said:

I feel the only way that you can get to grips with it is virtually have a go and then have someone look at it and say: ‘OK it wasn’t too bad but you could do this and you could do this’, and I think that is the best way to learn. Because it wasn’t until I started doing the planning that I realised the strands and the achievement objectives with learning the language of dance...(were similar across the four arts)...(it is) probably easier from a planning...same strands, and they’ve even got the same terms for them.

Doing it, the planning and the teaching, is what prompts Ethel to learn and to know what she needs to know.
When observing Ethel teaching, I noticed the strong direction offered to the children and her use of humour. When teaching dance she demonstrated ideas, which the children copied. The lesson structure revealed the ongoing challenge of maintaining creative flow in the lesson with the children’s behaviour management. Positive reinforcement was a feature of the lesson for those who provided what she wanted. I felt the dance class progressed as a series of activities that were shaped into skills that created a particular rhythm within the lesson. Ethel mentioned to me after the lesson that she wasted too much time with finding music and that she wanted more “filler activities” to go between each activity. I suggested that having a stronger through line, or theme, within the lesson might reduce the need for those activities, and allow the children to start to establish ownership of the lesson, in turn reducing the pressure upon Ethel.

When Ethel watched my teaching she was surprised at how long the lesson went for and how attentive the children were. I consciously did very little dancing myself and focused on the children being busy rather than me being busy. I also created limitations for the children as a way of extending their thinking. For example, only using your fingers show me something that you might find on your beach. At the end of the lesson Ethel commented “they certainly got a lot of physical exercise and fitness there.” I was intrigued that Ethel made this comment when from my perspective the highlight of the class was the creative and expressive work.

Ethel, Gessie and Kate all participated in the shared dance activity together. This arrangement suited us all and was very successful. Ethel was extremely apprehensive about ‘doing the dance’ and initially shy of contributing her own ideas and questions. We created the dance on the theme of water as this was very much what Ethel and Gessie wanted. Once we got started and ideas started to flow, Ethel was totally engaged and enjoyed participating. When we analysed the dance I enquired how the experience of making the dance affected personal ideas of dance. Ethel stated:

Good because it (the dance process I initiated) looked at the different elements that we were using such as size, space and music to direct us. And we changed it with variety to make it more interesting. It was not perfect, and it didn’t have to be perfect either. But we can see how we can improve this or change it.
She went on:

For me personally it did a lot for my confidence. Because like you know, that was one of the reasons why I put my name forward for this, was because I had very little knowledge of dance. It gave me confidence to see that there was no right or wrong. And that it’s the same when the children watch you, they do not see it as right or wrong either.

After Ethel did the ‘shared dance’ activity she continued to teach dance with her children. The above comment reflects a big change in the way dance is now perceived by herself and by the children. I asked what happened to effect this change:

Well what have we done? You and I talked, that helped a lot. Planned my own series of lessons has given me really good insight into dance, and this building up of a dance itself.

A brief comment, but an important one, was about Ethel being more excited about dance:

I think because they (children) think it is interesting. There’s sort of a progression there as well. So you now see what they see as interesting, whereas before you didn’t see it as interesting.

Ethel became more able to ‘see’ the children’s work, their thinking, the creations that the children find exciting, consequently there is a greater sharing in the meaning of what the dance and the activity means for each other.

Our final interview was back in her classroom. Ethel revealed that she had been doing more dance with the children and her facial expression visibly showed her enjoyment and success. She wanted to speak of her dance lessons:

The one we did today, we did mirroring other people. So somebody had to do an action and the partner had to mirror it. And we set limits, like you were only allowed to use your head...Yes, then we got individual people to do something different with your head, and that worked out quite well. And then I had them sitting around their desk and they were only allowed to do something with their head...and then only their fingers...they found that difficult. Yeah they that’s what you find – they do find things (movements). When you extended that and gave them the use of their hands as well, suddenly you got a
whole range of things, whereas if you’d come the other way, you wouldn’t of got that. But because you limit them first and then add another element, they seemed to get so many more different (ideas).

The ideas and the way that Ethel was describing the activities and the children had changed. I found Ethel to be enthused and confident about her teaching of dance. I asked her why she was now doing more dance. She replied:

I feel more confident than I would have. Like if you’d said to me originally when it first came out that we had to do dance: okay what do you envisage this dance would be? I would have said ‘probably folk dance’, that type of thing.

Ethel went on to relate a conversation she had with her husband about what we had been doing:

And he said, ‘what kind of dance do you do? Ballroom dancing? I said ‘no’. But that’s the exciting thing, you know. Whereas I know now its more body movements and things like that. But you do have the elements for whatever you’re doing, whether it be art or music where you create something, you perform something.

Ethel was more aware of the building blocks, the elements of dance that you use to make dance, more aware that the whole body provides the movement source and ideas. As she said again:

But for me it’s a fact that I’m more aware of what it (dance) involves and because of that I feel more confident, so it’s just become part of the curriculum. So if you’ve done anything for me that’s what you’ve done.

In further questioning what initiated the confidence, Ethel commented that in working with me she was:

able to get feedback without a lot of criticism. I think teachers get an awful lot of criticism… I think it is just the general support and acceptance of what you do I would say.

And again:

I’m less self-conscious now. Perhaps because I feel I’ve got a guide to skills base. But I know more about what I am wanting them to do…and perhaps part of it is that it’s (the dance programme) more planned.
As a possible consequence of Ethel’s increased confidence and comfort, she is noticing the children’s attitude shifting:

It’s like, when we take our shoes off everyone now says ‘do we dance? Are we dancing?’ I don’t have any trouble with anybody not wanting to – everybody just gets in there.

In relation to this I asked Ethel about the children’s perceptions of dance. She replied, “they probably relate it to what they know.” I believe that this was exactly the case with Ethel at the beginning of the study. Once she gained some experience through doing dance, planning, teaching, observing others teaching and generally talking about dance, she knew more. She was more confident to play with ideas and approaches and let the children and dance take the lead. In respect to this Ethel noticed:

See I noticed too that it’s children that you least expect that give you something that is really good. Like Student X, who wouldn’t say boo to a goose, she’s the one doing the great hip movements today. And the other kids said to her ‘that is really neat’. The kids actually noticed. Under normal circumstances she’s not the type of child that would do that.

Further observations by Ethel:

Some children found they had a natural ability to dance. ...They try things, taking risks, where perhaps they don’t in other (curriculum) areas.

Over the course of the study, Ethel began to let her fairly determined perspectives of dance relax, and she started to see the children more clearly, allowing them more space for their ideas and directions. She shifted from her role as the teacher who taught the steps, to a teacher who invited the movements, and consequently the children came into the lessons with their movements and imaginations.

In light of her experience in this study, I asked her what kind of in-service education or help would be appropriate for other teachers like herself. Firstly she said, “You never know (what you need) until you’ve tried it.” Then went on to say:
probably you need to have some idea of a format...some sort of planning, that’s a bit sequential. It can be simple and repeated...and let the kids go with their ideas...getting the children as your base more I think. Because if you haven’t got the knowledge – because they have already started, they might be ahead of you...I don’t think you can write lesson plans that you follow, follow, follow.

The change in Ethel over the course of our research experience was clear. In commencing her involvement in the study, Ethel was an experienced teacher who identified herself as a teacher ‘struggling with dance being included in the curriculum’, that is, not confident with dance, with teaching dance, or even with the existence of a curriculum in dance. She then became a teacher who was visibly excited by her teaching of dance and excited about what the children were doing.

My interpretation of the barriers to dance Ethel experienced included: an inclination to see dance as defined steps that someone with expertise delivered; over reliance upon curriculum and planning for ideas and directions rather than the children she knew everyday; regarding music as the key stimulus for movement; presuming her view of dance was equivalent to the class’s view.

I observed Ethel stepping back from dance and allowing the children into the equation. This seemingly simple yet difficult step was taken once she ‘felt’ a dance education experience, had seen others teach in her work environment and discussed her dance lessons. Through feeling and seeing dance education she began to find personal meanings for words, such as ‘explore space and time’, which immediately connected with her planning of lesson sequences, and her ability to see progressions and make assessments of student achievement.

From a pedagogical perspective she subtly shifted the balance between her ‘control’ of the classroom and the children’s contribution or ownership of dance in the classroom. Also, I believe Ethel relaxed and returned to trusting her knowledge of her classroom, she allowed her knowledge of the children, the space, the learning environment to be her starting place. From here she found success and positive
learning experiences. Once this occurred, the sense of dance being alive in the curriculum was apparent.
4.5 Gessie

"Where do I start?"

"It allows children to think. Think creatively."

"I've got some really hyperactive kids in my class and I was thinking 'imagine teaching dance to them, they are going to be all over the place.'"

Gessie was young, had only been teaching for two years, was open to advice and keen to gain experience in as many things as possible. Gessie was an animated teacher and enthusiastic about dance, yet as she stated, "I've never taught dance and really know nothing about it." Irrespective, she valued the arts in education and believed in dance's potential—though without having a clear sense what that might be.

Gessie taught a composite class of 20 year 1, 2 and 3 boys and girls alongside Ethel and Lola's classrooms. Gessie, Lola and Ethel's classrooms were average in size, with most chairs and tables arranged in clusters of 4 to 6. All rooms were decorated with children's artwork, writing and current projects. Each room had a reading corner, a computer, wet area (sink and tap) and a mat area—an area where the children sat on the floor.

Gessie was honest in declaring her interest in dance as well as her lack of knowledge about teaching dance in the classroom:

I do really think that dance is a really good way of exercising and a fun way for kids (to learn), and I enjoy watching dance.... But I wouldn't be able to go back into the classroom and teach how to dance because I've never danced myself, apart from the old folk dance.

Gessie associated teaching dance with fun, exercise and skill, but it was something that she could not imagine herself teaching because she did not know 'how to dance'. Even so, she enjoyed dance as an audience member and established that she had preferences.
I've seen Black Grace (all male Maori and Pacific Islander contemporary dance group). That sort of dance is my favourite I think. That sort of abstract dance...you can see a message. I can't say that I'm a ballet fan.

Gessie really enjoyed this “abstract” dance with a “message” and “humour”. But as a teacher who had to teach dance she puzzled:

How do you think of a movement and you make that an abstract movement? Even to me as an adult, I was thinking; ‘how do you make a movement – an abstract movement?’ I just don’t get it. I think it is really hard for kids to understand as well, to see a message. To them dance is more moving around to music.

Gessie also briefly mentioned her training at college:

I find it hard to know where do I start? There are so many different movements. I know I learned at college (that) there’s rotation, there’s low, high, there’s medium, and there is all these things, but where do I start and when do I mix them all together?

I believe Gessie summed up her situation with her statement “where do I start”. It seemed all too much and she could not see connections to her college training or imagine translating notions of abstract dance, as seen in Black Grace, into her classroom. Also apparent in her comments are assumptions about children dancing; “moving around to music”. In recalling this conversation, I can remember Gessie’s mounting frustration reinforced by despairing hand gestures and exclamation “where do I start?”

I replied:

I think the thing I start of with is – first of all: what do I feel comfortable doing and, secondly, what do I think the kids are up to. Who are the kids, where are they at, what is of interest – what are they doing?

Gessie continued, asking, “how do you find that out? Are you just going to ask them?” I replied that I watch them, the way they behave and carry themselves into the classroom, and that “yeah, I ask them”. Gessie speculated, “They might not know of different types of dance”. We talked of the vast diversity of dancing experiences that kids may be exposed to such as dance on TV, dancing by yourself in the bedroom,
watching parents dance. Our conversation highlighted that everyone has some experience of dance, and it may or may not be distinguishable as any particular style or “type of dance”. This conversation highlighted the value of sharing perceptions and experiences that may, in turn, inform a classrooms’ shared understanding of dance in its diversity. This represented a starting point.

Gessie unpacked aspects of the relationship between dance out of the classroom and the teaching of dance in the classroom:

Well I think it is because you simplify it at school, so it’s not quite the same, it’s still dance but I think it’s just simplified so much that it might seem like something else to other people. Probably too, because it is not professional dance people who are teaching dance at schools, but if you go to a dance class and you have professional people – they actually know how to dance and have experience in dance and know everything about the movement – that’s probably the difference.

My interpretation of this conversation is that ‘stylistic’ conceptions of dance create a mental barrier for Gessie, with an emphasis on issues of correctness, mastering steps and having the appropriate music. She was struggling to find a connection between herself and dance in the classroom, and a way to connect the children with dance.

Having had this conversation, Gessie then made the observation of the young children she teaches, “They wouldn’t know the difference between their dance and another dance, as such, a dance is a dance with these little kids.” This statement initiated further discussion about the importance of process, the acceptance of the children’s ideas, and the tolerance of ‘right and wrong’ in the creative process. Gessie had already started to change her perceptions of dance in the classroom. She remained unclear about how to direct or facilitate dance in the classroom, but began to focus on what was important for the children:

It’s the movement. Yes and be creative too. I think that is the most important thing. To explore - to explore with the body to see different ways of moving or different ways that they can do things. But also to be original.
Gessie went on to say that she included “movement” activities in her programme particularly when the kids are “wriggly”. She admitted that she did not see this as dance, initially distinguishing a dance programme as including music. Gessie continued to speculate:

“you can’t give children music straight away, because sometimes that confuses them. Because then they have to think of the beat, they have to think of the rhythm, rather than thinking about the movement... I think you have to separate the music from the actual movement and maybe let the kids listen to the music and then think of the movement... or whatever.”

During this conversation Gessie listened to herself and began to clarify her ideas to the extent of answering her own question of “where do I start?:

So I think they (movement and music) do go hand in hand. I think to teach them, you’ll probably have to start – I guess we are coming back to that: Where do I start? You have to probably start teaching them different ways of moving, like you might just explore, just in your classroom, going high, low spinning in different ways. And thinking of how you can combine these different things into different movements, then slowly adding music and then maybe a little skip in between or something like that.

Throughout this conversation Gessie continued to refer to teaching the children some ‘ways of moving’ or, as she later said:

Probably have to start with showing the kids or teaching the kids the basics of dance, which I guess are those movements.

It was not till much later in our conversations that these “movements” were clarified to be the dance elements (space, time, body awareness, energy and relationships) that are mentioned in the New Zealand Arts Curriculum. Gessie reflected upon her teacher training experiences as not really helping prepare her for teaching dance:

It just felt – no it was not enough. It was just so basic. You come into class and think, well that’s so basic, can I actually really do that. Like is that all you do? I felt so bare coming into the classroom with those little tiny skills in dance, because I don’t know much about teaching dance. It was just a couple of lessons really at Teachers College, on how to teach dance, and now it’s part of the curriculum and I think; ‘oh shit’ you know.

Having said that, Gessie recognised that many teachers lack even that experience:
I think in a way that I am lucky because I did have those few lessons, ...and it was recent...so I do remember some things. I guess there are a lot of teachers out there and they have absolutely no idea. I guess whatever you know you always want to know more, because you think you don’t know enough about something that is new.

After speaking about teacher training experiences we discussed Gessie’s earlier life. Gessie noted:

I went to ballet and stuff every now and then, like operas...just watching...I did drama when I was little. But to me dance was very...dance and music, it just goes hand in hand ...because it’s that whole art thing, how its something creative - something kind of abstract that you just do not know what it means or whatever. That’s been a very big part of my life. Because my parents – they are really into music and drama and theatre and that sort of stuff, and I think that’s why I enjoy dance.

She was not always a happy audience member:

I didn’t like it at the time. I thought ‘I have to go to this stupid thing again’ but now, as an adult, I love it.

It was in this context that we spoke of the importance of children being exposed to art within their schooling:

I definitely think that would be beneficial, but I really feel that I should have taught a lot of dance to them (so as they) get as much as possible out of it. For them to appreciate what they are actually doing (seeing). Because it’s very well for the kids to just sit there and watch the dance, and they come back (to the classroom and say) ‘oh yeah that was really cool’, but they don’t actually know about the movement. Or they do not understand the movement or the meaning of the dance or why you dance, and I think that’s the most important thing. I guess some teachers would think that any experience that they get is good, but it is better if they can take something home with them and actually have had some experience of how you do it yourself.

Gessie highlights the importance of seeing ‘art’, but she emphasises the importance of having some classroom experience learning how to ‘see’ and do dance. This would enrich the theatre visit and help children connect with the meaning of the dance as an expressive form. She also makes the point of reinforcing the learning by directing the children’s viewing of the dance performance or experience:
It’s no good going there just to look and then come back... it’s got to be - you might say before they go out, and it might be to a Maori performance, I want you to look at the facial expressions of the artists. I want you to have a look at what type of movement they are using and how it makes you feel. To give them something to think about when they are there... I think it is important that they are thinking for the whole time – engaging their brain I guess.

Given Gessie’s stated inexperience with teaching dance, these comments revealed that she nonetheless had clear thinking about education, and the role of the arts in that education. Gessie had firm thoughts that the school and the curriculum should provide these experiences, especially in schools such as Oyster Bay, where most families could not afford to go to dance performances. Gessie noted, “Actually a lot of kids don’t get much at all at home, as far as experiences like that.”

On the subject of parents I was curious to know if Gessie had had to defend the place of dance in the curriculum. She said that parents on the whole had the attitude “Oh cool, I never did that when I was young; oh that’s neat that you are doing something different.” Gessie qualified this statement by saying that she still does all the other curriculum areas. I asked, if she did have to defend dance, how would she argue for its place in the classroom, and she replied:

It allows children to think. Think creatively. It allows them to express themselves in a different way to writing or talking... also, I would say that it’s part of the curriculum- I’ve got to do it.

Again these conversations revealed to me that Gessie had considerable insight into the place of dance in the classroom and its contribution to education. Dance was more than a curiosity, as the parents might have implied, it was about thinking and expression. Given this, it was not long before Gessie took the conversation back to ‘how do you teach dance’ issues. Chief amongst her concerns was that of the children’s behaviour:

Control issues of behaviour... I’ve been thinking about it and I think that lots of teachers don’t teach dance because they are required to keep control of the kids. I’ve got some really hyperactive kids in my class and I was thinking ‘imagine teaching dance to them, they are going to be all over the place’. Because you know what they are like, they are going to be all over the place, if you just let go for a second, and you’ve always got to go: ‘no come back here, sit right there’ And that’s a huge restriction in a way, because you would really
like them to just do anything and sometimes it gets all the other kids hyped up as well.

We talked around this issue and I emphasised Gessie’s own point that – ‘she knows the children’ when they are sitting at their desks, the problem appeared to be knowing their ‘potential’ and their ‘terror’ when they are asked to move – to ‘think and express’ in this way. We went on to discuss the role of the teacher ‘discovering the kids’, and letting them discover the teacher during the process of ‘learning to control their bodies’. The balance between control and creativity directed our discussion as we spoke of making the activities relevant to the children and achievable in the short term; using “silly behaviour” as stimulus for movement; watching the classroom mood for inattention and being prepared to shift focus quickly; modelling laughter and silliness and developing a shared understanding of what the behaviour rules in the dance class are, as well as being the firm voice of authority as required. It was obvious that this was a very big issue for Gessie. She said:

I can see in front of me my boys particularly. They’ve been told to do certain movements and they are going – tap, tap, tap on each other’s shoulder saying ‘look at this one’…and they are all sticking together, I think ‘what do you do then’.

It is notable that Gessie perceived it was the boys who were the cause of concern when they were in groups and copying each other. We spoke of teaching strategies particular to this scenario and many more. We discussed strategies that Gessie already knew about and ones that we adapted from the activity itself. Success appeared to depend on having different strategies for different children, some general strategies and some specific to boys. Once more we returned to the questions of ‘who are the children’ and ‘what do you want to achieve with the children’. When teaching ‘with’ the children as opposed to ‘at’ or ‘on’ them, I believe they will respect the activity and they will help find the balance between control and creativity. As we continued the conversation Gessie started to find her own answers for a lot of issues:

It has to be fun...making it a positive experience...setting appropriate expectations.
Gessie noted that the children did not have “those bad perceptions of dance” when they were younger or when they were happy and successful at dance. However, she noted that as the children get older the perception of dance was predominated by views such as:

It’s just not cool to do those because dance – that’s what girls do.

Gessie felt that peer pressure and parents’ attitudes were the main forces informing these views. The different valuing of the activities of girls and boys raised the issue of having different expectations of boys and girls in the classroom. I asked Gessie if there was anything in the school that implicitly or explicitly reinforced different gender expectations. Gessie stated:

I guess everyday things that you do, like you try not to but I’m sure you do it at times...like the other day I wanted someone to get some books from the office, it was a big box, and the first thing you were thinking about saying was, ‘I want two strong boys to go and get that box’. But I didn’t say that, because I knew that was wrong. So I said, ‘I want two strong people – one boy and one girl to go and get the box of books’. So I think you are trying to be conscious of it, but often you are not. And sometimes you say, ‘well if you don’t finish your lunch I want you to take that back to your mum or dad and tell them why you didn’t like it. I think those little things that teachers say all the time to the kids, ‘Well you ask mum for these books...’ because that must be a girl thing to do.

Gessie and I talked around the issue of activities that children enjoy in the classroom, and how these can be different for boys and girls. We also spoke of the individuals and of how sometimes, as a group, the class is less concerned with expectations. Gessie made the observation that a lot of dance is gendered, where boys and girls have to know different roles and steps:

All the boys have to do this and all the girls have to do that. Boys on this side (of the room), and girls on that side and in a way it is kind of sending the kids a message too, that boys do certain things that aren’t quite as feminine

Gessie is touching upon the supposed feminine overtones of dance. However, she also raises the potential for dance to educate for the valuing of the differences, to teach the masculine aspect and the feminine aspect of dance while respecting the notion of difference within partnered dances. Ideally, dance in its diversity may advocate for
multiple roles that males and females fulfil in dance as in life, where one’s gender may or may not play a defining role.

Our conversation shifted to resources such as visiting artists and music. Gessie’s immediate concerns were around music:

First of all I was thinking about music. What do you do as far as music goes? Do you just sit there and listen to music and think ‘oh cool that’ll be cool’. How do you go about finding the right type of music?

I replied that I don’t use a lot of music and when I do it is music that I like and have in my own personal collection. I stressed that I generally use music after I have played with and found movement ideas. We were discussing different ways of using music, when Gessie said:

These are great ideas, it’s really awesome, but you do need to have the basic skills before they can do that though, don’t they?

Upon questioning what Gessie meant by ‘basic skills’, she replied:

Oh I was thinking of that rotation thing – rotation and low and high levels... yeah, space stuff. Just to be able to use that effectively and not just walk around and think this is dance (that) they are actually moving themselves in different ways I guess.

Gessie seemed to be vaguely referring to the dance elements in the curriculum. However, the way she referred to the use of words such as ‘rotation’ told me that she was referring back to another source of information that focussed upon Laban’s movement classification system. I can remember this conversation moment and my realisation of what was informing Gessie’s frustration in not being able to realise her desire for the children to do creative dance. I felt that Gessie was interpreting Laban’s movement schema as a set of skills that the children learnt, and once they had these you added music and then they would be able to make a dance. Through my experience in many schools I have seen this approach to Laban’s principles many times, frequently within physical education contexts.
We returned to resources, or anything that would help Gessie teach dance in her classroom. She mentioned activity cards that stimulated creativity:

> Just to stimulate creativity, because I think that is the most important thing in dance. Because it’s all very well to learn a dance routine as in folk dance and that is good for your coordination, but it really doesn’t do a hell of a lot for your creative thinking.

Gessie went on:

> I don’t know what I really need. I wouldn’t really know what I would need to teach dance...I’ve never been taught actually.

Explaining this last comment, Gessie said, “I’ve never seen dance being taught.” She enthused that it would be great to watch an experienced teacher teaching dance to her kids. Irrespective, Gessie felt the confidence to teach dance was within her reach:

> But I’ve never danced in my life, like taking dance classes. But I feel confident to teach dance, once I know how to teach it. Does that make sense? ... Well I can see how people would not feel confident to do it. But I feel I’m a little bit creative, and I enjoy watching dance, and I feel that the arts are a part of me.

Despite not really knowing a lot about dance, Gessie recognised some personal strengths and experience, and was willing to give it a go, probably make mistakes and learn to “find out”. We spoke of gaining experience teaching dance, where Gessie would plan a lesson and teach it, then evaluate it and teach it again, making adjustments in order to improve it. I mentioned that I tend to flow with the children’s ideas as they arise and let my initial planning flex a lot. Gessie said:

> You would see a teaching moment and say ‘lets go that way’. But I don’t think I could do that now. I might be able to. I don’t know.

She reflected upon what she does in other curriculum areas and noted that in reading she is more than able to flex and go with the children, but she suspected that the skills of spontaneity in teaching require experience:

> I think its just experience. Just teaching it. ...And the more you teach and do little courses and finding different things out as you go along, I think that’ll come. Because that has come with me with reading. I can’t see many people
have taught me to teach how to read. I know some basic strategies, but you can't get taught what each child is going to say during a reading session. You can't learn what to do for each child. So you sort of—and now you're able to sit there and read a book and someone (a child) says something, and OK let's see if we can do that (the child's suggestion) or whatever and then you get going. Yeah it's just experience.

In noting Gessie's current situation I asked, if it were possible to wind the clock back to her teacher training, what is it she would have liked to receive?:

You want to get ideas on how to make your dance programme exciting... you really need practical things, practical ideas. And I think the best thing I could have had, when I went through college is actually going to a class and watch dance being taught, because I think that is what is lacking. It's all very well to move and stuff, but we've never seen it being taught. It's pretty hard to teach it yourself, if you've only seen an adult teaching it to adults, who don't want to dance... Yeah, experienced teachers who have taught dance and who are running good dance programmes.

I was curious to know how Gessie would identify a good dance lesson:

When the kids were buzzing afterwards.

The actual dance curriculum, however, seemed to daunt Gessie:

Looking through the document for the first time thinking 'oh my god what is this'. ...So much writing and just sitting there and being at school for hours and hours already... looking it (the curriculum) up and say 'Oh god – it's got four strands.'

Coming to grips with the four arts areas was fine, but comprehending the four strand organisers, the achievement objectives and the outcome statements was more problematic:

I did do it (write a plan). I'm not sure in the end, I don't know... I thought, well I really don't know if this is right. The first year the curriculum is out, so what if ERO (Education Review Office) is going to say I'm wrong, you know. Someone's going to have to teach me this because I've never done it. So I thought, well I'm just going to write it up what I think and just deal with it later.
Regarding planning, I asked Gessie what was her starting point in the planning process:

What I want the kids to achieve...I think of some learning outcomes and then I think, where does that fit in and then I tweak my learning outcomes a little bit.

We spent some time planning lessons that focussed upon using the dance elements as the process facilitators and movement manipulators, and developed a lesson sequence to show the progressions. During this process Gessie’s emphasis was on developing the children’s creative and expressive abilities:

I would love them to be able to come up with their own moves...and not just copy what I am doing.

She wanted to relate dance to class themes and for the children to make a dance – to have a product. Once we did this Gessie immediately saw the scope of dance across the curriculum and where movement ideas may come from. Gessie found the planning process helpful in structuring her ideas in conjunction with the dance elements. She started to explore the scope that the dance elements provided in directing the children’s ideas. Gessie came to the realisation that she did not have to have the ideas nor particular dance skills, but as she said:

I give them some dimensions (guidance) of what sort of seal (theme, idea) they are going to represent...explore by doing it. ...explore the elements by moving to a variety of action words.

As Gessie started to play with her ideas and progressions, she was increasingly excited and confident about how the children would respond. However, she did note:

Well really in the morning I was just thinking about – I need to find out what they know hey. So I think for this little half hour, just sort of explore to see what they know.

Gessie shifted her stance in relation to teaching dance from teaching the skills to exploring with the children. Watching Gessie teach the other curriculum areas, it stood out that Gessie was ‘with’ the children in the moment. When I watched her teach dance she was initially concerned about behaviour and being ‘a teacher’—
exercising her authority. Then, as the children started to move, she moved with them in her manner. Gessie taught a great class, but afterwards she commented on how “bad” it was. I asked her during her playground duty, why was it bad? She commented upon the fact that the children were not as creative as she had expected. I sensed that Gessie found it hard to reconcile this lesson with her vision of abstract dance as she has seen it. I pointed out that it was the children’s first creative dance class, and Gessie’s first attempt at teaching creative dance, and that this all happened with me observing them. All of these reasons independently could be enough to frustrate her vision, and I reinforced that it was a very successful class.

There was a child in Gessie’s class with a syndrome similar to autism. He was a delightful boy and had a fulltime teacher aide. He could not speak, but could communicate with sign and gesture. He was expected to participate in classroom activities, even though he was generally unable to participate as fully as the other children. The extent of his participation in the dance class was therefore notable. The teacher aide’s expression indicated to me that this was extraordinary. I asked her about it and she commented that she had never seen him achieve to the extent that he was achieving that day. His facial expression, and the encouraging comments from the other children, further reinforced that this was a ‘breakthrough’ for this boy, for the class and also for Gessie. In this lesson, dance offered this boy an opportunity to participate with his peers and achieve on equal terms.

Gessie enjoyed the shared dance activity with Kate and Ethel, and became a kind of leader in the group, as she appeared more assured when moving her body. Gessie had plenty of ideas and made many suggestions throughout the process. During the analysis of their dance, Gessie noted that the dance expressed their intent, also, that the elements provided the structure and that counting provided patterns. Though it was not complete, Gessie was pleased with the dance, and said, “it actually involved quite a lot of hard work to get to that stage.” She also commented, “it’s all about working together and putting something together, using everyone’s bits (ideas)...It also made me think that it is quite difficult to do that with my kids.”
During our final conversation we looked over resources and planning forms. Gessie was pleased to see that her ideas were similar to those in the books and that she could use other structures to plan with. Gessie commented:

Oh cool, I’ve done these sort of things. Some things you do without realising it can be linked to dance. I do these things all the time.

The planning guides appeared to provide Gessie with some security, and as she expressed it - “checklists”. We finished up with Gessie describing what she got out of this study in terms of her participation:

I feel that I’ve got a lot out of this. When you go to one of those (in-service programmes) like you’ve got all of this knowledge but you don’t know where you fit it in. Here, I’ve told you exactly what I need, and I’ve got it, what I need, so now I know where I need to go...after this it makes me realise how important it is to almost have like one on one.

Gessie mostly valued the talking and planning and reviewing of her lessons. Although she did not like being observed, she noted:

I don’t want anyone to observe, but it does sort of put that little bit of pressure on...it makes you really think of what you are doing, and I think that is good.

Also:

I got heaps out of ...just watching someone experienced teaching dance – you get so many ideas, because there are so many different things all the time that’s happening and you don’t realise those little things that an experienced teacher does, that you probably wouldn’t think of yourself.

In reflecting on her own teaching of dance:

I’m not scared anymore of behaviour. I was scared of that. Now they really feel they are missing out if they are not part of it (dance). So I said to the kids ‘if I see anyone who’s being silly...they are straight out... and I did... and he wasn’t happy.

She also noticed “some kids really blossomed and some kids were so confident,...how some kids just let everything go and they dance.” When thinking of her actual teaching Gessie commented:
I feel like I want to let go of it more. Like stand back a bit more and just give them tiny prompts, and let them do most of the work...it's just a different way in dance. ...I don't know what I do different, but I just know that it feels different.

I asked Gessie, 'what does 'dance' bring to education?':

Creativity and expression are the main things I think and individuality...that's what you want the kids to do.

She speculated that starting dance early and keeping it going as the child matures could help in developing children's creativity and individuality, and break down the "peer group thing" about dance stereotypes. Gessie discussed the film 'Billy Elliot' (a UK film about a boy's journey to dance) and the issues raised in the film about boys participating in dance and the associated perceptions of homosexuality. She perceived this was difficult to overcome in the school.

We ended with Gessie saying in words, and through some hand gestures, that her conception of education was now broader, and that she was freeing her boundaries of teaching and learning. She indicated this with her hands by pretending to hold a small ball, and then expanded her arms as if to hold a beach ball.

I left our conversation that afternoon thrilled for Gessie, as I could sense that she was very proud of her transition into being a confident teacher of dance with a new realm of learning to offer her class. In the end Gessie was able to make personal connections between the curriculum terms, her children, her own experience and her ambitions for dance. I believe that these connections gave her a sense of ownership of dance in her classroom, whereas previously it was all too abstract and seemingly beyond her grasp.
4.6 Kate

“I think that’s the thing with me, I worry about what others are thinking or seeing or doing.”

Kate seemed nervous when we commenced our interviews. She claimed that she knew nothing about dance and that she did not like dancing “even when I’m out drinking.” Kate initially hedged around questions about her ideas on dance and I felt was quick to placed me in the role of the expert and herself in the role of the novice. As Kate said, “I’m a nod girl”, implying a sense of going along with things and not rocking the boat.

Kate had no dance training and little in the way of memories or interests in dance. I asked Kate why she volunteered to be involved in the study when she seemed so uninterested. Like some of the other teachers she saw her involvement as a way to learn about the new New Zealand Arts curriculum. She also admitted to some curiosity about dance. Kate stressed that she supported the place of dance in the curriculum, but was unsure why or how its value was realised. She sort of had a ‘hunch’ about its worth for the twenty five, 8-9 year old boys and girls in her year 5 and 6 classroom (upper primary) at Oyster Bay School. I admired Kate’s quiet and steady strength and acknowledged the risk and challenge she took in becoming involved in the study.

Our initial conversation focused upon teaching from our curriculum strengths and then moving into other curriculum areas. We eventually talked about dance, and I asked Kate what she thought dance would be like in her classroom:

It will be something that I have put a lot of thought into. I’ll have to have it really well thought out in my head and know exactly where I’m going from one set to another...obviously I will let it flow on with the way it takes itself.
I asked Kate about any dance experiences in her past, such as teacher training, her childhood or as an adult. Kate remembered doing gymnastics in primary school years but no dance. In regard to her teaching training she said:

No. I was always missing dance at college.

Kate went on to say that she was “probably self conscious”, not helped by something her sister did “when she was picking on my (dancing) style” when they used to go out. Despite this, Kate claimed that she did not have any reluctance to teach dance:

I mean for me teaching dance, I’m happy and love taking folk dancing and enjoy doing that, because that’s what you do. That is how many steps you do, and how you do it, like a recipe that I can follow through. In my other school we did folk dancing and the kids (12-13 year olds) loved them. We had a great time. I learnt them with them. So that was good to learn them, that was really fun. ... I enjoyed taking that side of it because it’s got structure.

Structure and order provided Kate with safe starting points for teaching. We also talked of how folk dance can be extended to explore the functions and histories of dance around the world and that this was a part of the curriculum as well. Kate did say:

I think I’d like to be more confident. I’d like to do more on that side (creative side), and if I get more comfortable taking it in the classroom... I suppose I (want to) feel safe to do whatever you like in your own class.

I asked about the unsafe aspect of teaching dance. Kate replied:

People see... what other people are saying and thinking.

I asked Kate what she thought people see or take most notice of when they watch a dance – do they see what you are doing, the dance or who you are, the dancer. Kate replied, “probably it would be ‘oh what’s he doing that for’. “Kate initially suggested you would take more notice of the dance, the reasons behind the action. However, when discussing this issue in relation to the children, Kate felt that who the child was would have a strong influence on how a dance is seen:

For kids, I think it depends on how people see the person who’s doing it. So I think if one of the popular boys all of a sudden started to do some very fine
intricate movements around the place, people would be thinking ‘ooh’, as if to say, he’s ‘cool, we think he is cool, why is he doing that?’, or ‘I didn't know he could do it’. But because of who he is, they'd be thinking ‘oh that looks different...that's quite good and cool’. Whereas if it was someone who was more unpopular then they sort of snigger and think they look silly. They say ‘ah well that’s them and that’s what they do’. I suppose that’s where I think it’s who the person is, in some ways, and what they are doing. ...I think that’s the thing with me, I worry about what others are thinking or seeing or doing. And so probably if we were out at a wedding I'd probably dance a lot more than anywhere else. Because it's not head banging music, so you'd know what to do with it.

I perceived that Kate felt safe when the dance does not require that she put her ‘self’-her thinking, her ideas, and her expression into the public arena. Kate felt that when the dance focus is upon the individual’s contribution, the individual’s dance (body, action, thinking, expression and emotion) is more open to critique, as it translates from private idea to public image. I think this phenomenon is a part of teaching the arts curriculum in general, but the inclusion of the ‘body’ as the medium for representation of expression within dance, involves issues such as personal development, social expectation, sexuality, body image and gendered behaviour. In Kate’s class, her students are becoming increasingly aware of these issues as they begin to identify themselves with their peers.

As a teacher of dance in various contexts, I have felt the pressure of judgement from the children on me and watched children judge each other’s credibility of their dance and their person. I believe that recognizing and managing the critical gaze of children is a key aspect of managing a dance lesson, and as such the teacher needs to predict and plan for critical moments. The sharing of an individual’s expression through their body requires the individual to slowly build their confidence in their own ideas and the place of those ideas in the group’s evolving understanding and choreography. One of the teacher’s roles is to monitor the exposure of the ‘private’ in relation to the speed of the group’s development of shared understanding. I maintain that the teacher’s main task is to create a safe, sensitively paced learning environment that will value children and their ideas in their diversity.
We moved on to talk of other topics that were raised by Kate. These included: what were the minimal requirements for teaching dance - "how much of the programme should it be? ...where do you start? ...are there good resources somewhere? ...what are the skills?". In my experience of working with teachers in New Zealand and Australia these are common questions and concerns. In respect to planning dance into her programme Kate asked:

Should it be like science - once a term? ...Should teachers be doing it more regularly like their PE, twice a week...or one off experiences all the time?

My answer, framed by the premise that dance is a given part of the curriculum, focused upon what the teacher feels comfortable with initially, and then on what the teacher thinks will relate to the children's interests and abilities. I also emphasised a need to be realistic:

Take your time, you've got your whole professional career. I mean it is unrealistic to assume that all teachers are going to leap in and be keen, good or interested in dance...if it's the first time and with a class that hasn't had it much before in the school, then keep it fairly safe I would imagine.

At this point I sensed Kate relax. She replied, "Yeah, I get (their) response and do what you have to", we continued to talk about knowing what to teach. Kate returned to her reality in the classroom, saying:

Where do you start? And then what are these progressions and things like that?

Kate wanted an outline comparable to her maths resources, describing what had to be taught, the progressions and the core skills and techniques. Kate noted that, "the first place I'm going is: right, where am I going to get some music from" She went on to liken dance to drama and talked of the latest resources in drama that outline the 'drama conventions'. Kate expected that dance would follow in the same way. We talked around her conception of the dance elements, arriving at the curriculum's terminology (space, time, energy, body awareness, relationships) via Kate's reinterpretation of her knowledge of the drama conventions and her hunches of what the dance elements might be. We discussed how the teacher might manipulate the dance elements to suit the children, the classroom theme and the ongoing, unexpected
dance creations. We also focused upon managing the learning environment and the relationship between the teacher and the children. This prompted Kate to say:

I suppose that’s one way to probably tackle the dance. Because they (children) quite like the idea that you do not know what you’re doing.

Kate acknowledged that children like to feel ‘equal’ to the teacher, or even better. I agreed and we discussed this strategy of declaring your disinterest or lack of knowledge up front and appeal to the children as co-learners. We quickly built up a lesson plan that used the type of question and answer strategies Kate was familiar with in her science programme. She decided that focusing the dance on what the children knew and expected from dance would be a great start. I emphasised that this is one way to start, and that the ‘starting point’ choices that you make are in the main determined by who you are and who the children are. This approach relied on the teacher being honest and real with the children. I said:

I have come to think, if you are honest and you are up front with it (dance) and you just regard it as another thing that you are going to talk about in the classroom day, then it will be another thing in their life that they will talk about. Rather than being this thing that you snigger about or that you have to be precious about. Because I do not think it is like that in the real world. So just talking, talking, talking about it is great.

We started to talk about what dance might look like in Kate’s classroom. She acknowledged the set folk dance way, and then said:

I suppose when I’m thinking dance I’m thinking ‘its creative’ it’s all of that. But also dance is so big, there’s the creative side, there’s the folk side, there’s the other styles of dance...that you forget, but when I think that when you have to teach dance, I’m thinking it’s going to be this creative, imaginative, free thing.

I asked why creative dance was the dance activity that she chose to value:

Because...so they could relax. So they could be themselves. So they could just do what they felt it was right to do at the time, listening to a piece of music in the environment where they were, and that they had the right to do what they wanted, as long as they didn’t cross to the silliness side...as in the stupid behaviour that is not even part of it. ...(they get) very little time that you get to just do that. ...And I suppose it’s to get rid of that feeling that there’s a right way, there’s a wrong way, and if you do it that way you look stupid.
Kate valued the need for children to have freedom and time to be themselves and that they could do this in a ‘safe’ environment. As Kate and I got to know each other I began to see that Kate valued the educational potential of dance as a medium to explore difference, yet her experiences of education as a child and as a trainee teacher did not provide for this form of expression or being. I felt that Kate was seeking this opportunity for her children but did not know how to organise the learning experiences to realise this.

Having established Kate’s ideals and vision, I prompted her to go on and tell me how she would plan a creative, yet structured (safe) dance class:

I suppose you’re going to have to start being quite structured in the fact that if you wanted to do the doing part of it, that you are going to have to have something that you’re going to work with. That they are going to do and feel comfortable doing, like breaking the ice with them. So there’s going to be something that is quite controlled… Then they are going to do that and they feel the success of that, …then you might do one thing, one thing, one thing, but the next time the three things come together… And once they’ve got those three things, then you might just leave it there and then the next time… they’ve got to use a little bit more, they are going to use a little more of themselves, with what you have given them as the guides. So then eventually you could say ‘this is---‘ and they’d be able to go and do most of it themselves.

Kate went on to acknowledge that there would be different approaches according to different dance styles and outcomes sought. Nonetheless, irrespective of the dance specific knowledge, the above schema is a structure adaptable to any curriculum and as Kate outlined quite suitable for her purposes. Kate’s role focused upon guiding the process of manipulating the movements while the children were given the role of selecting the dance content. Discussing this, Kate explained:

I want them to make and decide because otherwise I have to decide and I have to show what I can do and think. I’m not going to do that. It makes it safer for me, the fact that I can say ‘oh you might want to side step there, or…big or small. I can say all of those (guiding) words (dance elements) and do all of that side.

Kate is defining her teaching role and in doing so notes her preferred way of teaching. She states her self-perceived weakness and turns it into an opportunity as she continued:
It's still me and I'm not having to let go of everything. Because I can’t do that in my personal life, so I don’t see how I’ve got to do it (here)... even though I mean I think that the smaller and younger the children are the more silly you are with them...the higher up (older) they start to think ‘oh she’s drippy’... you worry about their perception of you...

Kate does have concerns about dancing with the children but she has also figured out how to participate and help engage the children simultaneously. As she stated:

Because I have this thing about not wanting to dance and feeling so uncomfortable with it and all that, I think well this could be a way. And you sort of think, maybe I’m not so bad after all...and last year the arts came out as a curriculum, and (I’m) thinking, well if we are going to need to do this, why not do something like this because then I’ll have more of an understanding and come up with a few things...So I suppose it’s more personally professional development...I'm going to start it now, where as probably it might have been something I might not even do

As the arts curriculum was raised I asked if there is any difference about dance being in the arts curriculum or the physical education curriculum. Kate indicated that she would probably still include folk dance in her physical education planning, and that the creative aspect that linked across the curriculum via the theme work would be reported under the arts, though it did not seem to be a big issue for her where it came.

In questioning Kate about her planning process, she firstly decided to do a dance programme that related to water animals and environments in her natural sciences unit. She was going to use the dance elements to provide a sense of structure. But when it came to writing it all down:

Oh my goodness. Where am I going to go? ...And I suppose last night was. Right I’d better stop this, I’d better see what the curriculum says. And that was what the curriculum says, I’d better contrive some sort of specific learning activity. Now I’ve got that, right what are we going to do? And that’s how it (planning) starts.

Once we discussed the programme we spoke about strategies for keeping the lesson flowing, dealing with children who work faster than others, use of groups, music, selecting a dance space, directing specific activity with the elements. We agreed that a lot of the teachers' work is the task of "crowd management" and keeping the class
travelling towards the established aims. We talked about finding an understood balance between behaviour and being “jelly fish”, I mentioned the strategy of returning to the dance elements to find ways of directing wayward jelly fish.

I observed Kate teach a dance class that was structured around seven questions:

- Who has watched dance and where?
- When you dance what do you do?
- What are some kinds of dances?
- Where do you personally dance and how often?
- How do you feel about dance and why?
- What do you need to be able to dance?
- Who do you think dance is for?

These questions were written on large sheets of paper and the students moved around the room and wrote answers on the paper. Kate emphasised at the beginning “there is no right or wrong answer.” This statement in itself told me that Kate’s view of dance was changing. Kate participated with the children and recorded her own opinions, which were sometimes negative—much to the surprise of several children. The lesson stimulated a lot of conversation about dance and the children were very involved and interested in each other’s ideas. For me this great lesson was undermined when Kate said, “we’ve done some good listening and good thinking, we are now going to do maths by yourself, and do some work.” I felt that the use of the word ‘work’ here immediately reinforced a curriculum hierarchy, undermining the learning that went on and the valuing of the dance outcomes. As I sat there in the class, I reflected upon the little ‘throw away lines’ or instructions that we all say that signal our teaching values.

During the ‘shared dance’ activity with Gessie and Ethel, Kate asked, “Was this dance?” Kate visibly enjoyed this experience and was happy to hear that this was dance: “oh no, it was good, it was fun.” The experience of doing dance once again revealed assumptions about the role of ‘steps’, issues of rightness and wrongness and the use of music. Kate was involved and enjoyed the discussion around the selection and organisation of movements into sequences. I perceived that the teachers began to
relax with each other and as their trust increased so did the discussion about the
choreography. Kate's confidence to suggest ideas, to show ideas, and to learn others'
movements increased throughout the session. She acknowledged that she and the
other teachers had begun to see their 'moving' ideas, rather than their bodies. At the
end of the session Kate was emphatic about the value of experiencing dance activities
in the same way that the children would.

Before our final conversation I was sitting outside Kate's classroom when three of her
students stopped for a brief conversation:

    Student (Mark): Tom said you're gay, are ya?
    Ralph: Does it matter?
    Student (William): You're cool.
    Mark: You're not gay are you?
    Student (Tom): You're a good dancer.
    Ralph: I'm not, who cares if I am?
    Mark: You're a good dancer.
    Tom: Dance is cool.
    Ralph: Did you do any dance today?
    Mark: Nah.
    Ralph: Do any yesterday?
    Mark: Yeah.
    Ralph: What was it like?
    Mark and Tom: Cool, good. See ya.
    Ralph: See ya.

This conversation indicated several things: that these boys were enjoying Kate's
dance lessons; that the boys were comfortable enough with me to ask a fairly personal
question; and, that my sexuality was a source of curiosity, possibly prompted by my
association with dance, which they may have seen as a predominantly feminine
activity. Maybe they were curious about my style of teaching, my use of voice or who
knows what? Perhaps they were looking for a role model. Irrespective, in this one off
chance discussion they did not ask me about the rugby score, or my job, or my socks.
They wanted details about who I was. I believe that these boys were keen to connect
with and validate their dance experience, and that they were checking up on my social ‘credibility’. Nonetheless, they were talking about dance positively and keen to talk about their experience.

We commenced our last conversation by reflecting upon the shared dance activity. Kate noted her enjoyment and also the satisfaction of participating in a process that culminated with a product, a dance:

That’s the thing, you don’t enjoy everything, but by the end of the day we all feel satisfied if we have finished something, that completion.

Kate’s point gave an insight into the classroom where children do like to complete and master things. I agree that an activity like dance may not be enjoyable for all children all the time, but creation of a product and working at something until it is complete does provide great satisfaction irrespective of the ‘enjoyment’ factor and the work medium. Kate discussed the value of dance in her classroom:

Maybe it’s the means to learn another way...social skills would be the thing you’re learning...independent problem solving and cooperation as well...well maybe there’s a way we can learn a bit more about the difference by doing that dance and that moving.

In commenting on herself as a teacher of dance:

For me it still means that I’m going to teach dance. I’m going to teach them about the elements of dance. And I think if I stuck to it and pushed myself, maybe in time I would see it being more a way of learning. But that (will probably) take a lot more time because you know how you’ve done it and you’ve got your way and it’s all in separate boxes and you got out of that box to do it (dance)...it’s the getting out of the box and the doing. So it’s still to me...It’s also making me more integrated, thinking about it, whereas I’m still, I like to have everything in its place and not springing up.

Kate reflected upon her teaching style and acknowledged that teaching creative dance did not necessarily fit comfortably with her style of teaching. We agreed on the need to have structures and then to move in and around them as the lessons unfold. At the end Kate said:
I actually know more than I think I did. Like I (need to) sort of give myself credit for knowing a bit more.

Kate commented that she really enjoyed the research experience and that she found herself “freeing” her teaching. She also noted that “doing it – teach it” was what she needed to do and to experiment with ideas and different approaches, to extend the children. As she said, “No, I suppose I don’t risk them”. I made the comment that maybe dance in the classroom is, “rather than learning to dance, it is dancing to learn.” Kate said, “I wish I said that”. We finished up happy and keen to see each other again.

Our discussions revealed that perceptions of self might present barriers to teaching dance. For children and teachers may feel vulnerable and at risk as they expose their ideas, bodies and skills in a relatively public manner. Kate found that declaring and establishing an honest relationship between herself and dance, and then with the children, enabled her to plan a dance programme that she was comfortable with. She drew upon what she did know and then took the children on board and explored dance.
4.7 Joe

“When we changed the curriculum from an input thing, into an output driven curriculum, it just stopped creativity. It stopped the enthusiasm and enjoyment of it all.”

When I met Joe during the initial phase of this study, I mentioned that I would provide a dance in-service for the teachers. His quip, “So, will I need my tutu?” caught my attention and hinted at a raft of issues that I hoped we could talk about. Joe was the teaching principal at Oyster Bay School. During the study Joe tended to be in the role of the principal more than that of the teacher. Nonetheless, Joe reflected on dance both as a teacher and as a principal. Our conversations occurred in his office and were arranged around a timetable of meetings and frequent interruptions.

Joe liked his school and was keen to support his staff as they met the educational needs of the children. Joe acknowledged the challenges presented by some of the children, and was aware of their diverse needs, interests and abilities. Initially Joe focused upon dance skills to be imparted to the children. He said, “We need to look at the skills and so forth that we need to teach the kids here.” He was adamant that teaching dance was part of the primary school teacher’s role:

We’ve always said this in New Zealand – that all teachers will be good at all subjects. The other way round is to facilitate the dance person (out of school expert) – we’ve always said no. The New Zealand, Kiwi teacher has to teach everything, you have to come up to speed on everything. And if dance – if the law says so, then we’ll do it.

Joe felt that the teachers needed to “generate” the children’s understanding and as such they “had to stick something in to start or generate learning before it (learning) starts to come out”. He continued to speak of skills to be taught, “you have to stick (teach) lots of little skills, you do this bit, you do that. And it’s more than just being a facilitator.” The implication being that the teacher needed to have experience with dance skills in order to teach dance.
He went on to note that the starting point in the “cycle” is the teacher having initial enthusiasm.

They love it, themselves. So they’re enthusiastic about it themselves and then they can sort of work with the person next door (next classroom), it usually works that way. You come and join me, that sort of thing. And I’ll take that and you take that to my classroom…and it just starts to spin off, until everyone’s got this general understanding. And they talk, talk in the staff room and we then have in-service type of thing, this is the way we want it to be.

Joe noted that for him and for the many of the parents he speaks with, their meaning of dance related to dance styles such as line dancing, rock ‘n roll, ballroom and the skills that he referred to as specific to those styles. He identified that this understanding came from previous experience:

Personally what I think happens is that when we get a group of parents together and we start talking about those sort of things, they go ‘ping’ back to when they were in high school. The last contact they had with dance, music, physical education, that sort of thing and then they start their thinking from there.

Learning skills repeatedly came up in the conversation.

But if you don’t bring that up - you don’t bring the skills right out at primary age, you’ve chopped off a lot of kids’ lives. A lot of what the potential could have been if you’d really sat down and sort of pushed along at the skills. Of course you can’t just push skills, you’ve got to look into their attitude and discover certainly the enjoyment there.

In respect to learning as many skills as possible and having the opportunity, Joe said:

Yes, to gain confidence and some sort of security in it. But the higher the level you can get them the better.

Joe went on to say that providing the opportunity was the important thing in education, and that if some kids want to excel in one thing they will make sacrifices in other things.
Joe had no recollections of any childhood experiences in dance. He did remember his early enthusiasm for music:

I was always enthusiastic about music. I even used to sneak into the church and sit by myself, and try and get as close as I could to the nun so I could see the organ when she was doing her practice.

He noted that he didn’t learn music at school:

I just picked it up. I just loved it like that. And nobody knows in my family where that came from, but it’s just something I did and I went through and I played in bands. And my kids play in bands now.

Joe also remembered his earlier teaching days and reminisced about the loss of freedom in teaching now:

When we changed the curriculum from an input thing, into an output driven curriculum, it just stopped creativity. It stopped the enthusiasm and enjoyment of it all. It said — OK you do this to get that, and you do it. And we’ll measure how much of that you get. And education doesn’t always work that way for all the kids… So, it’s taken a lot of enjoyment out and put a lot of pressure on teachers and a lot of work on teachers.

In relation to the pressure on his staff, and on himself as principal, he said:

That is where the work is for the teachers – marrying it up keeping records for some institution that might come in once every three years and has a look to see if you’re doing it right. And if you are not doing it right, you get your name in the paper and you get slandered and all the community out there starts to doubt what is happening. The role starts to fall away; you’ve got to play the game.

Joe empathised with his staff facing increased paper work and the time needed to do this aspect of the job. He personally longed for the freer approach to education that he experienced as a teacher in the 70s, “You just had this open range of things and you could just plan constructive activities that kids did.”

We returned to the subject of teaching dance in the classroom and Joe asked about a framework that outlined the dance skills that needed to be learned. He talked of a sciences framework that emphasised discovery:
Most of our teachers do science or social science...they have got a framework. You run a series of activities that might not bring out that result, you know. So it can be a discovery type of activity where the kids sort of don’t know...or it can be about – this happened, and why did it happen. It could be that sort of way. And with dance and you know you are teaching skills on top of skills, and you are using the skills that you’ve got. But we don’t have that. I can’t find that book that you open up and say; here’s a series of skills or lessons or activities or themes. Most other things – topics (curriculum) you open up a book and here’s the stuff unitised. There’s a lot of money to be made if you want to just sit down and write (a dance framework).

Irrespective of the need for a framework, Joe’s equation of science with discovery and dance with skill was interesting. Joe continued to ask about a framework that outlined the progression of skills to be taught through the school.

So what I’m interested in is actually what we’re going to do in the school? What are we going to do down here (lower grades) and progress up to here (upper grades). And what are we going to do? I’ve read through the document...It’s telling you to just teach dance like you teach music, like drama, so there must be some progression through the school that we’re going to teach, and what we are going to do. What are we going to teach and what are we aiming for? And I think that is the hesitation.

Joe emphasised the point that the teachers need assistance, or input, to know where to start and need insight into the progress expected of the students. Given this, Joe’s desire for a framework seemed to contradict his ‘ideals’ where education was much more free. Or perhaps Joe was saying there is a need for an overall structure as well as freedom within that structure for the teacher to find their own direction. I also noted that Joe, even though he had read the new curriculum, had not been able to fully connect with its structure or terminology. (Much like Kate and Gessie.)

From a principal’s perspective, Joe pragmatically broke down the teaching/contact hours into approximately three and a half hours per each of the seven curriculum areas per week. In the case of the arts this was then further divided by the four arts forms, which resulted in approximately 50 minutes / week / art form. Joe thought that this in reality would be about 30 minutes actual teaching time for each art form. He indicated that if we continually divided time and curriculum up according to outcomes and objectives “you’d kill it in your mind. You’d kill it in the kids’ minds.” Following this, Joe spoke of the value of integrating curriculum around specific activities and
themes, and he again referred to his early teaching days where he used to take the video camera to the river bank and allow the kids to question and observe what was happening, and then structure the learning according to where they saw the opportunities.

We moved on to speak of resources that teachers needed. Joe felt that there were no adequate resources available and that teachers needed activity books and progressive dance lesson plans. When I reflected upon comments made by the other teachers at Oyster Bay School about resource needs, the lasting impression was that personal experience of doing and teaching dance was valuable, and needed more than resource 'things'.

We moved on to the subject of assessment. Issues regarding levels of achievement were raised which led to the issue of what you are trying to achieve through dance in the first place. This led to discussing rationales for dance in the curriculum. We covered rationales such as expression, creativity, fun, problem solving, negotiation, team skills, dancing skills. Joe commented on the importance of offering children another way to experience life or to learn, "(dance) gives so many different avenues on which to look at life."

I noted that parents had considerable access to classrooms at the end of the school day. There were about ten parents watching the last 10 minutes of the school day in each classroom that I visited. My observation was that the parents appeared to 'read' the classroom, absorbing the contents of the classroom walls, the desk tops, the reading corner and the exchanges between children and teachers. Joe commented that in the past, parents sitting in at the beginning and end of lessons had been very problematic, with some parents interrupting and regarding the classroom as 'their own'. I also felt that some parents appeared suspicious of the classroom environment. I recalled one father collecting his 6-7 year old son who was obviously happy and excited about his day. When his son animatedly chatted about his work in dance his father glanced around and then regarded me with what could be described as a disapproving look. The boy was firmly spoken to and they left. This fleeting moment
reminded me that what goes on in school is only one small part of education and learning, and that children and indeed all of us are building understandings and knowledge from a mix of our own and others’ interests and values, and from purposeful and chance happenings. It is important to note that the vast majority of parents that walked out of those classrooms were happy about their child’s ‘exciting’ day. I mention the above exchange as it stood out for me on that day and Joe, as a principal, was often dealing with parental and wider community issues.

We moved on to speak of the teachers having a commitment to the arts and of ways to steadily develop their skills. I asked what would the school down the road do in respect to developing their expertise, what help would they need?

That is a big problem. It is a big worry. I can remember when you have no experts in the school. That’s why I think we should always run with teachers’ interests, no matter what they come in with. You should always say: look go to it, if you love music then do it, or visual arts, you know, go to it. Just take it and run with it, because during that time – bugger the balance, do what you can with that group of kids. They’ll love you for it. And you’ll get a tremendous amount out of it, a lot of stimulation. But try and keep a balance elsewhere (in the curriculum). And that’s what happens you know. Kids just love it, they learn from your passion. They might not get it next year (that experience with another teacher) it’s a massive gamble.

I commented that each teacher has strengths and personal ways of teaching. Joe replied, “It’s the sort of person you are and the way you are with kids.” Joe went on to say that it is the teacher that stimulates interest and learning:

Look at the number of kids who say - I don’t like so and so (that curriculum area)...it all boils down to the fact that old Mr so and so is going to teach it. It really depends on who was going to take it (teach it).

Joe did not have a class of his own and was more concerned with bigger picture school issues than with pedagogical issues. In light of this Joe wanted to spend further time talking rather than participating in a shared dance activity. He made many comments about how he enjoyed the discussions, and in particular how much more aware of dance he had become, “You have brought dance to the front of my head.” He also said “I’m now doing things in regard to dance that I would have never done
before." He was consciously watching dance on television, choosing to attend a dance performance, and noticing dance in the newspaper for the first time.

Joe wanted to continue to focus on planning issues:

So we have sort of looked at doing, for this year, focusing upon dance and drama...so that we can force it or push it a bit. So we'll have a couple of staff meetings and look at the document...two staff meetings on doing practical activities, and then the third one looking at how we see it fitting in for the next year. How would you plan a whole year in dance?

Joe made reference back to the visual arts planning that most teachers, himself in particular, felt comfortable with. From this context he queried:

I don't know how dance is broken up, but we've used it like visual arts, we've broken it up into picture making and clay work and that sort of thing. I don't know if dance can be broken up like that or if we need to or not, or if it goes along the line of experimenting?

I felt that Joe was again revealing his perception of dance as an activity based upon stylistic skills/steps, but as we continued to talk I noted that he was broadening his perceptions. His questioning about experimenting, his reference to classroom themes and the dance elements informed me that Joe was thinking more broadly about dance.

We spoke of the elements providing the dance focus from kindergarten to the end of primary school. I emphasised that they are continually manipulated and utilised to fit with each teachers' needs and the children's abilities. We went on to discuss that this approach did not ignore the value of learning dance styles and their steps. I stressed that this was an important aspect of the dance programme, though only one aspect. At the end of the day the planning is structured by the elements but shaped by the teacher and children in each classroom.

In respect to assessment and reporting, Joe was concerned not only about the over reporting that goes on in general, but also the added dilemma of reporting in all four arts and in four strands for all children. He suggested that teachers would make
generalisations based upon their repeated observations. I suggested that once the teachers gain some experience they would be increasingly able to recognise the levels of achievement within each strand, and as so would eventually be able to manage the sequential progression of achievement.

We continued to speak of teaching issues such as classroom management strategies and finding the balance between control and creativity. Joe thought that a key part of this was that the staff had a shared view of the curriculum, and that they were aware of each other's processes and approaches. This in turn informed what they were aiming to achieve through the arts curriculum as a team. At the end of this conversation he commented with genuine feeling, "pretty exciting stuff isn't it."
4.8 Paul

"Maybe knowing about it and doing it are different things, and that is possibly the thing that scares me away a bit."

Paul was a teaching principal whose job included fulltime teaching. Over the four weeks of our discussions we focused on his teaching role. Paul taught 15 boys and girls, in years 4, 5 and 6 (8-11 year olds) within a small two-teacher school in a low/middle socio-economic community. Sandy Track School was on the outskirts of the city and was surrounded by hills and beaches. There was considerable space to play and a small library that also served as an arts activity area.

Paul described himself as having virtually no experience in dance and it was apparent that Paul was more than a little concerned about teaching dance to his students. A particular concern centered upon issues around balancing the expressive nature of dance with the pragmatics of classroom management. We spoke a lot about the actual dance content in the curriculum and also about pedagogical strategies that translate dance from the page to the floor.

In describing my research to Paul, I described my general observation of “an ongoing hesitancy to teach dance in the primary school.” To which Paul replied, “I’d go along with that.” We discussed this attitude in general, and then I asked what he thought dance in schools was. He replied:

Well to start off with it’s movement. That’s pretty simplistic, but where one moves, and how one moves and with whom one moves is I suppose the guts of it and what I perceive at the moment. I think like so many other subjects there are two ways or maybe more than two ways of going about it. One is creatively, or open- ended perhaps. Where you can perhaps set the music and leave – not leave necessarily, but try and inspire or motivate the children to do their own thing under some limited guidelines. At the other end of the spectrum you can actually formalize the lesson and say ‘right on beat one you’re going to do this and on beat three you’re going to do that’. So it becomes a sequence of events that children have to go through, put together, refine, whatever. …But I’m trying to be a little flexible too with my definition, even though you may think otherwise.

I asked why Paul wanted flexibility in his definition:
Because children are different, children change and subjects (dance curriculum) change.

Throughout our first conversation, Paul touched on what I considered were two big issues: recognizing children as diverse individuals; and describing dance as a diverse activity that included the cultural, ritual, and artistic functions. I expressed my interest in studying the diverse functions of dance, “It’s amazing. I just get really amazed by the diversity of all the dance.” As we talked of the diversity of dance Paul appeared to relax. We went on and he spoke of his son’s basketball team performing a Haka (a traditional Maori dance with song) at an Australian basketball competition. He said:

Part of our presentation of ourselves, I suppose the culture that we brought along to those sporting events was preceded by the Haka. And the girls (the girls’ basketball team) did some Waiata. So there was that presentation. We are New Zealanders, the Maori part of it, which I think was really great. The Haka served two purposes for me. One was the representation of us as people, and two, it fired the boys up...they were focused and ready to play.

We briefly discussed the role that dance plays in establishing identity. In this regard Paul wanted to know more about Australian Aborigines’ dance. Our conversation revealed that both of us shared an interest in traditional dances of New Zealand and Australia. I commented that Paul knew more than he thought he did about dance. He indicated with a smile and nod that he did know more about dance than he initially indicated.

Given the diversity of dance, Paul expressed concern about what the dance programme should include:

But that makes me wonder too now, about the meaning of dance. I mean if we put it back into the primary school perspective, here we are about to take some dance lessons with the children, where do we stop? Where does it start? When we’re doing a dance, how important is it that children not only learn to dance, but they learn why they dance?

Paul had brought the conversation into the context of the primary school by referring to the children and the rationale for learning dance. He continued:

There is another element we have not spoken about and that is fun. A lot of the dances, the others seemed to be like fun things. I mean the puppet dances are fun, because you are changing rhythms, you are getting faster and slower and that’s a good rhythm sort of listening thing. ...So there’s that element too isn’t
it? The inventiveness and the fun that I’m sure will appeal to children, to the reasons behind the historical reasons. There’s a lot, isn’t there?

Our conversation centred upon the many different dances that could easily be a part of a dance programme. I couldn’t help thinking about the contrast that Paul was presenting. He was very up front in telling me about his limited experience and knowledge of dance and his subsequent concerns about teaching it, but at the same time he was talking about many dances and dance experiences.

Paul discussed different rationales for children’s participation in dance. Reasons such as learning through doing, fun, and energy release were mentioned, nonetheless, I gained the sense that Paul was looking for a stronger validating rationale that he had not yet found. I continued to press Paul and he said:

Well, first of all it’s a way of getting fit. Secondly it is a way of using your imagination. Thirdly it’s mathematical. Fourth, you can integrate it with music, some other subjects we mentioned before, history and culture things. And I suppose that you can dance as a vehicle for a lot of other ways of learning and doing... I’ll have a think about it. I’ve never thought about it like that before.

Paul listed a range of perspectives about dance, all of which offered diverse learning opportunities for the children.

The conversation moved on to how different children can ‘know’ and show what they know. I said:

They (children) have to be able to show it (their understanding), it makes them translate that paper knowledge into a bodily knowledge, and some kids can do that really, really well, and they are not always the children that can get it on paper really well. I have found that it is interesting that we do a lot of testing, lots of assessment, yet it is always (using) a limited range of tools, dominated by a pen and a piece of paper.

By making a place for dance in the curriculum we are valuing embodied knowledge, which expresses a particular way of knowing. By implication, we are also making a place for those who can know in this medium. I recalled many experiences that I have had in my career as a teacher advisor, where I have gained high quality work from students that surprised their everyday teachers. I recounted a comment from teachers that I have heard many, many times: “How did you get him/her to do that?” It was not necessarily that these students were less than capable in school, though this was often
the inference, it was more a case of dance providing the opportunity for these children to express what they knew. Overwhelmingly, this scenario was repeated with boys who were mostly characterised by the teachers as being ‘naughty boys’. Paul and I agreed that the perceptions of dance and of children needed to be wide in order to provide the students with the best opportunity to participate successfully in education. Paul’s interest was piqued, and he went on to describe an example of a boy in his class currently being introduced to dance by Mick (another teacher in this study). Paul said:

Interesting and I can see that. Even today, I mean a certain boy in my room who does get into trouble, he’s hyper, you know, it doesn’t take much for him to get off his handle. But no, Mick was raving about how good he was at dance. So that rings true.

I went on to speak of the importance of recognising the children’s interest in being physical. Paul replied:

There’s a bit of a rub there Ralph, in that maybe for a lot of teachers to take dance...it runs counter to what is usually, in a lot of cases anyway, perceived to be the sort of ideal teaching situation where you’ve got kids in rows and you’ve got them sitting down listening. Here we’re talking of them bumping and touching and it sort of runs against the grain a bit doesn’t it?

Our conversation began to unearth issues about who the learner was, what dance was and how the teacher manages the dance classroom. Paul’s comment about many teachers’ ideal teaching situation illustrated a pedagogical approach that emphasised control.

I continued by describing my dance classes as typically involving considerable noise, interaction, risk, and laughter. We spoke of the different learning environments created within different subjects areas, and the possibility of re-defining the teacher/student and inter-student relationships within a dance class. The management or balance of ‘control’ and ‘creativity’ appeared to lie at the heart of Paul’s concerns about teaching dance. Paul commented:

Yeah for sure, but then again you usually set the guidelines at the start, and you are able to pull them in if she or he thinks it’s required.
In response to this I suggested that both the teacher and the students play a part in 'reading' the classroom dynamics, and that often management of the classroom is determined by who is the most perceptive of interactions as they unfold. Paul and I discussed this in respect to a student teacher he knew once:

The demeanour thing brings to mind a student teacher I had last year who was brave enough to take - maybe I shouldn’t have said that, that way - a dance lesson. It was a formalised dance lesson. I had anticipated nothing but the worst results for her but the demeanour thing came into it. She was a very easy-going person, she wasn’t dictatorial or anything like that. She laid - she was very clear with her guidelines, but her nature was such that she got what she wanted. I was very pleased for her. Because she took that kind of lesson on board - well dance I don’t know, wouldn’t it be easier to do something like maths or spelling? I don’t know. For a student teacher I suspect it was a little bit risky. But she got away with it. She did a good job.

It is the teacher who can establish the attitude to learning in any curriculum, and as Paul described, different teaching approaches are available that most ably allow learning to occur. Paul further indicated his lack of confidence with dance through comments such as, “was brave enough to take...a dance lesson...(and)...I anticipated nothing but the worst results.” This conversation confirmed my perceptions that Paul was not confident to teach dance, irrespective of this I was pleased that Paul was feeling more comfortable talking about it.

We talked about teachers learning about “crowd control issues”. When a teacher removes the physical structure of desks, as one might do in a dance class, the students often gain a sense of freedom and ‘structurelessness’, which may lead to excitement and the bumping and touching Paul referred to earlier. As I said to Paul:

I could never underestimate the power of that structure (the desk). Take that away, put the kids in a different kind of structure and you’ve got to very quickly establish what is expected. What is appropriate and how are you going to deal with it? And you don’t want to spend all day doing it.

Structure in the dance lesson is a core part of managing the behaviour of the students, and this is what intrigued Paul the most. In discussing management and focus issues between the teachers and the children within the dance lessons, Paul shared Kate’s concerns about participating as both teacher and learner in developing understanding
through movement. I acknowledged that for a primary school teacher to simultaneously fulfil the role of teacher and learner in front of the children required confidence in oneself and the trust of the children. There is certainly a risk involved, yet I believe that this shift empowers the children and the teacher in the classroom context and releases both from the limiting roles involved in having set givers (teachers) and receivers (children) of knowledge.

We acknowledged that the curriculum area can inform the teaching approach taken and that this can also vary throughout a lesson. Paul said:

Sometimes though, OK in dance maybe you’re wanting a bit of creativity, that approach may not be the right one, but in other subject areas, that teaching approach is more successful. Like – well it is creative maths I suppose. But I mean, a maths lesson where you have a particular concept that you wanted the child to practise, it has to be done and repeated so that they gain mastery.

Our conversation focused on pedagogical approaches when managing the relationships between the teacher, the child and the dance. How we approached teaching dance was as crucial as what we taught. I stressed the importance of:

‘Reading’ the class and the individuals and being ‘on the ball’. Which is why I like to see myself as not a teacher but as an artistic director in the classroom. I’m standing back...I’m having the class go in all different directions, but I can see them all...and am allowing for all sorts of variations.

Paul replied:

I’m not criticising what you are saying, but I’m trying to open up the parameters here as to what is effective teaching and what is effective learning and when you know what is the good result to a dance lesson.

We discussed the aim of the lesson, the intent of the dance programme. I spoke of the teacher allowing for a diversity of ‘answers’ to the task without evaluating children’s work as being good or bad according to preconceived ideas of ‘good dance’. We spoke of children having varying abilities, and the need to offer opportunities to reveal those abilities and experience success. As Paul said:

There is something about exposing them to things that they have never encountered before. It might be their thing.
We talked mostly of teacher/student interactions and how to create the optimal dance classroom environment. In this regard Paul commented on how much he enjoyed talking about teaching dance and:

We may have differences of technique (teaching) and maybe differences of philosophy, but I find it quite fascinating. I’ve never been in a situation to discuss this topic before and I find that in a way quite refreshing. I mean the first discussion was quite fun, I could get a few things off my chest and see where you were coming from...I went away having learned something. I think that I didn’t realise that I knew as much as or as little about dance as I did.

Paul then went on to say:

Maybe knowing about it and doing it are different things, and that is possibly the thing that scares me away a bit.

Paul made a shift from talking about teaching dance from a passive perspective – as if someone else was teaching it, to an active perspective where he began to see himself as the teacher. He had listened to a particular piece of music and wondered if this was a starting point for him to teach dance.

I’ve got a tune, it’s a thing by Joe Satriani, and I thought ‘gee, if I get started with it, this is a really good tune to explore movement to’. Do I start here? Where do I start? Do I start with exploring the body? Like you did say before this afternoon (look at) ways of exploring how to move limbs and things...Is this a good place to start? But then I think ‘you just answered it by saying—well, OK, I have not done dance like this before, why don’t I try it anyway and see what happens and be honest with the kids and find out? And say ‘OK, I’ve got this music, shall we explore?’ I don’t know, do I or don’t I do that?

We talked around ideas, ways of structuring the lesson and the use of music. I stressed that Paul needed to be clear about what he wanted to achieve irrespective of the music. He commented, “I’m beginning to understand now, some of the possibilities.”

It was interesting observing Paul beginning to see himself as the teacher of dance. I felt that he had changed from thinking about the teaching of dance as an abstract notion to it being a very real possibility.

This talk prompted Paul to remember how another teacher taught dance when he was a trainee teacher:
There were bits of it I still remember where dance was the lesson, the lady there gave the group a hoop and just asked them to spend a few minutes exploring how to use the hoop, how to move it.

The interesting thing about this recollection was that Paul went on to say that that demonstration lesson had the effect of distinguishing himself as “not being that kind of teacher.” This statement was a timely reminder for me to remember that each teacher has strengths and interests that inform how and what they teach, in much the same way as each child in the classroom has strengths and interests that inform how and what they learn. Within the classroom context, knowing these respective strengths and interests are a part of knowing each other and establishing teacher/child relationships and trust.

Paul and I returned to talking about how a teacher directs the children. I talked of encouraging “risk taking”, where the children are safely allowed to explore new ideas and movements. I went on to say that it is the teacher’s job to direct these students and their risk taking and manipulate the material with the children in order to find the child’s potential and their success. I felt this was particularly pertinent for some boys:

So you cajole, you manipulate, you don’t stop him from investing that riskiness, because that’s what he loves and that’s what boys’ have got that we are not harnessing.

A part of this is accepting that there is no clear-cut right and wrong paradigm at large in the dance classroom. Dance invites movement for choreographic development and reflection. Paul agreed, and said, “That’s interesting because you are bringing out a dance as your final product.” Paul went on to distinguish this process from dance he observed some girls doing in their lunch break.

At lunch times they go into the library…bang it (music) on and do these somewhat miniscule robotic movements and repeat them 50 times before they are done. …I mean they entertain themse/ves, that’s fine, but the end product – really. You’ve actually mentioned about channelling them, encouraging them, getting them to think about what they are doing and what’s to follow. And that’s the real teaching isn’t it. It’s not in this type of dance?
I stressed that as a teacher you start with ideas and resources that are accessible. These girls and their dance may be seen as a resource and a starting point that may be valued in the classroom. I felt that I had to reiterate that I do not advocate for only one kind of dance, but rather I acknowledge what the kids do and know and that this is a way to connect with their interest and a beginning for where I eventually want to take the children.

Paul was a traditional teacher in the sense that he assumed that he had the knowledge to give to the children, and that the children sitting in straight lines were ready to receive it. I felt that Paul was initially overwhelmed with the burden of ‘knowing dance’ before he could teach it. As we talked of dance’s diversity, and the notion of allowing children into the process of learning and teaching dance, he opened up to other approaches and was keen to learn how he could teach dance.

Our conversations from here on included Mick, the part-time teacher at Sandy track School who also participated in the study. In keeping with the chronology of the interviews, Mick is introduced, and then the conversations with Mick and Paul will be accounted for.
4.9 Mick

“They will learn about themselves as they are using their bodies to dance.”

Mick was a part-time teacher, working with Paul and another teacher at Sandy track School. Mick’s input at the school was disproportionate to her part-time status. Mick mainly taught the Arts and Maori, and assisted in other curriculum areas in both classrooms. Mick had taught at this school for over ten years and had the longest history with the school.

Mick came to the first interview with a belief in dance as being a very important part of the curriculum; yet, Mick had very little experience in teaching dance in the classroom. She was upfront in saying “I have very little knowledge, resources and confidence and I’ll only be one step ahead of the children.” Ironically, Mick went on to say “I’ve already started teaching dance to the senior kids (Paul’s class), and I’ve been to the town library looking for resources.” Mick was a ‘self-starter’, a ‘doer’, and was not afraid of working with the children as a co-explorer. She made the comment “usually when I commence any new unit or topic I always start with the kids – who they are and how they relate to the topic.”

Mick was a calm, quiet and experienced teacher who believed that it was vital that teachers participated in the learning with the children, and that teachers needed to get involved irrespective of their knowledge and experience. Mick certainly did this in respect to dance. She valued the children’s ideas and used their perspective to kick-start her dance programme. Mick, like Kate, used simple who, what, where, why, how, when questions about dance to initiate a dance programme. She asked the children:

What is it? What is dance? These are the responses that we’ve got – moving your body; being flexible; moving in space or in a direction. Which is really good.

Where does it come from? It’s Spanish; all over the world; did the Maori start it; they didn’t start it but they do dance.

187
Why dance? For celebration; for enjoyment; for exercise; as a job – a profession; competition; greeting people, massing people and bringing them into the villages.

Who dances? Pop stars; parents; children; professional performers; animals – I thought that was quite interesting that they came up with that concept, because they do dance.

What sort of dance do they do? … Country dances (folk), ballet, jazz, break dancing, ballroom, tap, line, twist, boogy woogy.

Where do you dance? At home, hotel, night-club, circus, school, disco, theatres, hot stones in villages, on the street, rugby field – I suppose doing the Haka, ballroom, a hall, villages, in a studio.

So they really had quite a bit of knowledge.

Mick and I thought the students’ perceptions were valuable in establishing an initial shared understanding. I asked Mick where she thought the children gained these perceptions of dance. She replied:

(Firstly) they are used to being questioned… the responses came from a wide variety of the children, boys and girls in the classroom… I’m not sure where they’ve got the knowledge. Obviously from home or at school, or they’ve talked about it, seen it on TV.

My perception was that Mick consciously brought the children in to her dance programme and in doing so invited them to have a sense of ownership. Mick then looked at the curriculum and at library resources in order to clarify the dance programme focus. Nonetheless, Mick was more focused upon what the children were interested in and allowed this to direct the dance programme that she then later matched up with the curriculum. Mick’s focus was the children:

You’ve got to make it interesting for the children, and I like to be spontaneous with a lot of things… so things happen.

Mick also valued the opportunity to discuss ideas and find out things for herself:

I think children need to question. Really need to question to find out things. My children have always done that. It’s how they find out things… stimulate their mind, make their mind work… I like discussion, I like talking, we do a lot of group evaluating when we’ve done art as well. We talk about what we have created and how did they get that effect. What did they think about it, what could be better? Lots and lots of questions… you don’t have to give the answers because they can find out for themselves.
Having talked about the children and dance I returned to Mick, and asked what she felt dance was:

Well, probably celebration. Because we come from a country area and everything is celebrated. You would go to a dance, like at a 21st birthday, wedding, engagement. So in a country area everyone would gather together and they would dance. But it was more the formal type of dance - Gypsy Tap, Barn Dance and waltzing... I think it was fun.

I commented that the dance event was an important social event “where you certainly got to meet people”. Mick went on:

Yes. I can’t say that ballet ever enthralled me. I know that it is probably the most known dance, but ballet it doesn’t. ...I accept that the ballets are very clever but it doesn’t interest me a great deal.

Mick emphasised that she understands that others like ballet, and she does not hinder children or others from finding out about it. She continued, describing her:

Love of folk dance, but then I’ve taught folk dance before. I mean that’s all dance was as part of the physical education curriculum. Folk dancing, and how often would we do that. You might have done it once every second year or something. Not really enthralling at all either.

Mick’s comments as a teacher of folk dance revealed how dance was regarded in her school at that time. She continued to reflect upon folk dance in her own school days:

As a child in my primary school days, we did have a big Ball and two schools combined in a huge hall and we did all these folk dances. We were allowed to dress up the joint (hall). (We all) dressed up to go to these dances. So that’s really my experience that I had.

In Mick’s school days and as a young woman, dance was mostly valued as a socialising activity and usually associated with special events. It is reasonable to suggest that in order to socialise, knowing how to dance was critical to the success of the event as a celebration, and also crucial at the personal level if you were to meet anyone. It did not surprise me when Mick said that she met her husband at one of these dances. Dance in the rural community brought people together. The dance event was regarded positively, that is, an attractive function to attend where knowing the skills of dancing was desirable.
Mick returned to the present and noted that the dance she most enjoyed watching was contemporary dance, though was annoyed that it cost so much. When I asked if cost was a factor in determining people’s attendance, she replied, “Sure, yes, I am sure it is.” I reflected that this was an issue for schools who wanted to utilise dance in the theatre context as a resource to complement their ‘in school’ dance programme. The high cost implied an ‘exclusivity’, which reinforces elitist perceptions towards dance.

Mick described how she had gone to several bookshops and could not find any dance resources specific to dance in the primary school. Mick indicated that “it does help to do a bit of reading and find out (about dance).” Mick returned to speaking of the children she is teaching now. She described how much they are enjoying dance. She had asked the children to bring their own music and she was adapting the dance lessons as she went along. Mick was also alert to the fact that she could benefit from more information:

I’m aware that there’s a lot of information that needs to be passed on to them, but at this stage I will be keeping one step ahead of the kids. And I think that is how we (the teachers) learn as well.

I strongly related to Mick’s comments about learning to teach dance by actually teaching dance. We both agreed that learning with the children helps to create a good atmosphere and partnership. Mick said:

That’s right. It’s being involved with them, you getting out there and being part of what they are doing. I mean they were laughing at me last week because I was doing – being involved in this dance, and I thought ‘ah well if she can be silly, I can be silly too.’ That’s as I say, makes things a bit more relaxed.

Mick and I related to our teaching behaviour in much the same way. I talked of enjoying moments of being silly when I teach and that this approach is particularly effective in “opening doors for the boys” participation, to which Mick strongly agreed:

You do. I just found there was not – I thought there might have been a bit of a reaction from the boys but there wasn’t, there was just no (bad) reaction at all. They loved it. They enjoyed it. They really wanted to get into it. I was really pleased about that.
We both noted that having fun was a key ingredient for the teacher and the children. I asked why Mick thought the boys as much as the girls were happy about participating:

> It surprised me, but I think the children here (danced) with (the previous teacher), doing a production and involving the whole school and everyone was involved in performing and dancing in front of other people. I think that had a great deal to do with it.

Exposure to dance as a part of the school curriculum that everyone did, and valuing dance by performing it in front of the parents, possibly embedded an attitude that dance was ‘cool’ and for everyone. Irrespective of this school experience, Mick was not sure how all the parents in the community would accept dance:

> I’m not really sure how parents feel about it, I know, I’m sure the mothers will be accepting, but I’m not sure about the fathers.

Males dancing seemed to be an issue that Mick was alert to. I asked myself was this an overreaction or a false perception, given that at the beginning of her dance programme the children included dance as something that happened on the rugby field, a traditionally male activity, and that the boys were participating successfully and had done so in the past. Later in our conversation Mick recalled talking about the English film ‘Billy Elliot’ (2000) with her class and how all the boys laughed about the young boy’s desire to learn ballet. Mick commented, “there is a stigma there”.

Mick went on to talk of her own son and his desire to learn ballet.

> My son wanted to learn ballet when my daughter was going to ballet. I was quite happy for him to go. He couldn’t though, he couldn’t make himself do it.

In the context of Mick and Sandy track School it would appear that the boys did have a negative attitude towards ballet, though this attitude was more positive in respect to dance in general. The distinction between dance and ballet may have significance for dance in primary schools.

Our conversations revealed to Mick how dance can introduce the study of other people, learning about others and self. Here I commented upon the possibility of dance integrating with other curriculum areas such as social studies. This was an
important issue for Mick as she thought that teachers would have difficulties in fitting
dance into the curriculum.

I think it is going to be very difficult for full time teachers to actually
introduce it. How often do they do it? There are so many other important
subjects as well. I mean they are all important. They have got to be done. How
many hours in a day have they actually got to teach all these subjects? How
often do they want dance taught?

I noted Mick’s point regarding time, but also noted her implied valuing of dance as
important alongside other curriculum areas.

The issue of overall curriculum planning was discussed. We mentioned the need to
consider the overall aim of what education was about, the needs of the diverse
students, and the most effective means for achieving learning in all subject areas. In
this regard I asked Mick where she would like to go with her dance programme, what
it might encompass, and what the children might gain:

I think the children need to know about how they can use their bodies, which
ways they can use their body. They need to know more about dances from
other countries. They need to know what sort of dances they are, and have a
bit more knowledge about what they are, perhaps the origins, and histories.
They need to make up their own dances - they love making up their own
dance, and that is part of the curriculum. I like to pass on a lot of knowledge
and I think you can do that often through discussion and in showing them -
looking at videos. I think that would be good if there was a video that showed
you different dances of different cultures that could be shown to children. How
can I do this? How can I show the children when I can’t demonstrate it
myself? I can tape some things from TV. It’s a difficulty when there is no
resource...I think they’ll get more knowledge and understanding about dance
and themselves. They will learn about themselves as they are using their
bodies to dance.

Mick raised the issue of resources for demonstrating dance, both ‘things’ such as
videos and herself as a resource. She wanted more resources and to feel more
resourced in herself. I admired Mick’s attitude to herself as the teacher, where she
valued the teacher as the key resource as well as the user of resource ‘things’. Mick, a
teacher who was nearing retirement, was drawing on her years of experience. I felt
that Mick had an expertise that she had gained over many years of teaching and I felt
quite privileged to be learning from Mick during our conversations.
At our next meeting I shared a collection of dance resources with Mick and directed her attention to new in-service events happening in Dunedin. In respect to learning more about dance and introducing dance into the school curriculum, Mick emphasised the importance of parents learning more:

I think the parents as well as the children... I think the parents are going to have to do it too. I think they are involved in this in the initial planning – to get an understanding of why (dance is in the curriculum).

Mick felt that certain "prejudices" and attitudes towards dance held in the community needed to be dispelled if dance is to be respected fully as a curriculum area. I asked what was the best way of doing this, to which Mick replied, “I think having a sort of national exposure, I think- everyone watches TV, I mean...” Mick went on to mention the Ministry of Education video that introduced the new Arts curriculum, and said that this was good and that it helped, but not enough parents beyond the Board of Trustees would see it. I suggested that the strongest advocate for dance might be their children’s dance and that schools may need to present it to the parents in order to show them what it was all about. For me this is a complex issue as it requires teachers to consciously review what content and quality they are going to present to parents at school events, be they assemblies, school fairs or arts evenings. Mick agreed, though reinforced the point that, irrespective of parents’ attitudes, introducing it to the children was a great place to start.

Yes I think that’s it. I think what we are doing now is quite good, we are introducing it... we are introducing it very slowly and the children are getting dance at least once a week.

Mick suggested that once the kids were feeling comfortable, they could send out a flyer to the parents and inform them of the curriculum and what the children have been doing.

Mick wanted to refine her planning of her dance programme and wanted to do this with Paul. She also wanted to air her ideas:

So I really need to sort of have someone to talk to and with me and go over it with me. I think that would be good for Paul too.
The need to talk over and share ideas was something that Mick valued highly. We talked more about the activities that Mick had been doing over the last few weeks:

We’ve set up a scrapbook that children can bring along pictures or articles. and – (This idea) it is suggested in the curriculum. I found an article about the New Zealand group, Black Grace... a m.a.e group. We talked about dance being another means for communication...and being able to show your feelings and emotions. We talked about what sort of emotion would be flowing through dance. All these feelings of emotion that could be expressed through dance – happiness, excitement, sadness, being bored, loneliness, longing, yearning, frightened, love, sleepiness. This is what their thoughts were. I then asked them to show me these emotions. I said you are not to make a sound, you are not allowed to use your voices, just use your body. They found that quite difficult.

Some of them had good ideas. Some of them went around like stuffed dummies, like stick figures.

Mick appreciated talking about what she had planned and experienced so far in teaching dance to these children. She was enjoying it and finding mixed success. Mick did highlight one boy who was really surprising her:

I’m really enjoying watching him...he’s just sort of come out of himself and he’s not at all self-conscious, he is just really good.

I asked if he had done dance before. Mick replied:

No, I think he probably has not had the opportunity to show that side of himself.

Mick continued to speak of activities that she had done but at the same time was checking with me if they were OK activities. I felt that Mick was looking for some reassurance that she was teaching the appropriate material. I reinforced that you start where you start, and that what you, the teacher, brings and what the children bring to the lesson was what needed to be valued the most.

I talked about planning from the curriculum. I emphasised that while dance in the curriculum has been conceptualised into distinct ‘strands’, within the classroom it is usually all mixed in together and as Mick said, “they all depend on each other”. Again we agreed that we teach the children and then we relate the activity back to the
curriculum. I commented, “so the issue will be how do you write it up in a format to report on?” To which Mick replied “right”. We spoke of the different approaches to planning a programme and importantly the intent of including dance in the children’s education. Mick could see various ways and said:

Yes, yes, there are lots of options isn’t there. I think we probably need to – Paul and I need to do it together.
4.10 Paul and Mick

Paul and Mick came together for the remaining sessions as they both wanted to plan and participate together. It made sense, in that they were teaching each other’s class and in a small school they were aware of the importance of having a shared view on how they would approach the curriculum and the children.

Initially we coordinated our timelines for observing each other’s classes, creating the shared dance and times for other interviews. I say this here, as the planning within this small school context was quite different from the larger schools in this study. The teachers played many different roles that included administration, public relations, secretarial work, Board work, as well as their teaching roles, all of which consumed their time. In appreciating Mick and Paul’s participation in this study, I was alert to their needs and was quite willing to flex and help them as they helped me.

We commenced by talking about planning a dance programme. As Mick stated:

Are we looking at a plan for our school? That’s what I was sort of really thinking about, a plan for the year.

We looked at the four strands within the curriculum. Mick suggested the idea of planning around one strand for each school term. So we talked about each strand and what it involved, and the context of having to teach all the arts subjects. Mick said, “it’s probably not realistic.” Paul and Mick acknowledged that there would not be enough time to focus so closely on the strands separately, and they also agreed that it was not how dance in the classroom would be. They both thought that it was more realistic, in regard to both time and content, to integrate dance into themes or topics that they were already covering. I emphasised the need to keep it “simple”. Paul suggested:

Well Mick, the dance (programme) is the Monarch Butterfly, how does that grab you?
Mick replied, “Oh that’s clear, that would be good.” Paul went on:

We’ve got the Monarch Butterfly – it’s in a chrysalis at the moment and we are looking at heat absorption using the thermometer skills, that’s the science.

Paul and Mick both immediately started to come up with ideas for dance. They considered colours, patterns, growth stages and many ideas that reinforced the science curriculum and introduced dance simultaneously.

Paul: Could you do something, you could actually – I don’t know how ambitious this is - but I mean there is the caterpillar as well. They’ve seen a caterpillar moving and that is a bit more exotic. Then there is the chrysalis stage.

Mick: That’s right, emerging.

Paul: Yeah, so we can look at this as a three and four-step dance couldn’t you, really?

The ideas continued to flow and the planning happened around the theme of butterflies. The teachers had the ideas and also had the suggestions of how dance and science could be integrated. Throughout our discussions, Paul’s perceptions of dance as being predominantly skill based and Mick’s perceptions of dance as being about expression emerged and merged. Paul commented:

How much prior learning (dancing) will they need to do? Or rehearse them. I mean are we sort of saying ‘jump in kids, come up with something, or are we doing what we discussed before (the skills of using the dance elements).

Mick was more interested in learning about the dance elements as the children explored the ideas of caterpillars. As we talked about the process and product expected in the butterfly dance programme I played the role of ‘trouble shooter’ where I predicted behaviour moments that would arise. I emphasised the need to predict for children’s reactions and how to use those or avoid them by planning in advance. The key issue that Mick and Paul suggested from their past teaching experience, was to keep the children owning the process and using their ideas. I reinforced this saying that the children are your key resource and that the teacher’s role is to provide a strong structure that will direct the children’s energy and ideas. We all agreed that the science about the butterfly provided the stimulus and content.
for the dance, and as such they did not need a butterfly dance resource kit or book.
This helped Mick, “see where it is becoming interrelated with other areas.”

I returned Mick and Paul’s focus to dance and asked why they were doing dance.
What was dance adding to the children’s understanding of butterflies and was it necessary? Paul quipped:

Well first of all it’s a legal requirement, and it gives us practice to address that requirement. So that’s the easy answer, now the hard bit.

Mick carried on:

I think it is interesting teaching something new (in a new way). I think the kids will find it interesting. It’s fun... to have some knowledge of dance...have a confidence to be able to say that they enjoy it, especially with the boys...that they can talk about it with their parents who probably - whose father has the same attitude.

Paul commented that dance would provide another opportunity for some children to learn:

We discussed the other week that it is normally ‘naughty’ boys who come up with something really very original...and the kids that don’t (learn) in one way, do it in another.

Both Paul and Mick were very conscious of parents’ attitudes to dance and peer pressure from outside the school. They both felt the need to educate the wider audience. In this regard they thought exposing the children to dance was a vital step in building their confidence to participate in and accept dance. As Paul said:

With exposure to something, like it is also like the head lice thing – the more you realise that it is here with us, the more accepting we are. The children get it, is no big deal. With dance, the more you give the children the opportunity to do that the more it becomes a fact of life.

Mick firmly agreed.

We returned to their dance programme and discussed how they might relate what they did in the classroom to what is written in the curriculum as achievement objectives.
and outcome statements. Mick wanted reassurance that she had a correct understanding of the terminology in the curriculum:

One of the things I was going to ask you – there were five elements. These are here: the body awareness, space, time, energy, and relationships. So body awareness, that’s fairly straightforward.

Again, Mick was clear about her understanding but needed some reassurance that she was on the right track. I emphasised that Mick and Paul did not have to teach every aspect of the curriculum all the time, and that the programme and lesson intent and aims shape what occurs.

Paul and Mick observed me teaching a lesson that initiated the butterfly dance programme. This lesson prompted considerable discussion. The first thing Paul commented upon was how the children came up with great ideas. He then commented on how I structured the lesson:

The thing I was really intrigued about was the structure. You looked at specific elements and then you combined it and then you put it to music and you looked at the same thing in different ways until ultimately they had a practice, they were starting to think along a dancing line (about the dance elements) that you wanted, and they put it to a rhythm, in a sequence. ...there was this whole energy from yourself and everyone else. They got immersed in what they had to do. They got into it. I found that really good. There was pure thinking.

We continued to speak of individual children’s contribution to the lesson. Paul and Mick were interested in how I directed the children’s behaviour and valued their ideas as the basic dance resource in the lesson. Paul reflected further about the lesson:

I won’t go on, but you said ‘lets do this and lets go here’ and I thought gee why didn’t I think of grouping like that. Why do we have to think of a circle? That’s a different idea, why didn’t I think of that? I kept saying that all the way through the lesson. And I was going to ask you is there a resource book that says ‘OK this is what you can do when you are doing it, you can get the kids into fours, you can do this idea, this idea and this idea’?

Paul was intrigued by what happened in the lesson and wanted access to what and how I did what I did. The perception that a resource book may provide this access is
common and I believe misplaced. I explained that how I teach is the culmination of years of teaching dance and that I have learned by making lots of mistakes and exploring as I teach, just as anyone does in any curriculum area. I agreed that there were resources that had some great ideas and activities, but as to their implementation, I believed that it was by trial and error that the teacher established what worked for themselves. Mick observed:

The children. I noticed last week, you got your inspiration from them. They would come up with something and you said ‘yes I like that, let's do what they are doing’ ... You do that when someone's working, you go with it and extend it. When it’s not, you do change it around as well.

Paul summed this up:

So you are responding in a way to their response to you? So it snowballs in a way.

I described it as a cycle of action and reflection all the time. Paul also commented upon the energy and enthusiasm:

You put plenty of energy into what you are doing, but in response you get energy from them. At the end of the day I think they appreciate this sort of stuff, they (children) have got value for their time.

I thought that Paul’s comment regarding value for their time was interesting, as it is not a perspective that one usually considers. It sort of implies a ‘user pays’ philosophy and the issue of ‘am I (the child in this lesson) getting my money’s worth’ or ‘is this worth my time investment’. This is certainly a comment that I have heard from teachers at in-service sessions and conferences, and maybe a perspective that teachers might like to consider in their own classroom.

Commenting upon my teaching, Paul said:

It was good for me to see what you did because it gave me ideas and it showed me how you could sequence the lesson, structure it so you could get to that point where they are ready to make the dance.
Paul went on to say that he has not seen dance being taught like this and that watching has been very helpful. I assured Paul and Mick that the lesson was not perfect and that in any lesson there is a lot of rubbish that you sift through. Keeping an eye on the long-term goals as well as the short-term achievements is important. As Paul said: “it’s about giving them scope to come up with things like this.”

After talking about the lesson I asked Paul and Mick “So, was that dance? Why would you say that was a dance lesson?” Paul and Mick replied:

Paul: Because they had to think about the way they were moving.
Mick: And the space in which they were moving.
Paul: And the fact that they had to interact with other people. And the movements had to relate to being a butterfly. They certainly weren’t drawing it.
Mick: They were using the theme, the classroom, extending their knowledge. And they are showing it in a different form, rather than writing it down. Communicating.

I asked, is there any point in showing or communicating in ‘a different form’? Paul replied:

I think especially at this age, children have to learn that there is more than one correct answer, and that there is not just one way of doing things correctly. I think you made that quite clear in your lesson. You were encouraging different ideas and some kids got on to that. You gave them confidence for them to explore, and that is quite important at Sandy Track School, because a lot of the kids are hesitant to do things they’ve never done before. You created an environment that was good for them to explore in…and coming up with something that they have never done before. We want them to try things out and see for themselves whether they are going to work or not.

Mick went on to reinforce:

Providing opportunities, and see some children are far better expressing themselves through art than they are through language or the written form.

Both Mick and Paul were increasingly firm about the value of dance in their curriculum. The speed and the assuredness of what they said told me as much as what they said about seeing the value of dance.
I wrapped up the conversation by asking what dance was in the classroom:

Mick: You've got to talk about it. Children have got to know lots of things for the education of dance. I mean dance is just not going and doing it. There are lots of things that need to be talked about.

Paul: If you are teaching dance education, aren't you teaching processes that will lead to dance? ... in a way the dance thing is a little bit limiting as opposed to dance education which is quite open.

It was quite clear that dance in the classroom involved doing dance, talking about dance, analysing ways of making dance, and exploring the scope of dance.

Our next session involved making our shared dance. Paul, Mick and I went through the process of selecting movements and manipulating them to make a dance. I thought that this was a very successful session as all the words that we had discussed had a much more concrete meaning for the teachers, especially Paul. When reflecting on this session Paul said:

The first thing that comes to mind is that when I started to move, to explore, I was a little inhibited. It then became more of a normal thing. So I didn't really mind doing what my brain was thinking. As opposed to saying I could- I can run and spin correctly but I'm not loose enough, but letting myself go totally. The freedom of it. I wasn't used to that. There was nothing wrong with whatever I was doing. No one was watching or caring, but I could let myself go, you know what I mean.

Mick and Paul both anticipated that they would be self-conscious. Mick said:

I thought I would be (self-conscious). I thought about it before we went in, but once we were in there, I just found that you relaxed us and it seemed perfectly normal to be doing that. You made us think and that (helped me) get rid of the perhaps the self-consciousness. But I didn't feel self-conscious because we were busy thinking.

Paul agreed with Mick. Paul added, "You didn’t force us up against the barre going: “Up! Right! Now we have got to do this, one, two, three.” My observation from this little comment is the power that ballet imagery has over all other dances. After many hours of conversation and watching each other teach, ballet was not mentioned once
and yet Paul still had an image of ballet in his mind and that is what we would be doing.

Both Paul and Mick continued to describe the freedom they felt, the time to think individually, without pressure to find the right movement within the session. A key moment for Paul occurred after he had found his three actions and he glanced at Mick and I exploring our movements. He said:

"Ok I’ve done my thing. But then I saw that you did something else. I thought ‘Oh well I’ll try’ and that was interesting because once you started to do that it became easier. You know. I’ve done it one way, now I’ll try it another way and I’ll try it backwards, and I’ll try it faster, higher, low."

Paul was talking about his new understanding of the dance elements. His exploration by doing provided the understanding that he needed. I re-stated that it was about exploring possibilities, there were no rights and wrongs, just the encouragement to try.

Mick and Paul had different responses to the dance as one would expect, but I felt that having done it they were more connected to ‘dance’, and that the words and enthusiasm being used to describe the dance indicated a deeper insight into what dance could entail, Mick said:

"I can see all the time its about communication, whether it’s telling a story or showing feelings it is a means for communicating. ...It’s probably given more ideas of where to come from and how to do things; that everything is fine, because it is a way of communicating, a way of expressing. And that everyone is an individual, and they have different ways of doing that."

Paul commented on being free to find your own movement, and also commented upon the process:

"I found it a whole growing process. You can take one thing (action), take another, link it until you are getting sequences. ...The variety even in our short dance routine, upon reflection really quite amazing. We were doing all sorts of things. I never sort of thought the final product would have so many different things in it. But we were growing, we were being crazy. We were looking up, we were looking down, we were off balance, fast, slow, all sorts of things. And for how long, for about an hour and a half, I don’t know? We did all those things in that time."
Mick started talking of some more dance classes that she had taught since making the dance with Paul and me.

I had a great lesson last week. I tried it (the process we used ourselves) out with Paul's class and I used a very simple Maori Legend and took the actions of what was happening in the story...and I got them to come up with ideas. Then we made the sequence that told the story that they were communicating and it was very good, they did very well. ...If we can scheme off this other lessons could come from it.

Mick and Paul continued to talk about their children in respect to dance. For me this conversation that I was overhearing revealed that Paul and Mick were looking at their class with new eyes, they were talking about dance using terms confidently, thinking of potential directions for more activity, thinking about the children and dance, rather than the dance that the children will learn. I was very excited because they were excited about teaching.

Mick and Paul were speaking of success in their teaching and the words they were using were; “children creating, children thinking as individuals, ideas flowing, they loved it, fun.” These were similar words that they used to describe their own experience of making a dance. We finished our conversation comfortably and happily. We all felt that we had said enough and that any more conversations would be going over old ground. Mick’s final comment summed up the experience for us all:

I thoroughly enjoyed it, I’ve seen such a lot and understand such a lot more.
4.11 Helene

"It's good. I think every teacher that is going to teach dance, should go through that process of actually doing it themselves."

Helene was an experienced teacher and highly respected by her principal and peers. She had taught at Monks Hill School for about 15 years, teaching across the full age range of students. When I met Helene she was teaching a composite class of 27 boys and girls, 9-11 years old. This upper primary classroom was one of three that worked closely together, with the students moving quickly between classrooms for different curriculum areas. Different abilities of the teachers and children came to the fore as the children moved to different classrooms for maths and then again for reading. The efficiency of this operation told me much about the respect the children had for Helene and also about the effectiveness of this educative approach for these children in this school. The school was set in a middle/low socio-economic suburb on the outskirts of the city. It was a relatively large school with 12 teachers, large playing grounds and a sports hall.

Helene had “always loved moving.” She said:

I have an interest in dance. I’ve had it for a long time. Since I was very young. I did a lot of gymnastics when I was younger, and from the gymnastics I got to an age and stage where I wasn’t really going to go any further, so I sort of branched off into doing dance, like Jazz, Modern, that sort of area... I loved moving, I loved music, so moving to music made sense. I did try ballet. It wasn’t my thing at all. It was much too structured for me and I couldn’t stand, you know – ‘what’s this’ (the criticism). I got into modern dance and jazz dance.

As a young adult “disco came along, I got into that. I really loved it.” As Helene grew up, started a family, and became emersed in teaching she danced less. She:

Did a little bit of performing...did some rock’n’roll classes...I would love to do more, I would have loved to have had ballroom classes...try Latin American. So I’ve still got all these things to do.
Helene had considerable dance experience and a strong interest in learning more. I asked where her interest came from:

It's just there, it's always been there. I guess I come from quite a musical family, not that they dance -- well they can dance, but they haven't learned dance should I say. But I've always seen my parents dancing. They had lots of parties. Lots of people came and danced. It has just always been there for me since I was young. There's nothing better, I mean that was (and is) my favourite thing to do, go out and dance. I hate going to parties and they sit there and there's music on and they talk and drink and they don't dance. If you get up and dance people go hmmm (disapprovingly).

So I guess it has always been there. I can't actually say what inspired it. It just happened naturally for me.

We spoke of teaching dance in the classroom, and Helene commented:

I bring that enthusiasm (for dance) into teaching dance in schools. I've always -- certainly with young children done lots of dance. But now I'm working in the senior school (years 5 and 6), I just find them a little more difficult. How to inspire them? Five people (other teachers here) have said the same thing. You know it's all very well teaching like set dancing, like folk dancing, and aerobic type programmes...when it gets actually into the free type dancing, more expressive, ...you know, I understand it and I know what I do, but to actually get that feeling across to the children and especially I need to -- especially the males, the boys. To get them to 'want to move'. To get them to feel that it is OK to move and it's not silly. I mean it is easy for the little ones...they just do it naturally. Something happens, I don't quite know what happens because the little boys do it, but when they get to this age it starts to change. Especially with dance, there's one or two (boys) in here who would be a little hesitant.

I asked if Helene had done much dance this year, she replied:

No not yet. You know I want to get into it, it's great. But I just find it quite difficult getting started. And I found that last year too when I tried.

Helene was an experienced teacher, and an experienced dancer, yet had ongoing issues about teaching dance, especially expressive dance to boys of this age. More precisely, Helene identified the issues of 'starting' the lesson and then stimulating ongoing enthusiasm "to want to move". I can remember thinking at the time, how does Helene stimulate the children to want to learn maths or writing or science or physical education? Do Helene's issues in respect to dance have anything to do with dance, or are they more related to the developmental age of the children, or to
teacher/children dynamics, or gender relationships in the classroom? I also pondered on why there is the ongoing perception that young boys and girls “just do it (dance) naturally” in school.

Helene decided that she would like to walk through her planning of the dance programme. As she said earlier “Probably the biggest issue is where to begin.” I enquired if she had taught dance to this age group much before. Helene said that she had, and went on to say “Yes, but I always feel at this level that I haven’t quite got it right.” I asked how does she know with any lesson that she has got it right, that “you hit the jack pot in the class”. Helene replied immediately, “by the enjoyment, you can just – they’ll tell you.” The way Helene spoke indicated that she was alert to the nuances of the classroom dynamics, that successful teaching was more than curricular achievement; that accomplishment beyond the curriculum, fun and mood were all part of the mix. Helene continued to say “fun” was something that she valued and wanted in her dance class. Following this statement came the question, “So I’m motivated, but how do I get everybody else to feel the same way?” In reflecting upon my own teaching I replied:

I think I actually encourage a lot of silliness. ...get them to be silly. But you know what I mean, there is silly bad and silly good.

I described my purposeful silliness:

‘silly good’ is a ‘letting go’ kind of thing. I tend to be quite silly myself, but not pointlessly silly...it’s quite purposeful. I know where I am going with this actual bit of silliness...it actually leads into the next little activity. ...the outcome, at the end of the lesson is for people to have a slight shift in their attitude. That’s all (maybe) that might be it.

By playing with dance, being silly, the teachers require confidence in their own teaching style as well as with dance. For many teachers such a ‘risky’ approach to dance and teaching may be difficult. Yet I have found that this approach relaxes the children and broadens the scope of what dance may entail and where a lesson may go.
In planning a dance programme I asked Helene what she wanted to achieve. Helene emphasised that she wanted the children to know:

How do we get there, to feel positive about it and feel good about it (dance). (So that they) want to get up there and perform this (dance).

We agreed that it was about “awakening, inspiring” the children. Helene returned to “So where do we start?” I asked Helene where she started with projects and artwork that were displayed around the classroom.

I usually start from a resource. I gather all my resources and throw them all around the room, and then I start to try and put it all together. I work out what would inspire me and the kids, ... which bits I want and don’t want. Like for dance I’d really like to start with some type of visual presentation. To show the children, especially the children who have not seen very much dance, show them what dance is. (If) there is a video around with people performing (diverse types of dance), that sort of thing. I’m thinking that might be a good way to start.

The comment “what would inspire me and the kids” illustrated Helene’s awareness of the need to maintain her level of enthusiasm as a learner as part of the teaching/learning equation.

Given Helene’s preferred starting point for planning by collecting and sifting the potential resources, I could see why she found it difficult to start, given the paucity of dance specific resources for her to ‘throw around’. I also noted that at this stage in Helene’s planning she saw the children as the ‘user’ or receiver of the dance programme. As she spoke more of the children, Helene commented on the diversity of their interests and the diversity of dance types. Helene mentioned:

Videos on TV with all the bands, all doing little dances, including males. ...Haka... We’ve got (children doing) ballet and rhythmical gymnastics. We have not got any highland dancers or irish.

Helene aimed to:

Just sort of give them an overall view of what dance is. It’s not just one thing.
When I asked what she meant by ‘what dance is’ she replied:

I think all the various ways you can move to music, and to express your feelings. It's a huge big area. I mean there are so many different ways and (reasons), it can be personal, it can be for performance... a custom, like the Africans with their dancing...and Haka.

As well as her awareness of the diversity of dance, Helene discussed her familiarity with dance terminology such as space, time, body and energy, which she had used since finding them in a music resource many years ago. Helene outlined her methods for teaching dance:

Yes in the hall. I get them up and moving around. There is not enough room in this classroom... We'll have the music and we will get into some groups, or first of all work individually and then maybe with a partner and then maybe work in full groups. I've certainly had children making up little sequences and then they write...have you thought about adding different parts of the body and then we focus on that for the day. Next day we might change the size (space) of their movements and some change perception.

We talked about the elements being in the new curriculum, the scope they provide for the teacher and the children to approach all dance.

It was ironic that, given Helene's concerns about 'where do I start', I thought she had expressed clear starting points, such as moving in response to the music and manipulating the elements in respect to set movements. This confirmed my thoughts that the issue of how to initiate a relationship with the older age group of children, especially the boys within this learning context, underpinned Helene's concerns about initiating dance activities. We talked about her children and how to appeal to their interests. I described various strategies, such as movement tasks involving precise physical limitations, lateral thinking, problem-solving and physical and intellectual challenges. During this discussion we found that my emphasis was upon creating choreography, and Helene's was on performance, as she said:

I'm coming from a slightly different place. I'm probably coming from the feeling of when you put it together. And in fact I quite like following someone else, telling me what to do. I guess when it all comes together in the performance really. Like you've got to use the small skills and put them all together, and then the whole thing comes together.
Our different interests informed our approaches to dance. I asked about balancing the performative and choreographic aspects of dance with her children:

I give them experiences of both. Like I really enjoy teaching folk dance, because it has a set way and (I can) give them different types of folk dancing. I used to work an aerobics programme, where I don’t actually set the steps. I use some cards which have got different movements on them. So we work together with the cards, I usually move (place) them around the hall and the children move around the different cards. Then at the end they can choose either those movements from the cards or make up their own and do their own little sequence.

I found it telling that Helene was aware of our different emphases in teaching dance, and also aware of teaching dance across a spectrum of approaches in her classroom.

We moved on to speak of the curriculum in general and the place of the dance and the arts in the curriculum. Helene thought that the arts were necessary:

Absolutely. It is (the curriculum) just boring without them - the (arts) experiences children are having. I think it’s very important to have the full person developed, not just getting the children to write and add and subtract. I think it’s very important that we are given the opportunities to have a go at these things. We can’t go into too much depth because of the amount of time we’re given, but we can give them a little taste of these things. If they want to (do some more), I actually say that to children, if they are really enjoying something, think about going off and doing some more, like learning how to play an instrument. We are not able to teach that much here because of the restrictions of time. You get them excited in the little blocks that we do here we can’t do more – they go off and join a club.

Having decided that it was important to include the arts along with many other curriculum areas, Helene drew attention to how the school was going to go about including the diversity of learning experiences.

We’ve worked out in this school to deal with it (the arts) in modules. We used to do music one afternoon a week and that sort of thing and that didn’t ever work. So we take a module (of each art form)- there might be a particular focus for each term.

Helene described how the school organised the arts curriculum, where each teacher focused on one art form and they taught that for one hour /week within a four week block. The children broke up into mixed age groups and rotated around the teacher
and the arts form. Importantly, the school had a plan that worked for the teachers and the children. Helene described them as being “realists”:

In that way (modules over 4 week periods) you can cover other things, and not get too hung up if we don’t go into as much depth as you know.

In organising the teaching of the modules, Helene requested:

I asked especially to start the dance module with my own class group because I knew them well. I just felt, with dance – you really need to know your kids.

This comment confirmed that Helene still had concerns about teaching dance to the older children. But it also indicated that Helene placed importance on ‘knowing the kids’, which I interpreted as meaning having trusting and understood relationships. Helene valued the connections built between herself and the children. This was most apparent as we spoke of individual children in the class.

I asked Helene what she thought the children gained from their dance experience:

It’s the enjoyment, being able to express yourself through moving to music. …I love watching the children create, because they come up with things that I wouldn’t even think of.

Helene’s respect for the children’s ability to go beyond her knowledge and thinking reflected her approach of working with the children rather than teaching to them. Focussing upon how we taught dance, Helene began to describe a dance lesson she had taught since the last time we had a conversation. It was structured around body awareness and locomotion:

We talked about locomotion, how we could move around and the different ways we could move and then we combined these. It went really well.

Helene continued describing the detail and her dilemma with music:

I find trouble finding pieces that would suit what I’m trying to do. …It’s just a time thing, trying to make your own (compilation tape) and sort it out. Is there something that’s out there that’s got – that you could recommend?
We spoke of certain music resources. I explained that the music that I use is not music that is especially compiled for dance teachers. I said that I used music such as “music from film tracks. It’s the mood that I’m wanting.”

Helene continued recounting her lesson:

We talked about what we can do with our body, and what parts of the body we can use. So we had a bit of a discussion, but also moving at the same time. I had them in the hall and we started off in a semi circle sitting and talking about different body parts and then we got up and gradually started to move. Then talking about moving our bodies in the space. We played follow the leader and games, changing movements and directions – forwards, backwards. It went really well. They had a ball and we started to build up some good skills. ... It was more just having fun with activities, rather than putting a whole dance together at this stage. I thought that was a good place to start, rather than frightening (telling) them and say – you had to make up a dance.

Helene explored some elements of dance and allowed the children to explore their movement in a ‘games’ environment that focussed upon easing possible insecurities. She also allowed herself to become familiar with the group of children as a moving group, rather than relying on knowing the children as they were behind desks. Again, Helene demonstrated her awareness of the children, she considered their perspective in coming to dance and allowed time for establishing familiarity with the space, the ideas and each other. I consider these subtle teaching strategies to be crucial in the creation of a successful dance lesson.

Our conversation revolved around discussing strategies, most of which focussed upon building relationships between the teacher and children, and with the dance. I emphasised:

So instead of seeing abilities and non-abilities, you see what is in front of you - the children, and that’s where you start. No one is not able, it is just your construction of the ‘ableness’.

We continued to speak of knowing the learner; planing to meet needs of the children and yourself; using children’s ideas as a key resource; accepting a tolerance of diverse answers to problems and situations; complicating situations in order to challenge and
stimulate the children; valuing the children’s interests; being spontaneous with the
children and flexing with ideas that are presented; being alert to nuances of behaviour
and enthusiasm and ever ready to change everything; accepting that some lessons just
do not flow; trusting an idea and ‘letting it go’ so as the children can own and explore
it; travelling in small steps and prompting children’s success continually; having a
lesson structure that makes sense to the teacher and the children in real terms not only
on paper; ensuring that the children know that they own their dance and that they
know how it was constructed; knowing when to give them ‘slack’ and then when to
‘reel’ them in.

I argued that knowing the children is the primary school teacher’s expertise, rather
than knowing the content areas of what is taught. I said:

That’s your expertise. (It) is that you know in THIS room- not so much in that
room or that room, but this room, the 27 children. You know how much rope
to give, when to pull them back – like you are holding 27 fishing lines and you
are reeling them in and out the whole day. No wonder people (teachers) get so
exhausted.

Helene nurtured strong and respectful two-way relationships with the children and had
considerable experience in dance and in teaching dance. However, she was keen to
reappraise what she had always done, and grasped the opportunity to talk about
insecurities such as teaching dance to the older boys, and trying out new ideas:

I tried out some of your ideas. It was hilarious. I gave out the crayons and
pieces of paper, and they said ‘what the hell are we doing, we’re supposed to
be here dancing you know’. We did a warm up, and they then came up with (a
drawn floor pattern) and I got them to number the bits and think about the
different things (action and accent). All the things we talked about. They came
up with fairly complicated ideas. But they had lots of fun.

‘Fun’ continually appeared in Helene’s description of successful dance classes.
Helene valued fun as providing the ‘way in’ to the group and a foundation for the
introduction of new and more difficult activities.

Yes I thought we’d do something different, we would use the idea but maybe
talk about it first, how did that work? And how could we refine that a little bit?
I noticed as the study progressed Helene was describing her introduction of increasingly complicated dance ideas, and had also stopped asking about what to do with the boys. Helene was more focused upon the achievements of the class and how to extend the children’s thinking as she worked with them. They all owned the classes as they tried new things. Helene mentioned that spontaneity was not a strong point in her teaching, and she observed that it was a feature of mine. I also described teaching repertoire or set dance sequences as a weakness of mine, to which Helene said, “And I can actually teach that sort of dance really well.” We agreed that different teachers have different styles and approaches. Helene was very keen to watch me teach. She wanted to watch specific teaching strategies and also how I introduced ideas:

I’d really like to see you, when you come out (and teach)...but maybe you could incorporate a wee bit of that (spontaneous approach) I’d like to see that...how you’d go about doing the beginning stuff.

Helene knew precisely what it was she wanted to learn more about, revealing that she knew her own teaching strengths and weaknesses. I felt that Helene was skilled at self-reflection.

We talked at length about my interests in teaching dance in schools. Helene asked about my childhood dance experiences, teaching and any dancing experience. As I spoke of an experience of teaching at a Special Education school, Helene remarked on the freedom to teach according to the children’s needs. Helene found that the climate of accountability within schools was limiting how teachers taught the children.

You didn’t have someone saying you must cover this and this and this, you had that freedom to actually do with the kids. ...I have been teaching for a while and I have been through different stages, and that’s the bad thing about these ‘outcomes’ (outcome statements in curriculum documents) that you are so tied into what you have got to do, what you have to cover this year...you lose some of the spontaneity that we had in the earlier years of teaching when you would go off with the children – that’s great we are really interested in that, lets really get into that. We did not have to look where does that fit in with the AO’s (Achievement Objectives). We used to be able to follow what the kids were interested in, and yeah, educating, teaching the children through the subjects. Now it is turned around because we have got to be so accountable all the time. There are good things about it (Outcomes), because I’m sure under the old system, some people would just march around all day and didn’t really do a lot. There are two sides.
I commented that the curriculum may have the effect of de-valuing what the teacher brings to the classroom. Helene agreed that this has been the result for her, and we discussed the new curriculum and in particular the lack of explanations about the dance elements of space, time, energy, and body.

I watched Helene teaching, after which I described her teaching as being highly productive. As I said:

> Everything you did had strong aims. If I had to give one word that described you as a teacher it is ‘productivity’. You maximised the effort, the time and the quality in every session.

Other qualities that I observed included outlining expectations clearly in content and behaviour:

> Before you left this (work) environment you explained what was (going to be) happening in the next environment. Before you went to the hall you said ‘run around when you get there’. Before you left the hall to come back here (to the classroom) you said ‘get this book out and be ready’. At every change the kids knew what was expected and that just makes a secure environment.

I also observed that Helene laughed, joked and enjoyed the children, and that in return they gave themselves to the classroom activity in the same spirit. We continued to reflect upon the dance lesson, discussing the children’s participation, the content, new approaches to specific parts. Helene commented that it was wonderful to have feedback on her teaching:

> You don’t get much positive feedback. You only ever hear from the parents that are not happy about something, you know the spelling goes home incorrectly marked.

Helene commented on the difficulties of teaching to meet the diverse needs and interests of her students:

> You can guarantee by this stage in their schooling, you’ve got three levels in everything... You have your upper, middle and lower and you just have to try as hard as you can to meet all their needs. You never can meet all of their needs, it’s impossible really.
We returned to the importance of knowing the children, knowing who will find dance challenging, interesting, exciting. As Helene said in a conversation with one boy who loved rugby and was not sure about dance:

I said to him, we just sort of talked quietly, ‘I know it is not your particular thing (dance), but lots of us don’t like rugby, but we have been out and we have done that too. We have already had a go at that and some kids don’t like that. Even if you walk in front of the music, that’s fine, but I want you to move.’

A conversation I had with a boy in the class on the way to the hall further illustrated the importance of connecting with the children:

Boy: Are you an expert dancer?
Me: No, I’m more an expert teacher of dance.
Boy: I don’t like dance.
Me: I don’t like some either, but I like lots.
Boy: I like boogying.

When I taught the lesson I made reference to dance as including boogying, and this boy participated fully and with enthusiasm. After the lesson another boy came up to me and joked “what makes a hanky dance? ...A boogie.”

These children had a way of connecting to the teacher and to dance. I feel that these small conversations provide the vital moments for establishing rapport, where the teacher can ‘know the children’ and vice versa. I think that it is about being open to the connections.

Talking about dance and watching each other teach provided insights into what we both knew and learnt. Helene and I made our shared dance on the topic of ‘our perceptions of dance in the classroom’. At the beginning Helene was clearly anxious, and at the end of the session she was happy, excited, proud, talkative, stimulated and positive. I asked what caused her anxiety at the beginning, “I was a bit anxious about having to perform. It is the performing I think”. I pressed her to describe what is it
about performance, “It is that, how silly do you look (feeling).” I wanted to know who would be considering her silly? She replied, “myself.” She went on:

No it did not matter probably in this situation, it was fine because I felt comfortable with you. But to do that in a bigger class with lots of people, I would find that difficult. Yet, it is what we ask the children to all the time...It is always interesting to be in the other role.

Helene was self-conscious about looking ‘silly’, and mostly concerned about public exposure of herself through dance. I can remember being surprised given Helene’s extensive experience in dance. I noted that taking the ‘private’ self into the ‘public’ dance situation could always potentially be difficult, irrespective of experience. Her comments affirmed that the teacher’s ability to establish learning environments that enable comfortable participation is vital, and probably more important than specific dance skills. Helene said:

I think having you there too, to support...because I trust you and I know that you are going to guide me. In the same role as me, if I was the teacher with the children. If you have got that kind of relationship it makes it much safer and much easier.

Going through this kind of dance-making and performing experience, gave an insight into what teachers ask of the children, and in turn enabled the teacher to better understand the children’s perspective. Helene reinforced this, saying:

It’s good. I think every teacher that is going to teach dance, should go through that process of actually doing it themselves. ...Go through the process that you are going to ask the children to go through, because that way you do have a feeling and you can relate to where the children are coming from so much better.

And to say ‘look, as I said, I felt like this at the beginning too, and I went through it. And it was really worth it, it’s a really worthwhile experience’. I think anyone who is going to teach...(should) be on the other side and be the pupil. It’s a different place to be. I think it is good for us to do that. Probably much more than we do. So we do understand what we are asking the children to do and how difficult it is for some of them.

Such ‘embodied resourcing’ prompts the teacher to draw upon their dance experience as a learner, which I argue allows the teacher and the children to construct learning and teaching partnerships based upon shared understanding and common goals.

Helene went on to say:
That is why it was so useful, because I did, I felt like the learner rather than the teacher. Actually I was in the learner role and trying to relate what it would feel like for that learner – I did not realise it at the time.

Helene also commented on the value of the teacher providing clear structures and starting points. She said:

I'm sure that's exactly the way they feel, exactly the same way I felt. But once you gave us the structure – you didn’t just say ‘we are going to make a dance, let’s do it’. ...the pictures were great. That was the starting point...it just gives us focus. It just gave me something to think about...something tangible.

‘Structure and tangible starting points’ helped Helene to feel comfortable and secure. Given this, Helene outlined other strategies that provided her with support when participating in the dance:

So you’d still have the basic structure, but you’d just change some of the moves and it would become quite different. ...I knew that you would accept whatever I was going to do and maybe mould it slightly, but you wouldn’t jump on me and say ‘ooh that’s a terrible move’. I mean together we decided we didn’t like something.

‘Structure’, ‘choices’, ‘acceptance’ and ‘shared decision making’ were other strategies that helped Helene participate comfortably and fully.

In experiencing the achievement of making a dance, Helene found that the process and the product were equally important. I compared participating in a dance session to “Jumping out of an aeroplane with a parachute on.” The commitment and trust invested in the parachute is akin to the trust required between the teacher and the children. Helene responded, “Yes...that’s it...(trust) is very important.”

As we analysed the dance Helene contributed her insights and criticisms, which drew attention to aspects that ‘worked’, improvements needed, ideas explored and issues expressed. For example:

So actually the rising is quite good, you know slowly moving in and then open the gate, then woooow, play around a bit, and that at the end felt really strong. ... so you have got the ... elements of dance and you have the fun and it all
joins together into something that is really strong and meaningful. ...because we have analysed it, and because now it has a form and it is meaningful. It is about something I do.

Owning her dance gave it meaning for Helene as she knew why and how it was the way it was. The dance narrative belonged to us and she was amazed at how present our stories were:

We didn’t plan it that way, so that’s the interesting thing. That’s quite amazing because we had no idea that’s what we were doing when we were actually dancing (until) you sit down and analyse it.

Helene likened it to writing a story with a “beginning... middle... climax... and ending”. Helene summed up our shared dance about ‘perceptions of dance in the classroom’ with three words; “freedom, enjoyment and risk”. My words were “discipline, friendship and opportunity.” I asked Helene to expand on these as she reflected upon the whole research experience:

It is an opportunity to let children express themselves in a different manner... to express their feelings, their moods, their emotions in a different manner. What else, it is enjoyment, it is that feeling we got there. It is like anything where you start at the beginning with very little knowledge, you play around with it and then at the end you come out and you produce something really quite good. It is the same – like writing a narrative. I’m going to keep thinking about that all the time.

The meaning of dance in Helene’s classroom included ‘difference’, ‘expression of feelings’, ‘enjoyment’ and the opportunity to tell a personal story. At our next meeting Helene described her latest dance lesson:

It was so much better...so superb. I did it with so much more confidence. What is it? (that gave you the increase in confidence) about my ability to be able to deliver, deliver the lesson. I just feel so much more knowledgeable for a start. And then just that idea of yours, of being able to bring the emotion (connection) in, which I did not have at all before. That was just totally missing. It was just so very clinical before, and so that made such a difference, and straight away the kids were just switched on. Just right from the very beginning. They were so excited. So when it came to the bit - who would like to show (perform) theirs? Wow, they were clamouring to get up there and show theirs. They wanted to. That was so superb. And there were a lot of boys in that group and that didn’t make any difference at all with the way - especially using the sport (theme), and they came up with some super ideas. It was just superb, so much better.
Helene's excitement was thrilling. I asked what she meant by being ‘much more knowledgeable’? Helene replied:

OK. I have a much better knowledge of the dance elements. I mean they are up here now (pointing to her head), they are not on pieces of paper and not in books that I have to go and find.

Helene had embodied the elements of dance and could reference them quickly. She had become the resource that she was searching for several weeks ago and revealed that she was more interested in encouraging the children to explore movement and to manipulate it for personal expression through the elements of dance. Helene went on to describe how she approached her latest lesson:

The core things, the body awareness and the levels (space) and the energy, and the interactions and all those sort of things. And they are just there on my fingertips. I did not use any (prompt) cards this time because I did not need to. ...We actually had a wee chat before we went over (to the hall). We really only talked about dance in general, what they thought dance was, and then we talked about different types of dance. They gave me all the structured dances and I said ‘well there are many types of dances’. It took them a while to come up with this free type of dance. So I just talked about the differences...and that (in making ours) we are going to take bits of all these types of dancing and it’s not going to say ‘you must do this or you must do this’. That was good I think. So they went over to the hall feeling quite excited about where they were going to go.

Helene not only had a greater command of the elements but she also approached the children as partners in the dance making process. She wanted their ideas and allayed their fears by emphasising that there was no emphasis on the ‘right steps’. Helene was more comfortable in ‘free dance’ as she called it, and saw this approach as a way of connecting to this age group of children. This situation contrasted with how Helene (four weeks ago) avoided this type of dance and relied on teaching set dances and aerobics. Helene also commented on the boys’ positive participation, which she had initially identified as a concern.

I asked Helene to reflect on what we had done, and then imagine if she could organise an in-service programme for teachers, what would she include:

Making the dance was particularly valuable. Watching you was valuable, and just trying out some different things. Trying out some different ideas. Going through the process...talking and thinking – where am I going to start? OK
This might be a good starting point and trying that out and thinking that was OK, but it was not quite what I was looking for. But like what you picked up when you came out and watched me, and me watching you, talking with you, just having these discussions has been great. The information that you have shown me, and then putting it all together (in the shared dance) last week, ourselves, was probably the real turning point.

I summed these up as; doing, watching, talking, reflecting, and experimenting. Helene emphasised:

(Teachers need to) actually see it done. For me that is a very powerful tool. Possibly an expert, that would be more useful. From someone who knows a lot about dance and has taught a lot of dance and has the ideas, it’s the ideas as much as anything.

She continued:

It is like learning how to write, you need to actually write yourself, to actually feel that process. And drawing. When we did sketching, I actually sat down with the kids and sketched with them, and you know that was quite powerful for them to see me sitting there, doing that and looking at mine and looking at theirs.

Helene highlighted the power of doing an activity so that you can teach it as well as you can. I wondered to what extent does the teacher need to do an activity before they feel comfortable teaching it, and is doing it different from teaching it, and if this is so useful then why don’t all trained dancers make successful teachers of dance? I believe Helene’s statement may have presented an oversimplified generalisation. As Helene has mentioned several times above, doing a dance process that is specific to a classroom situation is vital for ‘feeling’ and ‘understanding’ dance as found within the primary school. This process orientated experience focuses upon the child’s participation, the child’s expression and learning, and is different from straightforward ‘doing dance’, which is often interpreted by teachers, in-service providers and community providers as participating in a dance workshop.

Helene’s comment highlights that participating as an equal participant in the classroom, changed the teacher/child relationship dynamics in a powerful way. The ‘doing dance’ involved the teacher experiencing an aspect of dance education so that
they are comfortable to participate in the dance with children. It is not necessarily about being able to ‘do dance’. As Helene succinctly stated:

\[
\text{It is like anything else, when you keep using the language and you keep practicing it, it just becomes a natural thing.}
\]

In this statement, I read Helene’s meaning of ‘a natural thing’ as an activity that is not loaded with the gendered, sexist, skill oriented, and elitist overtones that tend to pervade perceptions of dance. These perceptions of how the general community construct dance, peppered Helene’s and my conversations. I believe teachers such as Helene are aware of these issues, and recognise within them the ‘baggage’ so often associated with dance, and perhaps form part of the reason that teachers need to ‘feel’ dance anew in order to re-construct positive dance perceptions. When Helene relayed the following conversation she felt that it was a big event, and a very positive education outcome:

\[
\text{Well Alexander, you know Alexander (10 years old). He’s a little bit hesitant with some of these things. Thinks he knows it all really. But he came up to me and said the other day ‘Oh Ms Helene, when we go to the hall today, can we do dance?’ I thought ‘oooh’. Here is a boy who likes to play mini-ball and rugby and says ‘can we do some dance’. Wow, that is a break through.}
\]

It is important to consider the assumptions that Helene may have about this child. I pondered, did Alexander dislike dance because he liked rugby? I think we as teachers (and I purposefully include myself), do have stereotypes in our minds of who would be good at certain things in school. I have said to many teachers ‘children will probably like and participate in dance happily if you invite them’. I believe that it is a matter of the teachers looking beyond their own ideas of dance and who the dancer may be, and being open to what could occur in the classroom. I have to make it clear, that I thought Helene was insightful and aware of constructing stereotypes, and I observed her actively invite all children to participate as best they could in the classroom.

Helene was positive about dance, experienced in dance, and an experienced teacher of dance in the classroom. She was also a realist in regard to what dance was for others in the classroom and in the community. We had many long conversations that
unearthed many issues as presented above. We agreed that we had come to an end of our conversations. I agreed with Helene when she said, “That was fantastic, thankyou very much.”
4.12 Bella

"Our own perception of our body image and that kind of thing, because we see dancers as, and that might put people off; we see dancers as being well formed, they look beautiful on stage and there's that whole thing that goes with it. I think children are more free to not feel those barriers, but teachers definitely will."

"Your input is as important as the other person's input no matter what experience you bring to the dance."

Bella, with considerable teaching experience, presented as a quiet, strong teacher. In Bella's lower primary classroom (years 1, 2 and 3) the children were drawn to attention not by the usual chorus of 'follow the teacher's rhythmic clapping', but by a very soft music box tune. Bella had a variety of music boxes and they, in their soft clarity, demanded the twenty, 6-7-year-old children's attention in a calm, subtle and firm manner. These were the qualities that distinguished Bella's teaching for me — calmness, subtlety and precision.

Bella's classroom was one of 15 classrooms at Bach Ave School, located within an inner city middle/upper socio-economic community. The school had a large sport/activity hall and an extensive library. Bach Ave School was noticeably multi-cultural, and different cultural artefacts and languages were displayed in the foyer and corridors.

Bella and I started our conversations by reflecting upon our own approach to teaching dance. I described my approach and Bella reflected:

I probably, I think what I do first is get them to create to music as a stimulus. Have some music with perhaps just their bodies or some equipment, like balls, or picture cards for them to bounce off an idea. Then we just discuss what we did and write down on a chart, key words, like 'rotate', so they get the language of dancing and then we go into patterning (the movement) after that.
From the outset Bella referred to ‘creative’ or expressive dance, where the children respond through movement to various stimuli such as music. When I asked: “if I said go and teach dance now, what would you teach?” She replied, “Moving creatively to music and learning the language of dance.” I asked what she meant by ‘language of dance’?

Well I suppose there’s a language where we go up or down or we go sideways or forwards or we count or we rotate we spin.

I checked if Bella was referring to a verbal vocabulary or a movement vocabulary. Bella was clear that it was the meaning as movement:

Yes in movement. So that the children can then talk to each other about what we are going to do.

From the outset Bella was clear that dance was about communication and expression, and that if this were to be the case then the children had to learn the language through which they would be communicating. Bella acknowledged that achieving this involves more than just doing the movements:

It is a mind/body thing isn’t it. Where you are learning about patterns and things - like you are remembering. So using one side of your brain...one side is doing the creative artistic and the other side is doing the memorising.

I asked how Bella initiated expressive dance in the classroom:

We might talk about dance...talk about how they are going to move or what they are going to create. I use the music for the stimulus and then we talk about what different people did or how they moved.

Reflective watching was a teaching strategy that Bella mentioned several times:

So in that way extending the other children’s ability, or we might look at other children and say ‘look, Sue would like to show you what they did’, and they show their actions.

Bella was educating the children to think about dance, as well as through dance. This was apparent through her focus upon valuing dance as a language, practising reflective watching, developing movement memories and responding creatively to
stimuli. Bella noted that the stimulus used, such as balls, music, hoops, and parachutes, was quite important. As she said:

I think it is initially important for kids because they become more experimental. They can get quite experimental with equipment and they might do movements that they normally wouldn't do. They might not be self-conscious when they are using equipment. Because kids are used to working with toys or playing sport or using equipment, so then if you use equipment they might not be as self-conscious. A lot of children will stand there when it is just dance, particularly kids that are shy or younger – if it is just dance, they might not join in. If it is just music and you want them to have a boogie, but if you add in some equipment they do not see it as being dance or movement, so therefore they will be quite happy to use the equipment without feeling as though they are on show.

Bella had developed teaching strategies that engaged the children and that built on the children’s experience. The reference to toys and using things to ‘start’ and stimulate the children’s movement and to alleviate feelings of self-consciousness indicated an awareness of the children’s needs and interests. It also indicated the importance Bella placed upon comfortable participation for all the children. My other observation here was that in using these strategies Bella was, to a certain extent, predicting a negative attitude to dance, in that she needed to disguise dance with equipment – even with her young children. I asked if she was predicting problems, to which she replied:

Boys. Five year old boys, sometimes your older boys in the class, like the 8 year olds will be self-conscious, and that is sort of a pattern I think, more so than the girls that have been to dance classes. But they might feel foolish. Sometimes an 8 year-old boy feels too cool to be doing this. So in some ways you have to get around that fact that they are doing dance.

Given the need to ‘disguise’ dance, I asked Bella if she called dance in the classroom ‘dance’. Bella said “yes, because that is part of having the language of dance to relate to.” I believe it is a paradox that teachers want to teach dance, and value what it brings to children’s education, yet to do so they often disguise it, emphasising the movement with equipment, the game aspect and using names such as ‘moving games’ in order to maintain comfortable and appropriate participation. Once there is a degree of secure participation the word ‘dance’ is increasingly introduced. Such strategies are undoubtedly useful in introducing children to dance and the language of dance, and I agree that the activities, irrespective of their name, are an integral aspect of dance in
the classroom as they provide entry points for participation. Bella, identifying the boys’ attitudes to dance as a potential problem, employed strategies that dealt with this. Bella’s pedagogy tacitly acknowledged that the children’s meaning of dance is as important as the teachers’ meaning of dance.

Bella’s aim was to teach dance to the whole class, and in achieving this aim she found some beginning points that enabled the whole class to engage and participate. Bella focused upon the children learning basic movement terminology, learning how to manipulate expressive movements and learning how to recognise and read the movements when they watched each other. This focus enabled the class to develop a shared understanding of dance and, in turn, provided a more secure position for the teacher and the children to explore personal ideas through dance while exploring movement and choreography.

We moved on to talk of “knowing” about dance and Bella’s introduction to knowing dance:

Knowing about dance is important. I know that the first thing that turned me onto dance was being very, very young and seeing dances, or reading stories about kids that did dance, it was a romantic notion. But I never got to do it. I was always too shy, and always too scared to say to Mum and Dad that I wanted to do dance instead of gymnastics, so I never got to do it until I was about 30...and then after that I know you are too old, you know. Then I thought that is just silly, and I thought ‘I’m going to go along to this’. I found some classes and just went along. You know, so if you do not have that language to relate to, and you are not seeing it as dance, you might think about it as something else. It is very important that they have the knowing about dance, to know that all cultures have dance, that it can be a Mexican dance or Flamenco.

Bella’s first dance experiences involved “being taken to ballets and concerts.” The dance experiences were something that Bella enjoyed but it remained, to a certain degree, removed from her. I felt that Bella learnt to ‘read’ dance when she was a child, and then in adulthood learned how to physically manipulate movement. In going along to her first dance education sessions (as distinct from dancing classes), Bella overcame her own perceptions of who danced, that is, even 30 year olds can learn to dance. Learning to move in the classes appeared to give Bella a felt
vocabulary or language that gave her an ability to “know dance”. Bella continued to speak of her childhood:

Mum took me...she was culturally aware but she would have been more in the language and music...I think it was more that that’s how she was brought up by the nuns. You learnt the piano and language was very important. Her father was very good at debating and language was an important part of their household...but our family enjoyed dancing, as in going out and listening to music and getting up and having a dance.

Bella commented that her childhood was much like any other, in that as you grow up you dance:

Teenagers are going to be dancing somewhere. That is part of culture – that you dance to music because it is such an enjoyable thing. ...It is just that each generation chooses new forms of music to express themselves and to move to music.

It seemed evident that dance for Bella had a strong association with music. I also gained from Bella a feeling that dance was seen as a way of slightly rebelling, of separating from the family. In regard to music and dance in the classroom, Bella thought that music was necessary in the classroom, and the most important dance resource:

Well, I feel you can never have enough music. ...Yes I often use music, nearly always use music. But I don’t think it is always – the silence is just as important too. At times to be able to teach the children that they can move to their own music in their heads, or their own space, their own feelings - from feelings.

I described my movement-oriented approach where the music was not used until the action was found. This reflected my interest in how the children found and abstracted the movement according to what they wanted to say rather than what the music suggested. We agreed on the need to stimulate the children’s imagination and that dance was wonderful in this regard. Bella commented:

What is important is allowing them to work at their own level so that they do feel safe and comfortable and they don’t feel ill at ease, because then what would be the purpose of the lesson, they would not have gained anything.
Feeling comfortable to participate was a recurring principle informing Bella’s teaching. In teaching ‘for participation’, Bella described herself:

I would be there more as an observer, perhaps helping them with their discoveries. I don’t see myself as holding the kite strings all the time because I don’t think that is a good thing either. A certain percentage of the time you need to do that, but then I think with dance a lot of the time is having them doing that experimenting and you just add the stimulation or be the instigator or helper along the way. And then you just reel them back in at the end of that.

As a teacher of dance, Bella played the role of director, instigator, helper and observer. I asked how she would help other teachers to take on these roles as they learned to teach dance:

I think the best way is to have them (teachers) observe, or to take part in something themselves... where the teachers are involved. Although teachers in the past ...did not have a good attitude in being involved in what the kids were doing, we preferred to learn it in a different way. But I think teachers are a bit more open now. They are prepared to do what the children will be doing and get themselves involved.

The discussion about teacher preparedness to participate as learners in a classroom process was followed up by comments about the importance of teachers ‘feeling’ the dance, to feel the “fun”; “it’s actually fun. It is so much fun.” The inference here is that it is not until you actually participate in creative dance processes that you comprehend that dance in the classroom can be fun. The irony I have found is that many teachers do not participate in these processes because they perceive dance is about learning skills rather than fun. I asked Bella if fun was necessary or enough of a reason for teaching dance and including it in an already full timetable?

It’s fun and it’s physical and children actually need to do a lot of physical activity. But it is – they are working with their bodies and their brains, they are working two things simultaneously.

Bella expanded on this, stating that dance included thinking:

I found (learning dance) very hard, the memory part where you did this (a movement) and then you quickly changed and you did that – and you have to think ahead. You are learning to work the brain so that it is thinking ahead of what it is going to do while you are doing something else.
Dance also involved communication, “that creative edge…”, making, inventing and “motor skills”. I couldn’t help but think that teachers and children had to experience the ‘fun’ before they could appreciate the extent of what dance meant. Perhaps as Bella suggests, it is by participating in dance as a learner and observing the teaching of dance in the classroom that the teacher gains an insight into dance whereby it is understood to be simultaneously the motivator for learning—“it is fun”, the content of the learning—“language of dance”, and the strategy for learning—“doing and experimenting.”

Bella continued to speak of a dance workshop for teachers she had recently attended:

Nearly every person there had absolutely no dance experience at all. People out there are going to find that once the document (The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, 2000) is up and running, there are a lot of people out there that do not have any experience. But they are willing to take part in the workshop…they were really willing just to be in a class that you know, that you might take children through. And they did it with all seriousness (purpose) and there were people who were not very coordinated or didn’t have much rhythm.

Bella’s comment about the teacher’s lack of coordination and rhythm indicated that these abilities were a part of Bella’s perception of dance.

Bella and I agreed that teachers in general were apprehensive about teaching dance and Bella said this apprehension related to “putting themselves on the line, because it is going to show up what they don’t know.” Being self-conscious about what you do not know is a poor position for a teacher or anyone to operate from in a sustained manner. I believe a teacher needs to work from what they do know. Working with what you have is, I believe, a much more constructive approach to teaching. Bella exemplified this when she was talking of teaching Te Reo Kori:

I got out the Te Reo Kori kit and I went through it, and as I went through it I thought I don’t really know much about this. This is too difficult for me to understand, I am not going to teach it. So I thought, no, wait, put that away. OK this is what you do know, so you are going to teach like this because this is what you do know about it.
I asked Bella how she saw her own experience within the above workshop context. Bella immediately referred to her body:

I have not done dance for quite a while. ...You know even my body after the last three years, I have not done these exercises. It does not feel like a dancer’s body, or it does not feel like it moves anymore. But I do not feel shy either, I feel I’m there to learn, but also to express, gain experience and have fun and be a bit creative, because that is what I enjoy about dance, you can springboard off and it really feels great to be able to put yourself into a different persona.

Bella knows what her body isn’t. It is not fit, nor a ‘dancer’s body’—whatever that means, but she does know what she likes and it is from this knowing perspective that she goes into the relative unknown of the dance workshop. I asked Bella, how do you think you can educate teachers to adopt a more positive mind-set to dance? “Build up experiences with movement...enjoy dance.” Bella highlighted that personal body image was a barrier for teachers’ participation:

Our own perception of our body image and that kind of thing, because we see dancers as, and that might put people off, we see dancers as being well formed, they look beautiful on stage and there’s that whole thing that goes with it. I think children are more free to not feel those barriers, but teachers definitely will.

We continued to note that some teachers would also not be comfortable with “touching other people...creating ideas...being the leader with a group copying your movement - your body.” Bella went on to say that it was important to “broaden our perspective of what dance is.”

Using your ‘private’ body as medium for ‘public’ art, albeit in a workshop situation, potentially draws others’ attention to your body. I say potentially as it is also possible to draw the viewer’s attention to the moving images and ideas more so than the body. The body can become not the focus but more the ‘background canvas’ upon which ideas are expressed. Teachers’ self consciousness, as observed by Bella, may occur because they perceive their body as being ‘a non-dancer’s body’ and an inappropriate focus of attention and /or, as I believe, they are not confident about the movements that they use to express an idea. I was perplexed that when Bella described adults
participating in dance, she used words such as beauty, technique, coordination, rhythm, and form. In contrast, for children Bella emphasised that dance focuses on feeling qualities rather than exclusive skills:

No, when you are teaching children it becomes quite different, I think we look for children (to be) motivated...enjoying dance...creative thinking. I do not think we are looking for coordination (and movement that is) technically correct...more like creative dance and the (manipulation of those elements) time and energy

The curriculum focuses upon the children’s thinking rather than their bodies. Similarly, when teachers were placed in a learning situation similar to that of children, they enjoyed dance and were surprised at the scope for thinking and expression. When Bella did her shared dance she did not comment on her ‘unfit’ body, she commented upon her ideas and their communication of her thinking.

I asked Bella what she thought the barriers to teaching dance in the classroom were:

Knowledge, personal image of oneself or how one sees themselves, how somebody perceives dance, lack of training, resources and education.

Knowledge was the initial response, and we talked about what Bella meant by knowledge. It was primarily about physically experiencing the elements of dance and the choreographic processes. As Bella said:

I’m sure some teachers could quite easily do the section on knowing about dance and talking about a picture or photograph or reading a story and turning kids on to dance that way. But it is the moving bits, because they do not have a language of dance, people do not know that movement language yet.

From Bella’s perspective, the development of teacher’s ‘movement language’ would improve the implementation of dance in schools. Bella went on to say that:

I do not think that there will be such a big resistance that you might imagine. I think there is a willingness there, there is just lack of training, lack of knowledge.
Bella also described time in the school day as a constraint and the subsequent programming and planning as issues for some teachers. We touched on the place of dance in the curriculum. Bella stated:

‘The arts’ is its (dance’s) home. Dance crosses over things (other curriculum areas) over social studies when you are looking at knowing about dance. It crosses over health when you are looking at safe practices. It crosses...but it does not fit in with Physical Education as a subject area.

Bella was aware of the links that dance had across the curriculum and her planning in other areas often included snippets of dance. Bella also taught dance in its own right and devoted about an hour each fortnight to dance. Bella did acknowledge the issue of having very limited time to teach dance in the overall curriculum but, as with all the other areas, she established a balance that worked well for her, the children and the curriculum.

In regard to lesson planning, Bella stressed the importance of structure:

Teachers need training in that aspect in the planning, because they need to be able to look at the structure of how a dance lesson would go. There is a lot in there, a lot of small activities.

We agreed that establishing a goal was vital in planning and that all the little games and activities within a set of lessons are in effect moving the children towards that dance goal. Talking of the curriculum and planning led on to the need for resources to support the teacher:

I would quite like to build up a bank of resources, of videos, books...videos of different types of dance, because you want children to see the whole picture of dance.

In achieving Bella’s aim to develop the children’s movement language and also to supplement the lack of visual resources, Bella described an activity that her class completed at the end of a dance session:

What I’ve done in the past was I made up big charts of what we had talked about. I might just quickly scribble it down on large sheets of paper, but then I’ll make it up into little stick figures and show them ‘twisting’ or ‘leaping’ or ‘jumping’ and put (pictures) next to all the words that they came up with. Or
just a chart of all the things that they said: ‘I like cartwheels’ or drawings of what they did. Whatever they did.

This resource became a teaching aid in developing vocabulary, reinforcing movement meanings, providing more opportunity to express an idea, and reflecting on the activity.

Bella and I discussed the need for teachers to feel and experience dance as a key part of in-service support and I asked, as the devil’s advocate, why do you have to ‘do it’? Bella firmly replied:

To get it, for someone that does not know what they are doing to actually get the feel for it to know what it is about, you actually have to do it because there are certain feelings that go along with it. If (for example) I put on some music and we are going to sit opposite each other and we are going to mirror our partner and I just tell you about it, you are actually not going to know the function of that activity or the purpose of that activity. By actually doing it you know, you realise the purpose of it. Why you do it, how it is going to make you feel.

Bella emphasised the importance of experiencing the communication of ideas through performance of the dance, and stressed the importance of this for each individual – the personal ownership of feelings and expression. As she said:

It can be quite emotional, it can be spiritual. There is nothing else in the curriculum that sort of deals with that aspect, other than the arts – the spiritual side of the person. …it is a personal thing and it may not ever be spoken about, it might not be communicated, it might be just that feeling that person has for themselves.

I believe that acknowledging personal, emotional and spiritual responses and feelings is an important component of dance in the classroom. Importantly, as Bella said, the personal responses need not necessarily be shared with others, but time and space need to be allowed for them, so as the children may reflect on their own feelings and insights as well as others’ work. Acknowledging that children may respond differently, and that their responses are valued, is a part of arts education.
Bella and I ranged over several issues regarding integrating dance across other curriculum areas; planning programmes according to themes or to disciplines; developing structured programmes in schools that introduce and sequentially develop dance knowledge; use of music tapes and CD's and the importance of having the music prepared before the lesson; lesson preparation in general as vital when teaching dance; resources in general; and, focusing on elements of dance that underpin different dance styles. I suggested the idea of keeping fairly open to spur of the moment dance opportunities in the classroom. Bella replied:

You do not tend to do that as teachers anymore. No we don’t, not a lot. Because we are so bound with time and this curriculum – the New Zealand Curriculum is so overloaded, there is so much to get through, we feel pressured. We’ve got say 45 minutes to get through Maths. It has got to be an ‘A’ level lesson and then you’ve got to take two groups to get them through it and you’ve only got three days to do it. And then there are the other topics, and you always feel like you are chasing your tail. So you tend not to stop… to be able to do that at the spur of the moment would be wonderful. I think we have lost our spontaneity as teachers.

The loss of opportunity and ability to improvise appeared to be a negative trend arising from the outcomes orientated approach to education. I felt that spontaneity was important in relating to the moods and shifts of the children and the day. Spontaneity can be a key strategy for engaging the children and motivating their interest in education in the broader sense.

This discussion prompted me to ask Bella what she thought education was about? She replied:

Education is about learning, stimulating, motivating, enjoying… in the variety of areas of curriculum and (essential life) skills such as communicating and socialising… So a lot of education is about taking risk, taking that one step further and being able to see — as an educator, being able to see the transition stages and being able to move children from one place to another onwards... But at some point in the day we would perhaps want children to have enjoyment. It depends on the type of learner …or the activities.

Bella acknowledged the importance of recognising that the classroom is made up of diverse learners that are inspired by different activities and curriculum. She also saw that children develop at different speeds and that the need for flexibility and
sensitivity in gauging the risks to be taken and presented is paramount. Bella commented that she saw her role as being:

A motivator. To expose the children to a lot of different experiences and then to be able to analyse where they are at, and then to be able to move them either horizontally or vertically, where they need to go next.

Bella emphasised that the decisions of where to go next were not necessarily made solely by the teacher, but more in partnership with the child:

Allowing them to come up with what they think they — where they need to go next. Setting some goals for themselves...even at 5 years old. ...They are actually quite honest, they can set goals, in their own way, and they can achieve them.

Bella mentioned that the goals are not always curriculum oriented, and more often related to “climbing the bars” in the playground, but as we discussed, it was the practice of goal setting, noting achievements and self evaluation that was being taught.

We talked around our ideas of education and Bella asked me where I found my inspiration as a teacher? I replied:

When I’m actually teaching my inspiration comes from the kids and their laughter and my own giggles. I really enjoy teaching. I get my inspiration from the general idea that education is the way to make the world better. I therefore see teachers as having the key role in facilitating that change, or that improvement. I’m quite passionate about teachers having the most important role on the planet - stimulating, motivating, all those words you said for kids to reach their potential and see a better way of living. Is it perfect? Is this environment perfect? I want them to question and to seek other ways, new ways. It is all very idealistic but that is what drives me. I want kids to understand each other and themselves much better and for them to take the understanding wherever. I certainly do not want them all to be professional dancers. That is not why I’m into dance education.

I reflected upon Bella’s ideas of education as I observed her teach. As Bella stated earlier and as revealed in her teaching, Bella provided the students opportunities to offer personal insights and state their views on ideas. Bella did value language and
allowed time in every activity for the children to clarify the meaning of words and activities from their own perspective. As an example:

Today I said 'how do we need to be when we are performing this dance today'? I got words like 'confident' and 'focused', they just came up with super words and I thought 'gee, that was neat' And actually none of them were silly today for the first time, they were not embarrassed, they did not giggle, and I was really proud of them.

I saw children take charge of ideas and evaluate completed work. A feature of Bella's teaching of dance was a certain rhythm or sequence of instruction: she explained an activity; asked for children's meaning; demonstrated or re-explained the activity; asked if everyone was clear, and then allowed them to explore for themselves. One example of this was when she asked the children to perform their sequences. She first asked what the children thought performing to others was all about. After much talk she summed up the ideas, “it is like giving a gift” and then, “how does an audience receive that gift”. The children went away to prepare for their performance with a clear concept of performance. Bella took time to teach an important aspect of dance, using the children's ideas. Bella's teaching was typified by calmness and precision as she provided the children with opportunities to contribute ideas, to think and explore.

Bella valued dance with her everyday language. Her preparation and the messages that she gave to the students were that ‘I value this, and it is important’. She did not undermine her own knowledge or position in the classroom by making throw away comments about herself or dance. She remained the 'teacher' she wanted to be.

Bella and I both disagreed with the notion of employing specialists to teach dance in the classroom, as this would send the message that dance is special and different from the other curriculum areas. We agreed that the children value the classroom teacher and associate learning with the teacher. I suggested that when classroom teachers give over the teaching of dance to a visiting 'expert', then the experience becomes something other than 'everyday' and children may interpret the teacher’s action as a model for themselves not to participate.
Bella and I made our shared dance in her classroom. She was focused and intent on finding the best way to express our ideas about 'what dance is in our classrooms', consequently we worked quite quickly and spent considerable time on refining the dance. After the process we discussed what the dance added to our understanding of dance in the classroom. Bella commented that it required considerable thinking:

It requires a need to focus on self and others (use of) space, timing, action and this requires concentration, and the concentration needs sharp listening, looking and feeling.

Bella went on to say that these skills are valuable in other curriculum areas and yet in dance they are taught:

Implicitly without explicit 'nagging' as can so often be the case when requiring concentration and 'readiness' skills in other curriculum and life skill activities.

I asked Bella about 'readiness' skills. It was about allowing the child to negotiate their meaning of readiness rather than relying on external markers or indicators to get ready or be ready. As Bella surmised:

Dance develops personal infrastructures that help the child in their creation of knowledge across the curriculum.

As we reflected on the process of making and performing our dance, Bella described one activity of mirroring the partner:

So in learning to focus, you learn about focussing by being the leader as much as you do by being the follower. And it is often not communicated who is leading, yes, ... it is a felt communication, that is why it is neat...the felt time-the internal felt time.

This one example of a dance activity opening up an understanding of what can actually happen, what can be learnt through a simple dance activity. It was of interest that it became apparent only after we experienced the dance activity.
In observing and ‘feeling’ our shared dance and approaches to our dance we were alert to subtle differences in our use of space and timing. We also became aware of similar ways of remembering movement. We noted how we patterned movement and how counting is integral to our approaches.

Doing the dance prompted Bella to speak more of her personal teaching strategies such as the use of music in dance, behaviour management strategies in general class work, and the fact that she observed that I taught ‘faster’ than she did. The shared dance reminded us of the ephemeral nature of dance and how every movement and gesture is part of the dance, and how difficult this was to remember, to be the creator and the performer simultaneously.

Bella stated that she liked our dance and thought it added to her insight about dance in the classroom. It prompted awareness of the teacher’s and the children’s input into dance activities, both contributing ideas, directions and strategies. Bella said, “Your input is as important as the other person’s input no matter what experience you bring to the dance.” Bella also commented that the shared dance activity focussed her attention on:

Thinking quite quickly. You have to say, well what does the movement actually mean. There is no slovenliness here. It is not like ‘oh it could be that one or that one’... quickly making a movement, with what springs to mind first. And that is what we are requiring of children, to do a lot.

We spoke of our enjoyment in making and learning the dance. As Bella said:

So you are working it out and then you are sort of rehearsing it and the enjoyment is in actually getting it right, and going ahhh, I can do it now. ...Mastering it and getting it so that each time, each movement feels like that, those little moments that you get, as the whole thing came together. You can imagine how artists must really get that on stage, getting that feeling and doing it together and just wow.

Bella highlighted the value of having a product to show and to master. She also clarified that getting your own movement as it suits your own body and expressive intent ‘right’, is different from getting the steps to a dance taught to you ‘right’. While
there might be similarities in gaining the buzz of mastery in both instances, the fullness of the experience in an educational context is, I believe, so much more intense when the ‘buzz of mastery’ is in regard to your own choreography, your own thinking. Bella indicated that owning one’s choreography and performance is an important part of dance in the classroom.

Bella and I stressed that knowing the ‘wow feeling’ was important for the teacher to experience, particularly because the feeling and the dance is so fleeting and yet so powerful in stimulating interest in dance and in this way of learning. When the teacher has a felt understanding of this, then I argue that they would be more likely to acutely appreciate the child’s feelings of achievement. They would also be sensitive to the moments when the work is not happening. By feeling and doing dance as the children might experience it, the teacher can share in the activity in a knowing and present manner.

The thinking, concentration and effort required to make and perform a dance were issues that the shared dance experience highlighted for Bella. Yet in the end, it was simply the enjoyment of the experience that was most important, “It is fun”. How much fun Bella enjoyed made her reflect on how she taught dance in the classroom and confirmed her belief in the role of dance there.

During our final conversation we reflected upon our previous sessions of talking and watching each other teach dance. We spoke of teaching strategies and of Bella’s increased awareness of diverse approaches to teaching dance:

Yes, it is just that as I’m widening my experience, I’m picking up blocks of different ways to look at dance as well. It is kind of like ‘wow – this is huge’ and it could go on all year.

We finished by recognising that wherever the teacher is at in regard to their knowledge, their bodily self-consciousness and their dance is their reality and their starting point for teaching dance in their classroom. The teacher and the children
provide the unique reality of the classroom, and that is where you commence teaching
dance.
Chapter Five
Discussion

Dance in the classroom entails – a unique active combination of thinking and fun.

5.1 Discussion of the Findings

This discussion articulates the major findings of this study as a set of relationships between dominant meaning categories of teachers, children, dance and curriculum that emerged from a constant comparative analysis and teacher narratives.

5.2 Relationships Between Teachers, Children, Dance and Curriculum

All of the teachers talked of their dance experiences, their teaching, their lives in general, and their joys and struggles in the classroom. These discussions revealed commonalities that centred on how the teachers related themselves and their teaching contexts to the work of teaching dance. The research process allowed for dialogue to range around a variety of topics, issues and relationships, and in this way commonalities and points of interest emerged naturally.

I have chosen to discuss the findings of this study in terms of relationships in the hope of preserving a true sense of the dialogue between the teachers and myself and to capture as accurately as possible the interaction between teachers and dance in their classroom. It is intended to also communicate a sense of the tensions behind themes
and issues that create barriers and opportunities for teaching dance in the classroom (Scheurich, 1995). Six relationships emerged out of the data as pivotal points of focus and they are: teachers and children; teachers and dance; teachers and curriculum; children and dance; children and curriculum; and, dance and curriculum.

The value of this discussion of the findings in terms of relationships is supported by the literature and social constructivist theory that attests to the central role of relationships in education. Eisner (1994) argued that educational reform might only occur when complex relationships between educational intent, curriculum, teaching, assessment and systemic structures are seen ecologically or as interrelated. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) also drew attention to relationships that originate within the teaching practice of the classroom, but which are informed and related to cultural and systemic influences out of the classroom.

Relationships are integral to theorising about education from a social constructivist perspective. Constructivism rejects the Cartesian epistemology that knowledge is a reality discovered, arguing instead that knowledge is constructed and that an individual makes meaning of the world within “an interactional dynamic” (Gale, 1995, p.xiii). Interplay (Bauersfeld, 1995), sharing (Connelly and Candinin, 2000), negotiation (Eisner, 1998), conversation (Ernest, 1995), dialogue (Fosnot, 1996), interaction (Gale, 1995) and inter-mental functioning (Wertsch and Toma, 1995) are processes that describe the dynamic of the relational dialogue between social and personal constructs as individuals establish personal meanings.

Teaching was described by Atkin (1994) as the complex art of facilitating the growth of individuals and two main elements of teaching were identified as “developing relationships (with the learner) and designing learning experiences” (p.2). Discussing teachers’ knowledge and teaching, Shulman (1987) examined possible sources of a teacher’s knowledge base and examined processes of teaching in which the relationships between teacher/learner and also teacher/curriculum content are apparent. In her study of beginning teachers’ knowledge in action, Ethell (1997) described the relationship between personal experience and the translation of that
experience for teaching purposes. Gallego, Hollingsworth and Whitenack (2001) noted that reform in primary schools must acknowledge the relationships within the “nested social, political, and cultural contexts of the school communities in which teachers and students are situated” (p.241).

The relationship between children’s experience and wider curriculum concerns was highlighted by Shapiro (1998), as she invited “A vision that validates difference” (p.8) into the dance classroom. Stinson (1997) also noted the value of examining children’s experiences of dance in terms of their “engagement...in dance” (p. 50), and their relationship with peers, teachers, family and learning environments (Bond and Stinson, 2000/01). Interest in relationships between the teacher, the learner and the curriculum is apparent throughout the education literature (Freire, 1972; Grumet, 1990; Grossman, 1990; Holt, 1964; Lusted, 1986; Middleton, 2001; Mosston, 1992; Russell, 1997; Shulman, 1987; Willis and Schubert, 1991), and dance pedagogy literature (Fortin and Siedentop, 1995; Hennessy, Rolfe and Chedzoy, 2001; Moore, 1997; Ottey, 1996; Stake, Bresler and Mabry, 1991; Stinson, 1991, 1998; Williams, 1989) and inspires ongoing debate and research.

All of the teachers within the present study spoke of their specific relationships with the children in their classroom. They talked of dance experiences gained in their lifetime and related this to dance that the children might have experienced in their communities. They talked of the curriculum in general and the dance curriculum as related to the New Zealand Arts Curriculum. They also spoke of themselves as teachers and learners. This demonstrates to me that the teachers are not only aware of these relationships and actively interpret and manage them, but suggests that these relationships inform their meaning of dance in the classroom and the subsequent dance experiences offered.

Each of the teachers observed particular relationships with varying degrees of clarity and importance. Lola described her classroom as a ‘community’, which implied her awareness of the relationships between members of the classroom and the presence of some identifying and unifying characteristics of the group. Lola also spoke of relating
her dance practice to the curriculum and the difficulties she had teaching dance when she
let her teaching be directed by the curriculum’s achievement objectives. Helene
was acutely aware that when teaching dance she was not initially “connecting” to the
boys in her classroom. Kate, Gessie and Mick were aware of their own and the
children’s roles in relating dance experiences gained out of school with the dance
curriculum in school. Joe, Ethel and Paul talked of dance programmes that related to
achievement objectives within each lesson and consecutive dance programmes
spanning the child’s years in the primary school. Each teacher’s awareness and
management of the relationships between such issues informed the balance and the
dynamic of the classroom and I suggest created participatory bridges or barriers for
the teachers and children.

With reference to the literature, I argue that the relationships between the teacher, the
children, the dance curriculum and dance in the wider community require continuous
negotiation. The importance of teachers’ awareness of the relationships and their own
perception of themselves as negotiators of the relationships is of relevance and is
examined. It is important to highlight that these relationships overlap and are not
distinct from each other. Nevertheless, there is value in describing them separately as
each relationship presents specific issues and perspective that may provide teachers
with a way to understand their practice. Figure four below, presents the relationships
as an interrelated structure wherein the teacher is seen to be central to the
development and place of dance in the classroom.

Figure 4. Classroom Relationships
The data collection did not occur within the tidy focus of these six relationships. They emerged out of the data and out of my analysis of the teachers’ stories. While the classroom is a maze of complex evolving relationships that researchers can never hope to fully translate on to the page (Eisner, 1998), the above framework guided my awareness of the diverse relationships and their subsequent issues. The articulation of these dynamic and fluid (Gallego et al. 2001) relationships (indicated by the two way arrows) raises consciousness of the ongoing dialogue that is in play in the lesson, and of the role played by the teacher in fostering and directing the dynamic creation of meanings. Placing the teachers’ practice in the contexts of the relationships enabled my interpretation of meanings. The specifics of these relationships as they emerged from this study are now discussed.

5.3 Teachers and Children

“a little community of learning.” (Lola)

I observed during this study that the way in which the teacher/child relationships were constructed and perceived had an influence on the dance experiences offered and created in the classroom. A significant determinant was the teacher’s personal teaching practice, which reflected how they regarded, included and flexed with the children in their dance lessons. The teachers increasingly ‘saw’ and valued the children in the dance lesson as they reflected on their teaching practice (in our discussions, shared dance and lessons), and began to articulate their personal beliefs about education. For example, Bella, “the children’s movement is the prime stimulus”; and Helene, “They come up with things I wouldn’t even think of”. Paul found the children were not always “barriers” as he expected, but emerged as “diverse individuals”. The experience and value of dance in the classroom is not fixed by the possibilities offered in the dance curriculum. The teachers’ comments suggested that meanings and values for dance in the classroom are significantly reliant upon relationships between teachers and children.
Teaching is a complex craft belonging to the person of the teacher. This is evident from the different ways in which the teachers in this study described their relationships with the children in their class. Helene observed that “with dance – you really need to know your kids.” Lola knew her children as members “of a little community of learning.” Mick stated, “I always start with the kids, who they are and how they relate to the topic.” In commenting on the physical “bumping and touching” pragmatics of a dance lesson, Paul said, “for a lot of teachers, dance runs counter to what is usually, in a lot of cases anyway, perceived to be the sort of ideal teaching situation where you’ve got kids in rows and you’ve got them sitting down listening.”

Implicit in these statements are theories of learning, and the teachers’ observations of themselves as teachers and the children in their classroom as learners. What the teachers saw (to a greater or lesser degree) in this study were boys and girls with diverse needs, interests, motivations, personalities, abilities, and behaviours. What I saw were teachers building and valuing their relationships with the children in various ways that in turn shaped the dance experiences offered and created in the lesson.

Underpinning the teachers’ comments about ‘knowing’ the children were the identified concerns for providing comfortable learning environments, support, trust, ownership and appropriate, fun learning activities. How these qualities were created in the classroom was in large part dependent upon the teachers knowing or, as Eisner (1998, p.68) said, “seeing” the children. Marques (1994) in her study of dance education in Sao Paulo, Brazil, commented on the vital importance of seeing the learner, “Perhaps we should…stop and look straight into the students before us (not the ones described in the books) and WITH them seek alternatives” (p. 17).

The relationship between teacher and learner is mostly discussed in pedagogical theory in conjunction with the curriculum content taught. Lusted (1986) described pedagogy as “the process through which knowledge is produced” (p.2) and asserted, “How one teaches is…inseparable from what is being taught” (p. 3). Shulman (1986) affirmed this stance and warned of separating what we teach from how we teach. While Grossman (1990) and Connelly and Clandinin (1985) agreed with this inter-
connection, they both commenced their discussion of the teaching and learning process by attending to the learner, "Teachers are concerned with the child, and the best teachers are sensitive to the child as a person and not only a carrier for the subject matter taught" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1985, p.178). The findings in the present study support the importance of prioritising the teacher-learner relationship within the context of other relationships such as teacher-curriculum, teacher-dance, and children-dance.

Nearly all the teachers identified the concern of 'managing' the children's behaviour without inhibiting creative participation. The priority placed on management did vary to some extent. Helene found that when she took another look at the boys in her classroom and adapted lesson content (curriculum) to fit with their needs and interests, the boys were keen and able participants in dance. The success of this strategy was most clearly demonstrated when one of her more 'rugby orientated' boys requested that the class do more dance.

The relationship between teacher and learner is most often described within the teaching literature in terms of the production and reproduction of knowledge. Two models predominate. One is the traditional or 'transmission' model (Lusted, 1986; Stones, 1992; Stinson, 1998), which confers the teacher knowing and conveying knowledge to a learner who is ready to receive the knowledge. The other is an interaction model (Lusted, 1986), where the teacher and the learner are active participants in creating knowledge (Ottey, 1996). In the present study, Paul summed up the two models with his comment, "going about it (dance)...you can try and inspire or motivate the children to do their own thing. ...At the other end of the spectrum you can actually say 'right, on beat one you are going to do this'.

The transmission model is uni-linear, involving one-way monologues, with the knowledge being deposited or “banked” (Freire, 1972) with the learner. Dewey (1938) described this pedagogy as subject-centred and authoritarian. In respect to dance in education, Bolwell (1998) described this learning process in terms of "rote teaching" (p.89), suitable for specific stylistic vocabularies of dance. Stinson (1998) stated, "this
is the reproductive function of education. Traditional methods of teaching dance technique fulfil this function” (p.27).

The interactive model values the exchange between the teacher and the child in the production of knowledge, and is often known as ‘student centred learning’, whereby “[children’s] personal experience is validated” (Shapiro, 1998, p.10). The latter pedagogy applied to dance in the classroom leads to lessons where the students actively create dance from their unique bodies of movement (Musil, 1999; Shapiro, 1998; Stinson, 1997). Critical Pedagogical Theory values the liberating and active process of creating and critiquing knowledge. Facilitating critical dialogue and the development of personal understanding, “that is liberating and empowering” (Otty, 1996, p.32) becomes central to the dance teachers’ role when this theory is applied in the classroom.

Similarly, constructivist pedagogy takes as its starting point children’s understanding, “and what they are likely to find puzzling” (Grossman, 1990, p.8). The characteristics of constructivist pedagogy have been enumerated in the literature (Chen and Rovegno, 2000; Dougiamas, 1998; Howe and Berv, 2000; Mayers and Britt, 1995). Howe and Berv (2000) presented the core premises as:

1) instruction must take as its starting point the knowledge, attitudes, and interests students bring to the learning situation, and 2) instruction must be designed so as to provide experiences that effectively interact with these characteristics of students so that they may construct their own understanding (p.31).

Applied to dance, constructivist pedagogy acknowledges the individuality of children in terms of their ideas, their creativity and their bodies. Individuality thus applied, refers to inclusion and acceptance of a diversity of individuals, not in terms of the dancer maintaining notions of otherness such as the gifted individual. Constructivist pedagogy allows for difference and actively works against perpetuation of stereotypes associated with gender, body types, dance hierarchies, and abilities.
The practicalities of the classroom, which include time constraints, parental and systemic expectations, diverse curriculum content, children’s learning preferences, and teaching preferences, would indicate that some information may best be taught in an instructive manner (Matthews, 1997). Constructivist pedagogy as detailed by Howe and Berv (2000) recognised that it is impractical and philosophically misleading to be totally child centred. They deferred to classroom reality and proposed a conceptualisation of constructivist pedagogy that takes constructivist-learning theory and supports it by “mixing ostensibly constructivist and non-constructivist teaching techniques as appropriate” (p. 32). Dewey (1938), who disagreed with the exaggerated swings to and from child centred or teacher centred approaches, would most likely have supported such a view. As Kate and Mick demonstrated in their teaching, teachers have to arrange their teaching to cater for their personal experiences and those of the children. These teachers shared their meanings of teaching dance within their classroom community, and created the opportunity for the (individual) children to construct and nurture the shared meanings in the classroom. Mick did this initially through discussion and the creation of a scrapbook of newspaper clippings. Kate openly spoke of her feelings in respect to dance and asked for similar candour from the children as they worked in their buzz groups.

The notion of shared meanings is important. Without shared meanings every individual would construct their own ‘truth’, requiring no corroboration from outside themselves, ‘the knower’ (Howe and Berv, 2000). This would make the relationship between the teacher and the learner almost seem irrelevant. The child would not need the teacher as they would seemingly already know the ‘truth’, and conversely the teacher would not need to engage with the children, as they would already know what was ‘right’ to teach.

Radical constructivists argue that ‘truth’ is relative to the individual (Von Glasersfeld, 1995). Like social constructivists, I argue that individuals construct their meanings within the shared discourse of a community (Ernest, 1995; Fosnot, 1996; Howe and Berv, 2000; Schwandt, 1994). Key to this position is the action of dialogue, which by
its very nature requires relationships to be formed and maintained. Lola’s description of her classroom as a community of learning reflects the thinking of Fosnot (1996), who wrote, “Dialogue within a community engenders further thinking. The classroom needs to be seen as a ‘community of discourse engaged in activity, reflection and conversation’” (pp.29-30).

A teacher may wish to create a democratic classroom (Dewey, 1938), but must accept that this brings with it diverse opinions and values that require voicing and management. A dynamic constructivist epistemology emerges from a democratic position. It begins with the students and the teacher’s own values and meanings, and if managed well may lead to contested, relevant and owned shared meanings. The teacher invites a “fallible view of knowledge by inviting critical perspectives” (Howe and Berv, 2000, p.36). As Dewey (1938) noted, this pedagogy is not easy to enact as it requires considerable insight into the children’s starting points in respect to culture, needs, and interests. Nonetheless, the benefits are immense in terms of the personal relevance the new understandings have for the children and the teacher. Helene’s reflections on her huge sense of achievement in connecting with the boys in her class and her subsequent breakthrough in helping them connect with dance exemplified these benefits.

All of the teachers in the present study spoke of the need for specific classroom management strategies that would help develop teachers’ relationship with the children. In my conversation with the participants, I talked of being “silly” as a teacher, and the significance of emphasising the ‘fun’ nature of dance in games that the children were comfortable with. Fun, games, and familiarity helped to maintain a dialogue with the children, reliant upon the experiences and meanings they and I brought to the classroom conversation (Eisner, 1998). Valuing their ideas also encouraged the children to engage in and respect the dialogue as they built shared meanings and knowledge of and through dance, enriching both for themselves and the classroom community as a whole.
How teachers relate to and include the children in the lesson matters. This relationship relies on the teacher and the children “knowing” each other, and allowing time and space for secure participation. In the course of this study it was found that as the teachers reflected upon their personal practices and beliefs, they revealed and sought strategies that they were comfortable with, and that allowed the teacher and children a sense of safety and authenticity congruent with the way in which they had learned to work together.

Once the teachers ‘saw’ the children in the context of their personal teaching practice, they could devise strategies that they believed met the needs of the children and that also invited disclosure and engagement. The strategies the teachers drew upon were informed by the teaching practice and beliefs they already had, their experience of working across the curriculum, and their specific dance knowledge and confidence.

Lola’s conception of the classroom as “a little community of learning” presented a particular relationship with the children that, as Lola said, was about “support” and “encouragement”. The term community suggested that the children were members of the classroom, owners of their space and their individual experience within a social context. In this sense, the dance experience offered is at once personal and social (Dewey, 1938; Polanyi, 1958). In reflection upon herself as a learner, Lola recalled positive experiences that she characterised as including “freedom”, “security”, “ownership”, and “personal responsibility”, all values that she now included in her classroom as a teacher. Lola also remembered from her own school experiences, certain teachers with whom she “just clashed”, citing lack of shared interests, boredom and poor classroom learning experiences as causes for the “clash”.

Lola, who had a ‘balletic’ introduction to dance and had gone on to develop a passion for explorative movement, recognised and challenged her personal philosophy for teaching dance right from the outset of this study. Lola’s dance lessons provided the children with structured freedom to explore and express ideas, as she did in other curriculum areas. Lola offered the children time to explore. She structured the activities in such a way that the learning space or environment was secure. She
negotiated ‘a community’ that valued different ideas and where expectations were clear and reviewed. Lola related to her children as a community that included herself.

The construction of Lola’s classroom community drew upon her beliefs of teaching and learning that valued the dialogic relationship with the children, where the ‘power’ was invested in the group rather than held by the teacher. Smith (1998) discussed the power dynamic in the relationship between the dance teacher and student. Such a relationship within the dance context conceives of the learner and their body as “docile” (p.131), placing the teacher in the position of control. Having described the contrasting power dynamic active in Lola’s class, it needs to be said that Lola was definitely in ‘control’ of her class. The lesson was driven by her educational intent and crafted in cognisance of whom she was teaching. Lola managed lesson structures and activities that provided time and space for the children to explore within the limits of the lesson. Strategies for managing the children and inspiring creativity in dance lessons stemmed from the value she placed on the children’s ideas and the design of activities that invited the children to interact with the experiences in a secure and yet challenging environment.

This account of Lola’s teaching supports the research findings of Atkin (1994), who discussed the importance of the teacher-learner relationship specifically in regards to security, “We don’t learn unless we take risks and we won’t take risks unless we have a secure base to fall back on” (p. 4). In the cognitive domain, Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) coined the term “scaffolding” (p. 90) as the process of the teacher moving children in a secure manner to the edge of their abilities and extending those abilities incrementally and successfully. Vygotsky (1978) described this as moving children’s learning to the edges of their knowing, or “zone of proximal development” (p. 86), with the assistance of more competent peers or the teacher. In the present study, the ‘scaffolding’, the ‘secure base’, and the support provided at the edge of competence (Eisner, 1993) was most ably demonstrated by Lola, who was alert to the children in front of her in that lesson on that day. Lola combined an alert awareness of who the children were with an ability and willingness to allow time and space for them to participate.
Like Lola, Helene was alert to the need to find a connection with the children in her classroom. As she said, “So I’m motivated, but how do I get everybody else to feel the same way?” Our conversation focused on the boys as we discussed connections between their interests, their needs, their strengths and how these may relate to the dance content matter. Mick likewise asked the children for their ideas of who danced, where, when, and how and why. Gessie used her confidence and knowledge in teaching reading as the beginning point for the children’s dance explorations; Bella used equipment and toys to initiate a connection between the children and the dance, and Kate levelled with the children and said that she would need their help in teaching dance as she neither liked nor knew much about it. Each teacher employed different strategies for engaging the children that made sense to them and which they thought were appropriate for their children.

A theme that arose in the initial analysis of the teacher’s conversations was that of ‘control and creativity’, more specifically managing behaviour of the boys while also encouraging creativity. The issue of control began to decrease once the teachers in this study focused on the needs and interests of particular children, found their motivations, allowed for diverse meanings of dance, and worked from their own and the children’s strengths to create and structure learning activities. A dynamic relationship invites and values a diversity of meanings and understandings that may be valued as resources rather than barriers for teaching dance in the classroom. This discussion now considers the teacher’s relationship to dance, and considers this relationship in terms of it being a resource or a barrier for teaching dance.
5.4 Teachers and Dance

"My body does not feel like a dancers body" (Bella)

Teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms originated in formative experiences, watching, experiencing and interpreting dance, frequently through pervasive cultural stereotypes. Teachers’ lived meanings of dance proved to be powerful filters for their understanding of dance in the classroom, and served both to motivate and deter the inclusion of dance in the classroom. Teacher reflection upon such experiences within this study prompted the realisation that they were already in possession of some knowledge of dance, which in fact represented a beginning point for teaching rather than a reason for not teaching dance.

The relationship between teacher and dance begins with the teacher’s personal experiences of dance in their lifetime. Here ‘dance’ refers to the discipline of dance in its broadest context, rather than dance in the classroom context as represented by the curriculum. Shulman (1987) described this relationship in terms of teachers’ content knowledge as distinguished from curriculum knowledge. Content knowledge encapsulates what the teacher knows of the subject area that they then transform for the students, “teaching necessarily begins with a teacher’s understanding of what is to be learned and how it is to be taught” (p. 7). Content knowledge rests upon knowing the content area literature and scholarship, along with philosophical scholarship on the nature of knowing in that area. Shulman also articulated the concept of pedagogical content knowledge as being the teacher’s ability to use their content knowledge in the classroom situation.

The teachers in this study sought and valued the importance of content knowledge. As Bella stated several times, “Knowing about dance is important”. Bella and many of the other teachers considered knowledge of dance would be sourced from literature and their own theory driven teacher education. Kate, Joe, Paul, Helene, Ethel, Gessie, and Mick all spoke of activity books, web sites, music resources, video kits, dance
steps and technique vocabulary as sources of knowledge for teaching dance. What I observed in this study was the way that the teachers talked of these sources as objective ‘things to get’, possessions that would make the teaching of dance happen. Many of the teachers continually looked beyond themselves, and beyond the children too, for knowledge that would enable them to teach dance. Regarding this kind of conditioning received in pre-service teacher training where knowledge is something you acquire to enable teaching, Connelly and Clandinin, (2000) commented, “knowledge comes from books, teachers, and professors” (p.103). Teachers learn that knowledge is external to their embodied and lived experience (Johnson, 1987) rather than “listening to their practices” (Russell, 1997, p.33). Schön (1983) described the knowledge flow from theory down to practice as “Technical rationalism...that fosters a selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry” (p.vii). In this sense knowing is a pre-condition of doing.

I was able to observe this attitude in action with, at the outset, some of the teachers teaching from this position. The effect was to deny the children the opportunity to use and reference their own body and context, making it difficult for them to find the sense and relevance of the dance activity. In these classes I observed children ‘tuning out’ and presenting various classroom management issues. For children, as for teachers as learners, personal connections must be made through the doing. As Holt (1964) said, “knowledge which is not genuinely discovered by children will very likely prove useless and will be soon forgotten” (p.125).

Helene allowed for genuine discovery. An important beginning point was her acute awareness of the need to structure the lesson so that all the children could feel and find personal relevance in the dance class. In particular, Helene sought to counterbalance the dominant socio/cultural perceptions of ‘boys dancing’, perceptions held by both the boys and the girls in the classroom. During our conversations Helene and I talked of strategies that would help the boys find a place for themselves in the dance activities. Helene used her knowledge of the children in her classroom as well as her personal history and knowledge of dance in the wider social context to overcome a major barrier to the educational opportunity presented by dance. Connelly and
Clandinin (2000) advocated for teachers to reference their own experience as a source of knowledge, and indeed they argued that personal experience determines teacher knowledge and practice more so than knowledge gained from much of the theory deemed important to learn in order to teach.

It is important to reiterate that like Connelly and Clandinin (2000), I do not dismiss the value of theoretical knowledge. My issue concerns the timing of the introduction of theoretical knowledge (Grossman, 1992). I suggest this study supports personal histories and narratives as sources of knowledge that complement and enliven content knowledge. Given the lived and tacit nature of these personal experiences, they are often overlooked as an initial source of knowledge informing teacher practice (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000).

As part of this study, the teachers and I talked at length over several weeks, observed each other teaching a variety of lessons, and created a dance. At the start of this process, Gessie was unsure about what to do, and about the direction of her dance interests in the classroom. Gessie’s reflection upon her experience of seeing a performance by Black Grace professional dance company served to direct and focus her dance work rather than taunt her as an ideal. Her reflection and our “genuine discussion” (Grossman, 1992, p. 235) (meaning that she and I shared responsibility for the discussion and ensuing action) of the art produced by Black Grace provided useful stimulus for her classroom’s dance programme. Gessie decided to direct the children’s dance programme towards choreographing and performing their own dance. Throughout the study, our ‘rich’ interactions provided for reflection upon our experiences of dance, which included positive and negative experiences. I found that as the teachers and I shared our experiences through the course of this study, we valued them more. The experiences were not discounted but seen in a different light as we began to refer to them as a resource to learn from.

Once Gessie could visualise her dance programme and had set a direction, a goal with educational intent, she then asked specific questions about things she did not know. Gessie was, as Holt (1964), said, ‘genuinely discovering’ what she knew and needed
to know. She now had a precise context and need for theoretical knowledge that served her needs. There was no longer a dependence on anyone else's helpful intent or assumptions about what she needed to know. For Gessie, and most other teachers in this study, reflecting on experience was powerful in drawing out values, knowledge and knowledge gaps. Grossman (1992) also noted the power of experience as a dominant influence shaping teachers' beliefs and practices. Connelly and Dienes (1982) found that experience based teaching knowledge overrode and shaped teachers' formal theoretical teaching knowledge. Ethell (1997) confirmed this in respect to the power of personal experience shaping beliefs and countering pre-service teachers' propositional knowledge of teaching.

Connelly and Clandinin (2000), Eisner (1988, 1998), Elbaz (1983, 1991), and Schwab (1978) have commented upon the role of teachers' practice in defining and enacting the 'what and how' of the curriculum. What the teacher does in the moments of any lesson represents the 'chalkface' of education. In this sense the teacher is the curriculum or, as Russell and Bullock (1999) have argued, “how I teach is the message” (p.32), confirming the central role of the teacher in shaping what is taught. Within this study, the telling of the teachers' personal stories was encouraged and valued in an attempt to capture the personal and social dialogue of teaching (Middleton, 2001).

Given that the subjective and objective sources of knowing social discourses such as dance are resolved and lived by the individual, Connelly and Clandinin (2000) argued that the knowledge is therefore of a personal character. The notion of 'personal' is clarified by Connelly and Clandinin (2000), “By personal we do not mean idiosyncratic or private, but something that has both a personal and cultural origin and quality” (p.93). Dewey (1938) also took the epistemological view that knowing involves the personal negotiation of subjective and objective knowledge; the melding of socio/cultural and individual perspectives.

Bella's statement, “My body does not feel like a dancer’s body” at once presents her personal negotiation of subjective and objective views of dance. The diverse social
discourses of dance meet and are resolved within the individual. In Bella’s next breath she stated, “but I don’t feel shy, I feel I’m there to learn, to express…gain experience…have fun…be creative.” Bella revealed that her meaning of dance as ‘doing, fun, expression, creativity, and learning’ was important to her and to her goals for the children in the classroom, and positively affected her negative ‘feeling’ to such an extent that it overshadowed concerns about normative socio/cultural perceptions of the ‘dancer’s body’. Bella’s dance experiences have shaped her meaning of dance, and she draws upon this meaning in teaching dance to her children. Bella’s meaning of dance in her classroom was informed by her positive experiences of dance and her own experimentation through teaching dance.

Bella’s narrative also revealed that she enjoys going to the theatre and watching ‘beautiful bodies’, trained dancers dancing. She commented that “our own perception of our body image and that kind of thing…might put people (teachers) off, we see dancers as well ‘formed’, they look beautiful on stage…I think children are more free to not feel those barriers, but teachers definitely will.” Hence dance may be regarded as a double edged sword; the images of professional dance motivated Bella and she enjoyed it for its aesthetic offerings, but she also considered that such powerful socio-culturally driven images of dance presented expectations, in terms of body types (Brown, 1999; Cooper Albright, 1997), and dancing skill (Sparshott, 1999), that may cause teachers to shy away from teaching it in their classroom.

Bella noted that diverse dance experiences “broaden your perspective of what dance is.” Bella enjoyed dance and despite being aware of its potential in education, she perceived social values surrounding dance that could create barriers for children and for other teachers. My observation was that Bella gave meaning to dance in her classroom because it fulfilled her holistic educational philosophies. Dance complemented Bella’s aims in education, which were about expanding opportunities for the children to learn. Bella consequently emphasised classroom dance experiences that allowed for children’s individual movement and ideas, and explicitly focussed upon developing process and product skills, much in the same way that I observed Bella teach maths, writing and how to use the library.
A synthesis existed between Bella’s philosophy of teaching, her experiences of dance and her teaching practice. At the commencement of this study such synergy was not as apparent in most of the teachers’ classrooms. However, as we talked, observed and danced, the teachers’ ongoing reflections revealed their values about who danced, what dance was, and the purpose dance had in their classroom. The opportunity to reflect served to help the teachers reveal their own construction of dance, and consequently their personal contexts that informed this construction. I found that the teachers were more able to critically reflect upon their teaching of dance when they recognised their personal experience of dance as situated in their social, historical, cultural and physical ‘landscapes’ (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000; Ernest, 1995; Gallego, Hollingsworth and Whitenack, 2001; Lincoln and Guba, 2000; Ottey, 1996; Schwandt, 1994).

Each teacher revealed dance experiences that were memorable and influential in forming their attitude to and meaning of dance. Paul talked of watching dance being taught during his teacher training in a way that shaped a perception of himself as not being that kind of teacher. He also spoke of his son’s basketball team performing a haka and the role of dance in signifying identity in New Zealand. Ethel and Mick referred to the social dances they learned as young women. These partnered dances required that they know specific steps and etiquette if they were to partake in the social culture, or ‘scene’, of the time. Lola spoke of early ballet classes and the impact the ballet teacher had by invalidating her personal meaning of dance. She also spoke of her interest in ‘just dancing’ as an adult, something that Kate had lost all interest in as a result of comments made by her sister during early adulthood.

The teachers’ meanings of dance were both formed and informed by their individual experience, or as framed by Ernest (1995), their individual perspectives and the social environment were interconnected and in conversation. Once the teachers saw themselves as having a personal dance context, I felt that they were more able to see the children’s dance contexts and were consequently more able to encourage the children’s engagement in a way that made sense to the children and themselves. What
this study has revealed is the value of articulating and reflecting upon personal values and experiences as a means for teachers to understand how they connect with dance.

The articulation of personal values is supported by Ottey (1996), who noted that with a diversity of dance practices, functions and meanings in society, declaring your “agenda” (p.33), informed by and situated in social contexts, reveals personal constructions of dance. This in turn allows for personal meanings and relevance to be derived (Gough, 1997/98). Finding personal relevance was also commented upon by MacDonald (1991), who found that elementary school teacher’s attitudes and beliefs presented one of the core reasons for not teaching creative dance in their classroom. Ethell’s (1997) study, about beginning teachers reconciling propositional and procedural knowledge, revealed the potency of teachers making explicit their personal values and philosophies in order to facilitate change in personal pedagogy. When facilitating change in beginning teachers’ beliefs and theories, Ethell outlined three necessary conditions: “make explicit the typically tacit beliefs and theories; expose and challenge the inadequacies of these beliefs and theories; and, allow extended time to explore, elaborate and integrate new conceptions into existing beliefs” (p.279).

Ethell’s findings resonate with the teachers’ comments and actions as they progressed through the research process. It became apparent that the methodology of the present study did challenge and change the teachers’ beliefs and practices. Our research conversations about dance allowed for tacit theories and practices to be made explicit. Observing each other teach exposed our practice, and the shared dance activity offered an opportunity to integrate and explore new practices and experiences safely. Our ongoing conversations about dance allowed time for reflection and ongoing articulation of beliefs. (The impact of the research methodology is discussed more fully on page 310).

As the teachers in this study reflected upon their experiences of dance in their own childhood, adolescence, adulthood, teacher training and previous teaching, they realised that they did know something of dance, and therefore already had some dance content knowledge. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) stated, “teachers hold knowledge
that comes from experience, is learned in context and is expressed in practice. This more than any other sense of knowledge, drives how classrooms are constructed” (pp.90-91). Paul indicated that he was surprised about how much knowledge he had gained through his experiences of dance, both positive and negative. Paul, Gessie, Kate, Mick and Ethel all felt similarly lacking in confidence to teach dance, yet this changed as they reflected upon their personal histories, talked of the lessons taught and observed in their own classroom context, and worked through the shared dance activity that valued their own movement ideas. The methodology utilised in this study had the effect of drawing the teacher’s attention to what they knew and what they felt confident with and, not least, served to clarify what they needed to know for teaching dance in their own classroom context.

Personal experience of dance, typically characterised by ‘doing types of dance’, influenced the character and shape of content knowledge. Attitudes and beliefs gained through such structured experiences influenced the nature of dance taught in these teachers’ classrooms. However, as Paul noted, “encouraging them, getting them to think about what they are doing and what’s to follow. That’s the real teaching isn’t it, it is not the type of dance.” Paul alluded to the relationship between the teacher and the curriculum, focusing upon teachers’ realities of transforming dance for the classroom curriculum. Paul summed up the challenge when he said, “Maybe knowing about it and doing it are different things, and that is possibly the thing that scares me away a bit.”

5.5 Teachers and Curriculum

"Where do I begin” (Gessie, Heidi, Kate, Joe, Paul).

Discussion about the teacher’s experience revealed that they certainly knew something of dance. However, knowing what and how to teach the dance curriculum
in their classroom presented many other issues. These are articulated in this section that explores the relationship between the teacher and the curriculum. This study found macro and micro curriculum issues, in and out of the teacher's control, that had an impact upon their teaching of dance in their classroom. Even though all teachers in this study agreed that dance was a valuable addition to the curriculum, many were unsure about how to reconcile personal teaching practice, informed by dance experience, with the curriculum. In this study, reconciliation of classroom practice and curriculum theory was advanced through processes of personal reflection and ‘feeling’ dance education first hand.

In this discussion, curriculum is taken to be inclusive of macro curriculum issues pertaining to politically mandated educational reform, dance theory within the new arts curriculum, and past dance curriculum. Micro dance curriculum issues in the classroom regarding the actuality of teaching, such as content knowledge and dance pedagogy knowledge (Fortin, 1993) are also discussed. The identification of broader macro curriculum issues and the classroom practice issues found in this study resonate with Connelly and Clandinin's (1985) conception of teachers' knowledge as “personal practical knowledge” (p. 182) and Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) further distinction of teachers' knowledge in respect to “professional knowledge landscapes” (p. 11).

The following discussion will elaborate upon the professional knowledge landscape and the personal practice knowledge issues raised by the teachers in this study. Connelly, Clandinin and He (1997) and Eisner (1994) stressed the importance of understanding teaching in context. To this end, I will firstly discuss the professional knowledge issues and then return to the teacher's personal practice knowledge, which provides the main focus of this discussion.

Helene and most of the other teachers reflected upon their teaching within the current climate of educational accountability, the new arts curriculum achievement objectives, and their own teacher training. In doing so they outlined the shaping influences of the social context, the professional knowledge landscapes (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000) that impacted upon their teaching in the classroom. Teachers’ accounts of their
personal practical knowledge (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000) described the personal and often tacit knowledge formed through experience. Within the classroom, personal practice knowledge can override formal and policy driven professional knowledge. When Helene spoke of her personal teaching style and strengths as being more related to performing than choreographing, she was reflecting upon and acknowledging her personal life history and her personal practice knowledge as it shaped her teaching. Helene’s and the other teachers’ narratives were indicative of the interrelationship between personal practice and professional context, and reinforced the claim that teaching in any one moment is idiosyncratic (Eisner, 1994).

The teachers in this study were active in constructing their meaning of teaching dance. They were not, as Connelly et al. (1997) pointed out, “mere screens who translate others’ intentions and ideologies into practice” (p.674). They played a defining role. As Joe commented, “The teacher really has an impact on what kids take out of school everyday...it’s the sort of person you are, and the way you are with the kids.” Eisner (1994) suggested that “educational reality resides in the school as it is” (p. 7), which simply and deceptively implies the ongoing complexity of interrelationships found within the school. To take this further, I perceive that educational reality resides in the moments of the lesson, where the teacher is most active in negotiating and reconciling personal practice with the professional knowledge landscape.

Within the present study, it was clear that the teachers’ professional knowledge landscape was influenced by the ‘outcomes oriented education’ reform as presented within the broader curriculum. Joe, Ethel, Bella, Lola and Helene all commented negatively upon the curriculum’s outcome orientation. Joe summed up the issue, stating:

When we changed the curriculum from an input thing, into an output driven curriculum, it just stopped creativity. It stopped the enthusiasm and enjoyment of it all. It said- ‘OK you do this to get that, and you do it, and we’ll measure how much of that you get’. Education doesn’t always work like that for all the kids. So it’s taken a lot of enjoyment out and put a lot of pressure on teachers and a lot of work on teachers.
Joe perceived the workload pressures upon teachers and the lack of opportunity for creativity (that makes for enjoyment of the job) to be a consequence of curriculum accountability imperatives. Bella also commented on these issues:

The New Zealand Curriculum is so overloaded, there is so much to get through, we feel pressured. We’ve got, say, 45 minutes to get through a maths lesson, and it has got to be an ‘A’ level lesson, so you’ve got to take two groups (split the class) to get them through it... Then there are the other maths topics, and you always feel like you are chasing your tail. So you tend not to stop, to be able to do that at the spur of the moment would be wonderful. I think we have lost our spontaneity as teachers.

Helene raised similar points:

I have been teaching for a while and I have been through different stages, and that’s the bad thing about these ‘outcomes’, you are so tied into what you have got to do, what you have to cover this year...you lose some of the spontaneity that we had in the earlier years of teaching when you would go with the children...We did not have to look ‘where does that fit in with the AO’s (Achievement Objectives). We used to be able to follow what the kids were interested in and yeah, educating, teaching the children through the subjects. Now it has turned around because we have got to be so accountable all the time. There are good things about outcomes, because I’m sure under the old system, some people would just march around all day and did not really do a lot. There are two sides.

Joe, Helene, and Bella are very experienced teachers, and given the consistency of their comments with those of Ethel and Lola, the issue bears significance for teachers and for dance in the curriculum. The strong sentiment expressed by these teachers presents a conflict between the teacher’s personal practice and the teacher’s professional knowledge landscapes. I have to say that I did not expect this issue to be as apparent. However, its appearance confirms the position of Connelly et al. (1997) that, “It is impossible to understand teaching by only observing the classroom” (p.673).

As Helene stated above, there are two sides to the outcomes debate. A thorough discussion of the issue in relation to dance in New Zealand would make for another
study entirely. However, acknowledging these teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes, the following discussion briefly outlines the current educational reform in New Zealand and the subsequent issues these presented for the teachers in this study.

From the 1930s to the 1960s “New Zealand was regarded as the welfare laboratory of the world” (Roberts, 1998, p.31). In respect to education and the arts, this period was characterised by innovation and strong educational leadership from the likes of Clarence Beeby, Gordon Tovey and Peter Fraser, Minister of Education, 1935, who advocated that all children have access to a quality education (Bolwell, 1995; Burrows, 1999). In 1984, the economic and social landscape was changed by neo-liberal politics and New Zealand became a market economy typified by the phrase ‘user pays’ (Roberts, 1998). Education was now a ‘commodity’ to buy “in a market-based system” (Jesson, 2000, p. 57) and competition between schools was fostered (Roberts, 1998). The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993) set out the subsequent curricular reform and outlined seven ‘essential learning areas’ (Arts, Health and Physical Well Being, Technology, Sciences, Language and Languages, Mathematics, Social Sciences), which placed the subject area of dance within the arts learning area. For each curriculum area there were eight ‘essential skills’ (communication, social and co-operative, problem solving, self management and competitive, physical, information, numeracy, work and study). Since 1993, heated political debate between the left and right side of the political spectrum has been a part of the development of each learning area curriculum (Roberts, 1998). Typically, this debate swings from the call for a return to ‘basics’ (traditional literacies) on the right, to the democratisation of the curriculum on the left (Jesson, 2000; Roberts, 1998).

The curriculum designs of the seven learning areas, as a constituent part of education in the new market economy of New Zealand, was influenced by the predominantly ‘right wing’ market driven Business Round Table (Jesson, 2000). This group, along with the government/s of the day, initiated human resource management theories within teaching practice that it was claimed would increase standards in teaching through the application of performance management systems in schools. It was
believed these systems would measure and improve aspects of teacher effectiveness (Jesson, 2000; Roberts, 1998). This became the means for establishing children’s basic competencies and standards in the classroom and hence learning outcomes became the accountability measure for the effectiveness of the teacher. As Jesson (2000) stated, “Assessment and audit were made priorities, with assessment being seen as measurement, and with audits providing accountability. Teaching standards, it was implied, could be determined directly from the outcomes of learning” (p.66).

(The neo-liberal reform of New Zealand education is well documented. For further reading, see: Jesson, 2000; McGrath, 1994; Ministry of Education, 1997; Roberts, 1998).

The teachers in this study commented that these accountability measures, rather than improving their teaching, created pressures that constrained their ability and their interest in teaching. As Joe stated, “Education doesn’t always work like that.” Jesson (2000) confirms this observation as she described today’s teachers as:

‘managed professionals’...less concerned with the details of the knowledge they impart than with inculcating their pupils with the information skills required for the new millennium. ...This ‘managed professional’ may be a more qualified form of teacher, but he or she is also much more directly controlled and constrained (p.67).

The teachers themselves recognised these feelings of constraint and voiced their concern for the loss of freedom in the classroom. The teachers in this study were as ‘effective’ as they could be, though they believed they were working much longer hours to try to demonstrate their ‘effectiveness’. Joe commented, “the teachers are living two lives. They’re living one for accountability and one for doing their classroom stuff.”

A unique comment made by Lola as to why she liked to teach dance was that “it’s like you’re challenging society...pulling them out of their little bubble, to try and do it in a different way.” I sensed that Lola was valuing dance as a means for kindling and maintaining the presence of creativity and spontaneity in her classroom. She appeared
to be using dance and its implicit ‘freedoms’ to balance educational reform as characterised by constraints and accountability. Supporting this stance was the finding that all the teachers in this study valued dance in the curriculum because “dance was a fun way to learn” (Helene). Paradoxically, the teachers welcomed dance for these reasons but were simultaneously concerned about knowing the dance curriculum and “doing [teaching] it right” (Gessie).

Work commenced on the new arts curriculum in 1995, and 1999 saw the first draft go out for public consultation. The arts were defined as including dance, drama, music and visual arts. By 2003, dance was to be taught to all primary school students in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2000). Dance learning would be assessed in respect to achievement objectives outlined in the four strands, Developing Practical Knowledge, Developing Ideas in Dance, Communicating and Interpreting in Dance, and Understanding Dance in Context. Progression in learning would be shown through achievement of skills, knowledge and understanding, as indicated through achievement objectives outlined at level one through to level eight.

Further to New Zealand’s education reform context, the Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) presented a more immediate curricula context within these teachers’ professional knowledge landscape. The arts curriculum draws upon a history of arts theory concepts and terms that articulate dance in the curriculum (Hong, Foley and Thwaites, 1998). Formative arts education theorists such as Abbs, (1987), Adshead, (1981), Eisner, (1998), Gardner, (1983), and Goodman, (1978), have been cited to justify the placement of dance in the New Zealand “cognitive revolution” (Bolwell, 1998, p. 89). Discipline Based Arts Education has, I believe, strongly informed the conceptualising of this curriculum’s content. The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum document validated the introduction of dance with the statement: “Dance is a significant way of knowing, with a distinctive body of knowledge to be experienced, investigated, valued and shared” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 19).

In the present research, it was apparent that the majority of the teachers did not know what the ‘distinctive body of knowledge’ was. This politically and theoretically
powerful statement from outside the classroom took on a different spectre within the classroom. Despite being an advocacy phrase it had the potential to highlight, as Lola recognised, “what they did not know, and therefore probably knocks confidence.” Bella referred to the need to know the “dance knowledge” and wanted to know where knowledge could be sourced. The question “where do I start?” and the teachers’ many initial requests for resources, activities, lesson structures and programmes further reflected their confusion about dance ‘as a way of knowing’. Teachers’ sense of not ‘knowing the curriculum content’ in the present study, was reflected by McGee, Jones, Bishop, Cowie, Hill, Harlow, Oliver, Tiakiwai, and Mackenzie’s (2002) National Schools Sampling Study in New Zealand, that found that 90.5% of teachers surveyed wanted more professional development in the arts.

Given the immediate concerns of knowing the new dance curriculum, what was also apparent was the competing influence of past curriculum documents and resources in shaping teachers’ expectations for dance in the classroom. In particular, past physical education curriculum emphasis upon skill development, as typified by learning select folk dances, established dominant expectations for dance in the classroom. Kate, Paul, Ethel, and Joe mentioned this type of experience. Helene referred to music resources, Mick looked on the internet and in the library, and Gessie referred to dance companies in the theatre. Each teacher’s professional knowledge landscape included the political reforms of the times as well as the influences of past and current curriculum.

The professional knowledge landscape has been described in terms of people, policies, curriculum and events outside of the classroom that directly impact upon the classroom (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000). The dance curriculum was seen as a component of the teacher’s professional landscape, and epistemologically regarded as a theoretical document intended to guide practice. Connelly and Clandinin spoke of the epistemological dilemma, “they [teachers] are expected to know things theoretically while, at the same time their job is to know things practically” (p. 97). As the teachers in this study revealed, teachers knew their classrooms and their children. They knew their personal practice through experience. The epistemological tension arose from the perceived disjunction between ‘out of the classroom theory’ in
terms of policies and curriculum, and the teachers’ personal practice knowledge within that classroom. As Lola mentioned, the curriculum contains “really good things”, and “knowing the curriculum is powerful” as it “provides direction”, but at the end of the day “they are just words on the page.” Lola emphasised that while having the curriculum is important, its translation off the page and onto the floor and into the body, so to speak, requires a curriculum implementation process that reconciles the theory with the practice.

The teacher and the curriculum are interconnected (Lusted, 1986; Shulman, 1987; Willis and Schubert, 1991), and practice and theory is required to direct and determine the nature of education (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000). The teachers in this study presented personal connections and responses to teaching dance as they drew upon their experiences and differing curriculum documents and resources that informed their action. Lola and Bella had greater awareness of dance regarding the new arts curriculum, and both sought to know more about it through dance in-service courses. For these two teachers, the curriculum sat in the back of their minds, gently informing their lessons. Kate and Gessie knew very little about the new dance curriculum yet relied on it for their direction. It was in the forefront of their minds. They wanted the curriculum to explicitly guide their classroom practice. Helene was using ideas and terminology from an old music resource that was informed by Laban’s modern educational dance terminology, and therefore was familiar with some terms in the new dance curriculum. Ethel, Paul and Joe maintained a skill orientation and referenced previous physical education curriculum expectations of dance, where the teacher knew the dance steps and taught them.

The majority of prior dance experiences that created the teachers’ personal meanings of dance were skills-based, informed by discourses of performance (Hong, 2000), such as training and learning specific movement vocabulary and techniques. Genres such as ballet (Lola), disco and modern (Helene), ballroom (Mick and Ethel), and folk (Kate and Paul) are typical representatives of dance for many New Zealanders who understand dance as a technical, performative form rather than an educational and participatory form (Hong, 2000). Bolwell (1998) makes the same distinctions and
notes the different educational expectations; wherein performance-based programmes
deal with mastery of technical skills, creative programmes focus upon personal ideas,
feelings and emotions, and a third orientation deals with critical understanding or
dance literacy (Bresler, 1994; Fortin, 1993; Hong, 2000; Ministry of Education,
2000). These orientations in the context of the teachers’ experiences of dance revealed
that the teachers did have some knowledge of dance but only a small portion in the
context of dance as articulated in the Arts in the New Zealand curriculum. The new
curriculum not only broadened teachers’ conceptions of what dance may include, but
also shifted the pedagogical emphasis away from mastery of skills to critical problem
solving, with a focus upon developing dance literacy (Ministry of Education, 2000).
In respect to Shulman’s (1987) knowledge base for teaching theory, the content
(what) and the pedagogical expectations (how) presented in the new curriculum bore
little resemblance and relationship to most of the teachers’ experience of dance.

Ethel, Mick, Gessie, Kate and Paul knew some dances and in their initial readings of
the curriculum saw a place for such skills, though they did not find the connections to
the dance strands conceptually easy. This was also confounded by terminology of
which they had little experience. Kate and I talked at length about the curriculum
strands and terms such as space, time, relationships, energy, and body, collectively
called the elements of dance. Upon reflection, my conversations with each teacher
included considerable discussion about the elements of dance. I found that my own
practice was very much inspired by these elements as delineated by Laban (1948) and
re-oriented by Adshead (1981).

While I had an intimate understanding of the terms and concepts in dance education,
the teachers found the curriculum language for dance alien and at times intimidating,
and they sought my assistance and advice during our conversations. Exploring
beginning points for the dance lessons and programmes, the teachers and I talked
about personal dance experience, the dance experience that the children might have,
the topics or themes being studied in the classroom and the elements of dance. These
conversations revolved around the classroom context that the teachers knew, where
they were the “connoisseur” (Eisner, 1998). I brought to the conversations my dance
connoisseurship regarding the dance elements and we constructed dance lessons with starting points that each teacher owned, felt comfortable with and were relevant to their children and classroom programme. This study found that the reconciliation process between teacher’s personal practice and their professional knowledge landscape most successfully began with reflection upon and consideration of the teacher’s own personal practice in that classroom. Situating this reconciliation within the ‘personal’ was strongly affirmed by Gessie in her reflections about this process:

I feel like I’ve got a lot out of this (study). When you go to one of those (in-service programmes) like you’ve got all of this knowledge but you don’t know where you fit it in. Here, I’ve told you exactly what I need, and I’ve got what I need, so now I know where to go...after this it makes me realise how important it is to almost have like one on one.

This process does not discount the need for knowledge input from experts or peers. However, what the teachers in this study emphasised was the value in ‘owning’ or personalising the reconciliation process between the teachers’ professional knowledge landscape and their personal practice.

Lola spoke about the power of knowing the curriculum and the liberation of having it in the back of your mind because, as she said, “you can start to look at them more critically and put them into your own philosophy, your own big picture.” As Lola indicated, theoretical documents like the curriculum can be ‘freeing’ when they are integrated into the classroom reality, made personal by the teacher, and transformed into practice. Lola also talked of her attempts to match her teaching with the curriculum, “In all the time I was trying to make my teaching match the AO’s (Achievement Objectives) my teaching was horrible and my teaching was not comfortable, it didn’t sit right.” Lola’s comments reveal the importance of owning the personal teaching context and using the curriculum in order to help her teach her children, rather than allowing the curriculum to ‘bully’ her teaching. Connelly and Clandinin (2000) made reference to Polanyi (1958) in valuing the personal nature of teacher’s knowledge. They emphasised, as did Lola, that teaching is in the context of a teacher’s particular strengths and weaknesses, and cannot be generalised to what the average teacher knows, or what all teachers know, or what the curriculum means for
all teachers, as it means different things for each teacher depending on individual experience.

Acknowledgment of the individuality of teachers, their classrooms and their practice, also requires the acceptance that this personal knowledge and practice is social in nature (Dewey, 1938; Eisner, 1994; Ernest, 1995). As Lola stated and the other teachers similarly found, her teaching was powerful when it concurred with her personal philosophy, which was a part of her ‘big picture’, her life.

Within this study, the teachers found that they could not easily reconcile their personal dance experiences with the cognitive discipline orientation of the dance curriculum. This is not to say that the teachers disagreed with the orientation, just that the theory informing the curriculum did not relate to the teachers’ personal practice knowledge. In seeking to find connections these teachers asked for strategies, resources and activities that might assist their attempts to commence teaching dance. Each teacher repeatedly returned to issues of lesson planning, structures, content ideas and most predominantly the issue of “where do I start?”

Gessie, Mick, Kate, Paul, Helene, Joe and Ethel all asked, “Where do I begin?” or “How do I start?” to teach dance in their classrooms. As discussed earlier, teachers had some experience and knowledge of dance; however, they had little confidence to translate their experiences of dance into dance education experiences for the children. This finding can be understood in respect to the ‘apprenticeship of observation’ literature (Knowles and Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Lortie, 1975), wherein it has been observed that teachers often replicate what and how they were taught as students. Joe made this observation when he recalled conversations with parents at the school and their meanings of dance. Within the dance literature ‘apprenticeship of observation’ is mostly discussed in terms of maintaining dance traditions (Fortin, 1993; Fortin, 1998; Myers, 1989). Geeves’s (1994) study of dance teaching in studio settings found that dance traditions as well as pedagogical conservatism are passed along from teacher to student, with the expectation that the genealogy of the dance is to be maintained, and in fact becomes the most important consideration. Ethell (1997) commented on the
power of this kind of learnt experience in respect to pre-service teachers establishing meanings of teaching. Her study showed that personal critical reflection is required if teachers are to understand prior experience, and develop new practices.

For Gessie, Mick, Helene, Paul, Kate and Ethel, reflection upon personal pedagogy practice and prior experience proved to be an effective to place ‘to start’ their dance programme. From this starting point the teachers collaborated with their children in establishing goals and then commenced teaching dance. As Gessie said, “just doing it” was a powerful though frightening step to take in beginning her dance programme. Implicit in Gessie’s comment is the value of practising teaching in real contexts where the teachers develop felt understanding of the content and pedagogy knowledge they know and need to acquire. In Fortin’s (1993) study of dance teachers’ competencies, she emphasised the importance of practicing and reflecting upon teaching in real contexts as the vital means for developing teaching strategies, “Teachers must blend content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in actual teaching situations” (Fortin, 1993, p. 37). In the ‘action’ of the classroom, the teacher most effectively learns dance pedagogy knowledge, which includes not just the ideas and activities, but the subtle shift from one activity to the next, the timing and rhythm of when to help a child or initiate the next challenge, when to use the child’s ideas and how to flex the lesson to fit those ideas.

These qualities describe for me the artistry of teaching, which I believe is built upon the individual teacher’s skills of perception. What teachers look for, see, and say indicates critical awareness of what is going on in the classroom (Eisner, 1998). Perceiving and articulating what a teacher finds interesting helps the children to see and understand, and vice versa. Ethel commented on her blossoming ability to see the children’s thinking in dance, “because they (children) think it is interesting, there’s sort of a progression...so you now see what they see as interesting, whereas before you didn’t see it as interesting.” I found Ethel’s fresh perceptions of the children’s work and her developing ability to see and value their thinking, as evidence that she is reconciling her teaching practice with the professional knowledge landscape as
presented in the new curriculum, which she had previously regarded as a barrier to teaching dance.

Central to this discussion of teachers and curriculum is the epistemological acknowledgement of dance as a medium that teachers can use to prompt and improve children’s access to seeing and saying what they know in the classroom. Dance has been described as a way of knowing the self and the world (Eisner, 1998; Ministry of Education, 2000). Dance invites particular experiences that require intelligence. Making dance, presenting dance and appreciating dance requires problem solving and analytical skills, sensibilities and awareness to qualities of space and time, and a willingness to commit the subjectivity of the body and spirit to movement. While the intent of the methodology in this study was not explicitly to offer the teachers an in-service experience that encapsulated the aforementioned knowing, the shared dance activity did give each teacher a felt experience of making, presenting and critiquing their own dance. This experience required the teachers to think, see and say through dance. Each teacher commented that participating in this activity ‘opened their eyes’ to the scope and nature of dance for their children. I also observed that this experience helped teachers reconcile personal teaching practice with the arts curriculum. This dance experience commenced with valuing the teachers’ own movement ideas and then manipulating them using the elements of dance as outlined in the curriculum. The experience modelled particular content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and specific teaching idiosyncrasies such as ‘silliness’ and the ‘ask, use, pattern’ process that Lola observed. I felt that the exploration of personal idiosyncrasies allowed the teachers to relax and see that there was no ‘right and wrong’ way to connect with the curriculum. By noting how I personally related to the curriculum, the teachers felt comfortable to find and expose their own way of relating to the curriculum. The felt experience, in combination with the critical reflection of personal practice and experience prompted these teachers to look to themselves and their own context, inclusive of the children in the classroom, as the place to ‘start’. Once they’d started, the teachers found what they needed to know next. As Ethel stated, “You never know (what you need) until you’ve tried it”, and there is no “right or wrong” way. Each
teacher commented that the shared dance activity increased their confidence to teach
dance and gave them an experiential understanding of dance as a way of knowing.

Questions such as “where do I start?” were not about finding dance steps, resources
and activities as the teachers initially inferred. This question represented the need for
finding a connection between personal practice and the curriculum. Within this study,
we re-looked at classroom themes, ourselves and the children, and found new
connections and possibilities. The teachers all sought dance ideas and help. What we
explored was a way of perceiving and recycling their own practice, relating to their
own children, their own classroom themes, and their own strategies. In effect, the
teachers themselves became the dance resource they were looking for to initiate their
teaching.

Critical reflection and felt experience provided the means for the reconciliation
process discussed above. Such critical reflection is advocated for within the dance
pedagogy literature (Fortin, 1993; Gough, 1997/1998; Marques, 1994; Ottey, 1996;
teacher’s knowledge in terms of Personal Practical Knowledge and Professional
Knowledge Landscapes supported the findings of this study that each teacher had
unique personal and socially shared experiences that led them to construct their
meaning of dance in their classrooms in different ways. The teachers’ narratives
revealed the particular blends of dance content knowledge and pedagogical strengths
and weaknesses that informed their teaching of dance in the classroom. The narratives
also indicated the interconnections between the social experience of dance, teaching
dance, and the teacher’s personal experience of dance. There is an ongoing dialogue
between individual and social meanings of dance.
5.6 Children and Dance

"I don't like dance...I like boogying" (Sam, 10 year-old boy, Helene's class).

In the previous relationship discussions, the teacher has been identified as being a central figure in teaching dance in the classroom. This research has argued that teachers' personal experience of dance, negotiated within and informed by social and cultural contexts, informs teachers’ meanings of dance in the classroom. Likewise, it has indicated that the teachers’ practice in the classroom - their teaching, might actually be the curriculum (Eisner, 1994; May, 1991; Russell, 1997; Willis and Schubert, 1991).

Children’s views were not purposefully sought in this study and comment on their perspective is therefore limited. However, the teachers observed children’s relationship with dance during the research process, further illuminating their own relationships with dance, and contributing to the re-construction of their understanding of dance in the education and curricular context. Teachers’ experience, beliefs and values locate dance in the classroom curriculum in ways that are particular to themselves and to the children they teach. Given this situated classroom practice (Schwab, 1978), the teachers in this study talked of dominant socio/cultural assumptions and expectations of dance that they and the children observed. Informing the teachers’ and children’s personal perceptions of dance were societal constructions of gender, body and dancing ability that impacted upon dance pedagogy in the classroom.

The children’s relationships with dance appeared to be based upon dance experiences gained in after-school dance classes (predominantly ballet), dance they saw on TV (MTV dance clips), previous dance experiences gained at school (usually folk dance within PE programmes), or dance they experienced in the family context. Children associated dance with dancers, that is, they were mostly familiar with dance as a 'product', an outcome of skill, practice and mastery. Emphasis was upon the
Dance in its diversity has evolved out of communal actions, practices, and needs (Best, 1999) and can be described in terms of its ritual, social and artistic endeavour (Adshead, 1981; Shapiro, 1998). Wherever it is found, dance is bound by the society’s conventions, codes, and institutions that authorise particular meaning and therefore particular dances and by implication dancers (Morris, 1996). While research and much dance practice works to break down these barriers of authority and hierarchy, it remains true that in western societies dominant expectations of ‘the dancer’ have mostly been informed by images of western theatre dance and of the ‘professional dancer’, which as Brown (1999) commented in reference to body type, is “enforced by the gatekeepers of the industry…upright, lean, compact, youthful, able bodied, and feminine (male and female)” (p.13). Cooper Albright (1997) noted that dance is often seen as an elite art form, where dancers are virtuoso instruments for the choreographer’s thinking. Against this backdrop of western societies’ preoccupation with ballet, Morris (1996) advocated for acknowledgement of differing notions of dance and flexibility about what constitutes dance. She cited Norman Bryson’s conference address in California, 1992, “Opening the viewfinder to maximum and moving the definition of dance from ‘ballet’ to ‘socially structured human movement’ may be vertiginous as an opening move, but it has heuristic advantages in showing how local and limited our sense of dance tends to be” (p.2).

Longley (2003) proposed that the ‘professional dancer model’ of dance, typically characterised by technically trained and ‘ideal’ bodies, continues to dominate meanings of dance within education contexts in New Zealand. Australian secondary school students’ views of dance were reported by McSwain (1994) as being predominantly informed by pop culture entertainment, with dancers being skilled, dynamic and physically attractive, as seen on music videos on TV. The dance ‘product’ presents dominant societal values embodied in the dance and the dancer (Hanna, 1999). As Shapiro (1998) stated, “the body…comes to be seen as the
personal material on which inscriptions or particular discourses of the culture have been embedded" (p.15).

When teachers accept and teach towards limited and limiting gender and skill based constructions of dance, they surely cannot be surprised when they hear the boys’ and the girls’ comments “I can’t dance” or “I do not like dance”. These comments, as heard during this study, are at once both false and true. Given that we can all know dance (Sparshott, 1999), and as evidenced in this study, every child danced, these statements are false. However, considering the codified stereotypes of dance and exposure mainly to the products of dance rather than the processes, one can also see that the children’s comments are accurate and honest views of themselves as dancers. It is all the more important therefore to distinguish these received perceptions from the ideals of dance education.

For each teacher in this study, maximising children’s participation in learning was an ongoing aim. This ambition was maintained within the dance lessons in this study, and provided the context in which every teacher made a comment similar to Helene’s, “I’m a bit concerned about the boys (and dance)”. One particular conversation I had with a ten-year old boy (Sam) in Helene’s class presented an opinion that I believe captured many of the children’s and the majority of the boys’ relationships with dance. As we were walking to the hall, Sam offered to carry the cassette player, and asked:

Sam: Are you an expert dancer?
Ralph: No, I’m more an expert teacher of dance.
Sam: I don’t like dance.
Ralph: I don’t like some either, but I like lots.
Sam: I like boogying.

Sam’s statement “I don’t like dance...I like boogying” can be interpreted as meaning that he doesn’t relate to the dominant dance ‘products’ that he sees others (age group
peers and society) do, yet he enjoys his own dance, boogie. Throughout this study, I sensed his and other children’s simultaneous wariness and curiosity about participation in dance, an activity appealing or repelling, eliciting a very personal response.

Social-constructivist theory helps to make sense of children’s relationship to dance in terms of the dialogue that each individual has with social constructs of dance. Crotty (1998) and Schwandt (1994) emphasised that individuals, such as Sam above, have specific idiosyncratic experiences of dance and life that provide personal perspective as they engage with dance. Children filter social constructs of dance through their own ‘sieve’, constituted by personal experiences, age and gender, contexts which establish personal notions of what matters to them (Rubin, 1991). Sam’s own experiences of dance in social settings, such as at school or at home, informed his view of dance and established personal preferences and abilities. His construction of dance provided an individual perspective within an ongoing dialogue with ‘others’ constructs of dance, presented by his teacher, his family, and his peers, and via this research, myself, in the classroom.

Gaining the child’s perspective, as Bond and Stirson (2000/01) and Sansom (1999) advocated, raises awareness of ‘what matters’ for children and the social interaction that informs that meaning. Consciousness of what is individual and particular to Sam reveals personal values, preferences and nuances - ‘I like to boogie’, and also reveals social interactions - ‘are you an expert dancer?’ upon which Sam’s meanings are constructed - “I don’t like dance”. I focus on my exchange with Sam in order to stress that acknowledging the child’s perspective of dance is another crucial component to maintaining access to dance in the classroom for all children.

Helene’s concern about boys and dance was shared by all the teachers and was identified by them as one of the main barriers to teaching dance in their classrooms. Within the literature and in my experience, the issue of boys and dance pervades many teachers’ classrooms (Hanna, 1999; Risner, 2002). As Lloyd and West’s (1988)
study of dance in American elementary schools 1925-1935 noted, the perception that ‘boys do not dance’ has long informed practice in the classroom.

A recurring theme in the literature is the association of dance with femininity (Adair, 1992; Barbour, 2002; Brown, 1999; Hanna, 1988; Kraus et al. 1991; Lloyd and West, 1988) and is often proposed as explanation for why boys don’t dance. In support of this view Daly (1988) noted, “Movement itself has traditionally been consigned to the realm of the feminine, set in opposition to male mastery over language” (p. 43).

Implicit in many views of gender and identity is a binary reading of masculinity and femininity (Butler, 1990) where the difficulty for boys and girls arises from strict differentiation and representation of gender. Hierarchical and heterosexual characteristics dominant in constructions of masculinity imply power over others such as women and homosexuals (Burt, 1995; Desmond, 1999). Dualistic readings of gender define one by not being the other. Given, as noted above, that dance has strong associations with femininity, boys are distinguished as male by not being associated with feminine activity such as dance. Most girls on the other hand, comfortably associate their identity with dance and femininity.

However, a constructivist paradigm allows for many ways of being and knowing. Pluralism recognises the reality that our world is made up of diverse people and interests. Men participate in a diversity of dances, some of which are predominantly masculine expressions such as the haka here in New Zealand (Karetu, 1993) and hip-hop (break dance) both of which are powerful mediums for expression of their respective cultures (La Boskey, 2001) (Further discussion re the haka may be found on page 298). Social constructivism supports the interplay between the individual and their social context as they determine the kind of male they are and the kind of dancer. Risner (2002) noted that narrow constructions of masculinity and homophobic views of sexuality pervade western societies and our schools. Stinson (1998) and Shapiro’s (1998) cautions are clear; dance educators must be alert to the role of dance in challenging or supporting this status quo. The important issue for teachers is to not assume that boys do not dance, but to expect that all children, boys and girls, will
participate in diverse ways and show diverse interests that may be fostered and that may shift.

Analysing the lack of male participation in dance, Crawford (1994) suggested that those men that do dance, perhaps unknowingly, reinforce limited constructions of men dancing, and therefore limit access to dance, “The emphasis on dance as manly, athletic, demanding, and potentially dangerous parallels society’s general attitude that men must be physically strong, aggressive, defiant and dominant” (p. 41). In reference to a dance of the youth culture, hip hop (breaking), LaBoskey (2001) stated, “hip hop dance has provided the arena for the expression and affirmation of masculinity. Built into this artistry is competition and domination, sexuality and libido, and hero worship” (p.112). If male dancers are expected to fit this ‘norm’, issues of access and participation arise for men and particularly boys who are questioning, exploring or learning what it is to be male, and a participant in a dance lesson.

It remains a prevailing ideology informing dance in the classroom that heterosexual males don’t dance (Risner, 2002; Wild and Page, 2001) despite the extremely high profile of the iconic All Blacks and the haka in New Zealand. This was made most apparent within this study by a conversation that arose with three boys in Kate’s class. I had recently taught dance to this class and I knew they had done more dance with Kate. This conversation occurred at the end of a school day, while I was sitting outside Kate’s classroom, and was not prompted by myself (at least not knowingly) and was unexpected, even if not unfamiliar.

Student (Mark): Tom said you’re gay, are ya?
Ralph: Does it matter?
Student (William): You’re cool.
Mark: You’re not gay are you?
Student (Tom): You’re a good dancer.
Ralph: I’m not, who cares if I am?
Mark: You’re a good dancer.
Tom: Dance is cool.
Ralph: Did you do any dance today?
Mark: Nah.
Ralph: Do any yesterday?
Mark: Yeah.
Ralph: What was it like?
Mark and Tom: Cool, good. See ya.
Ralph: See ya.

My reading of this conversation (the like of which I have had many, many times in my career) is that while these boys enjoyed dance, they needed to check my credibility in respect to the dominant masculinity, and in so doing check their own credibility as boys dancing. These boys were comfortable and happy dancing, yet their personal comfort needed to be reconciled with their reading of societal meanings of male dancers. At play as these boys construct their meanings of dance and masculinity is the dialogue between the influential social constructions of masculinity, as referred to by Burt (1995) and Risner (2002), and the experience of the individual (Eisner, 1991; Crotty, 1998).

I believe the above conversation presents a powerful rationale for the inclusion of dance in the curriculum. Dance presents another way of knowing self and others, and if given non-threatening opportunities within the security of the classroom, boys may begin to broaden and even question limited constructions of male identity and behaviour. It also illustrated the important role teachers have in presenting dance as ‘something that we all do’, and affirming that there are many dancers and many ways of dancing the diversity of dances.

As the boys’ exchange with me reveals, personal constructions of dance are in ongoing relationship with social meanings of dance and who dances. While these three boys’ experience of dance was positive, the effecting of a sustained shift of gender biases in dance requires much more attention and research.

The children and the teachers in this study frequently spoke in terms that reflected cultural discourses that gender and sexualise the dancer, valuing specific ‘looks’ and
skills. It has to be noted that as the age of the children increased, the concerns of
gender and body did too. Bella commented that while she thought teachers considered
body and skill as barriers to teaching dance, she did not think her 6-8 year olds would
consider it an issue. Putting the issue of the child’s development aside, of interest to
me in this study is the prospect that the teachers may transfer their adult perceptions
onto the children and, by doing so, actually construct participation barriers for the
children. Did Helene’s concerns about boys create, or merely reflect a barrier to
teaching dance in her classroom?

While sectors of the dance profession appear to maintain restricted gender
constructions, other sectors actively challenge it. As Burt (1995) recognised, the post-
modern choreographers such as Trisha Brown and Meredith Monk in the 1970s, and
then the UK ‘New Dance’ movement in the 80s, subverted the masculine and
feminine paradigms and ideologies entrenched in ballet. Current New Zealand
choreographers/researchers, such as Douglas Wright, Carol Brown, and Karen
Barbour, aim to raise awareness of body and gender myths and constructions that
pervade public views of dance and bodies in general.

Dance plays a role in questioning constructions of gender (Barbour, 2002), as well as
a role in constructing gender (Hanna, 1999; Morris, 1996). Partner dances, for
example, teach more than steps; they also introduce sensitivity with regard to touching
and being with another’s body. Expectations in respect to manners, etiquette, courting,
and conversation are all a part of learning social dance. There are male dance steps
and there are female steps; the dancers are individuals in a partnership. In subtle and
not so subtle ways, diverse dances such as break dance, disco, haka, and the waltz
may teach, reinforce, and question gender identity for boys and girls. Gessie valued
the fact that boys and girls learned different roles in dance, as she thought dance
provided the opportunity to learn one’s own role and regard it as being important, yet
do so while accumulating appreciation for the partner’s role. Like Gessie, I value the
potential that dance has to educate about difference. It is important to remember that
difference is not limited to gender or sexuality. Dance has great potential to invite
different bodies, abilities, and cultures and to build new communities of understanding (Fensham, 1997).

Within the present study the teachers noticed and talked of the boys’ participation more than the girls’. In the main this was in regard to managing behaviour issues so as the whole class could gain maximum participation. Helene, Kate, and Paul commented on the impact that boys’ behaviour can have upon the class environment, and the difficulties they had in finding ways to help the boys relate to dance. Once the teachers were able to find a relationship between the boys and dance, the teachers noticed how well the boys participated. The keenness they showed for dance minimised behaviour problems and also had the effect of improving participation for all children.

This study revealed that socio-cultural norms of boys dancing informed the teachers’ attitudes to teaching dance. These norms presented barriers to teaching dance irrespective of the particular boys and girls in the classroom, and irrespective of the benefits and rationales articulated in the curriculum. The teachers assumed, expected and in part created classroom tension around boys and dance. It seemed paradoxical that if specific attention given to the boys to gain their participation was too obvious, then both the girls and the boys further questioned their participation. Similarly, if children were praised for their dance participation they would receive taunts from their peers. (This issue is discussed within the children – curriculum relationship.)

Some of the strategies for teaching the boys that the teachers and I discussed included: breaking activities down into small and achievable parts; using known playground games as ways to warm up the children and the dance space; appealing to boys’ sense of competition; accepting all movement as valid beginning points in the process of making a dance; varying the pace of the lesson and varying children’s focus; maximising ownership of ideas and movements; and limiting the introduction of music until they are familiar with the movement material.
The complexity of the impact of gender in the dance lesson is not to be underestimated. Meglin (1994) observed that within the school classroom there exists a “prestige system” (p.26) that promotes boys’ dance ideas and movements, and that monitors girls’ body types. Meglin (1994) stated, “The prestige system places feminised movement, body type, and projects in an inferior position on the scale of worth” (p.27). I am aware of my own interest in maximising children’s participation, and am keen to work against predominating narrow constructions of masculinity (Risner, 2002) and dance. I proactively take this view and I am aware of acknowledging girl’s achievement, and the need to redress issues of ‘body type’ and notions of acceptable movement and ideas for girls. If the girls dance and they are good at it, then let’s celebrate it irrespective of the boys’ participation. As Ferdun (1994) and Barbour (2002) argued, we should celebrate female achievement and ways of knowing in dance.

Joe’s comment “do I need my tutu” at the beginning of the study was indicative of his personal construction of meaning. Similarly, Ethel made a comment to Gessie during a shared dance activity to the effect that Gessie would be a better dancer than she would because Gessie “looked more like a dancer.” Ethel thus indicated her personal meaning of dance interconnected with a particular cultural and social meaning of dance related to body type (Wolff, 1997). Within this comment are several assumptions: firstly, participation in dance relies upon having a specific body type; secondly, participation in dance relies more on ‘looks’ than expression, movement, thinking and creativity (Arkin, 1994; Sluder, 1998). A girl with great ideas and diverse movement explorations, if not the ‘in vogue’ body type, risks being derided for her abilities. Yet, the girl who looks like a dancer (Cooper-Albright, 1997)(read ballerina) and can ‘lip sync’ Britney Spears pop dance routines, will be applauded as the ‘good dancer’ (McSwain, 1994), complying as she does with peer/society’s expectations of how a girl dancer looks (Adair, 1992; Burt, 1995). Such type casting is apparent for boys as well, and explicitly evidenced within several classrooms in this study.
The limited perception of the female dancing body and the social constraints imposed upon it were discussed by Arkin (1994), “Although the female body has been the preferred vehicle for dance expression in Western concert dance, it has served mainly as an icon of beauty and not as a source of creative energy. Dance is an art form and a profession that emphasises the iconographic quality of women’s anatomy” (p.36). Goldberg (1987/88) spoke of the limitations that the “ballerina icon” (p.25) places upon creativity and expression. Lola’s memory of her first dance experiences illustrated this issue:

I did get the idea from a really young age that I wasn’t a dancer, and I gained a stereotype view of what a dancer was, and it was the pink, the soft leotard or tutu and the little dainty ballet shoes and the hair, you know and floating. It wasn’t me.

As a young dancing adult Kate was adversely affected by a personal comment made by a sibling about ‘her look’ that negatively reinforced dominant constructions of the look of the female dancer; a comment that continued to impact upon her as a teacher of dance. Lola was alert to the social pressures that prescribed the dancer aesthetic, and actively worked against them, nonetheless she expressed a desire to dance with like minded/bodied teachers in order to explore dance in a secure learning environment that was free from society’s surveillance.

Boys and girls in all classrooms need to be seen as diverse individuals. I agree with Bond (1994) and Crawford (1994), who noted in regard to pedagogy and gender research, the important issue is to use “explicit teaching strategies that recognise and value individual learners and the particularity of life experience” (Bond, 1994, p. 32). I support Bond’s recognition of children and their individual dance, acknowledging diversity of children, thinking and expression.

Teachers and children alike, as evidenced by Lola and Sam, wanted to dance their own dance in a secure environment, a classroom where other learning occurred, a classroom where everyone was accepted, a classroom where dance was ‘not for experts’, but for people like themselves. Social constructions of bodies and dance pervade dance in the classroom. This study discovered relationships with dance
beyond the classroom that impacted upon the children and teachers in the classroom. Dance as constructed within social discourse presented incentives and disincentives for teachers and children to participate in dance. The study also indicated that socially powerful constructions of dance can be reconstructed in the classroom when the teacher is conscious of the relationships shaping those constructions in the classroom. The next section focuses upon how the teachers in this study addressed the issue of dancing ability in the relationship between dance and the curriculum.

5.7 Dance and Curriculum

"How am I going to teach dance? I can’t even dance myself" (Kate).

Over the course of the research process, each teacher enjoyed some degree of success teaching dance. Personal meanings of teaching dance were transformed from a preoccupation with learning specific dance steps towards a deeper engagement with the new dance curriculum, and an energising of the teachers’ educative role.

Gessie and Kate were convinced from the outset that they did not know ‘how to dance’. Hence, they did not possess ‘the steps’ to teach the children, even though Gessie loved dance and Kate expressed some comfort about teaching folk dance. These teachers knew dance from their experience of dance as product, as “performance discourse” (Hong, 2000, p.246) associated with mastering steps, techniques and expectations for replicating dance. They had had very little exposure to or experience of dance as process or “participatory discourse” (Hong, 2000, p.246), which places the emphasis upon participation, inclusion, diversity, ownership, and creativity. Not knowing the steps translated to not being able to teach dance. As Kate said, “How am I going to teach dance? I can’t even dance myself.” Given past
articulations and expectations of dance in curriculum, such as mastery oriented Physical education programmes (Williams, 1989), I can understand the teachers’ hesitations.

As most of the teachers in this study reflected, prior models for teaching dance were mostly found in the physical education curriculum contexts of their own education. Teachers’ own schooling and their memories of how they were taught has been found to be profoundly influential upon beginning teachers’ beliefs for teaching (Ethell, 1997). Fortin (1993) found these histories also affect professional teachers of dance, leading one to conclude it is likely the prevailing issue for several teachers in this study about ‘knowing the steps’ is a direct reflection of their own experience as learners.

As the research process progressed, the teachers saw that dance in the classroom was more than transmitting steps. Paul observed:

But that makes me wonder too now, about the meaning of dance. I mean if we put it back into the primary school perspective, here we are about to take some dance lessons with the children, where do we stop? Where does it start? When we’re doing a dance, how important is it that children not only learn to dance, but they learn why they dance?

And Ethel:

So for me now it’s more, it’s more a whole range of movements, whether they be large body or small body...like to me dance would have always been using your feet...but now I know it’s not.

Like Ethel, Paul questioned the expectations and assumptions of dance as it moved into the classroom context. He also drew attention to the distinction between dance as he may have been taught and dance within the current curriculum that he will have to teach. Both he and Ethel agreed that if dance were in the curriculum, then it would require more than dancing and knowing ‘steps’.
Kate had taught folk dance in previous years, and enjoyed it, but now perceived that dance in the curriculum was more than that. Kate was supportive of dance in the classroom, but as for teaching it herself, she admitted that she lacked experience, training, resources and knowledge. Furthermore, given the outcomes orientated curriculum driven by accountability, Kate did not feel confident to rely on her limited experience, nor to invite the children’s views into the classroom in order to ‘make’ a curriculum. Neither her past experience of dance, nor her considerable experience in teaching across the curriculum, provided her with the confidence to teach dance. For Kate, Ethel, and Paul, it appeared that the new curriculum structures and ‘knowledge’, articulated as outcomes and achievement objectives, had somehow disenfranchised them from their teaching role. All these teachers sensed dance was more than the performance of learned dances and if, as they suggested, dance is in fact more than dancing, then what is the body of knowledge that is to be taught? And how is it accessed? Referring to the new curriculum Lola noted:

During the consultation process most teachers said that the terminology was too specialist and therefore inaccessible to the primary school teacher. This clearly indicates the limited level of knowledge, skill, and experience in this learning area. The document does not build knowledge and experience. It only points out to teachers what they do not know, and therefore probably knocks confidence.

A resolution to the division between meanings of dance that originate out of the classroom, and teachers’ educational motivations for dance in the classroom and as found within the new curriculum, is suggested by Lola’s statement that dance was the barrier and dance education the enabler. Her comment exposes an ontological and epistemological distinction wherein dance out of the classroom has been largely valued as a product, an object to attain; alternatively dance in the classroom can be valued for the inherent learning processes engaged in when learning in, through and about dance. Constructivists refer to this epistemological distinction in terms of discovering knowledge (product) and creating knowledge (process) (Bauersfeld, 1995).
Within the new New Zealand dance curriculum, the emphasis is upon critical understanding and dance literacy (Hong, 2000), which in short provides for studying in, about and through dance. Teaching dance in today’s classroom questions the objectification of the body as only being a vehicle for dance technique, steps and abilities. I would argue that dance within the classroom may be characterised as entering into relationships with dance and with children, rather than attempting to ‘control’ dance and children.

As each teacher brought their own meaning of dance to the classroom context, they found that the curriculum presented educational meanings of dance. The teachers spoke of doing types of dance, such as folk, haka, ballroom, modern, ballet, while the curriculum introduced a raft of concepts such as “Developing Practical Knowledge in Dance”, “Developing Ideas in Dance”, “Communicating and Interpreting in Dance” and “Understanding Dance in Context” (Ministry of Education, 2000). Terms such as choreograph, perform, and appreciate dance were also introduced.

What became apparent was the need to reconcile the personal, societal and curricular meanings of dance within the classroom. This began to occur during the study as we discussed the above concepts and especially the dance elements of space, time, body, relationships and energy (Ministry of Education, 2000). These elements became my building blocks for dance and for helping the teachers come to understand the dance curriculum and dance in general. When the teachers and I discussed movement ideas in terms of these elements they began to see how they could value children’s and their own movement ideas. The dance elements also encouraged the teachers to ‘see’ (perceive) and ‘unpack’ (critique) dances that they had previously only regarded as things to copy.

Familiarity with the language and concepts of dance education allowed the teachers to build upon ‘what mattered’ for the children and develop sustained interest in and learning through dance. Allowing and encouraging children to integrate their life experience and prior knowledge with the teachers’ aims of the dance programme
acknowledged that the children were integral to the classroom and indeed, could be the teachers’ greatest resource.

The curriculum fulfilled a vital role in these classrooms by validating exploration and process work through dance, despite terms and concepts that were not initially fully understood by the teachers or the children. It was exciting to observe the children’s enthusiasm for and pride in making their own dance in partnership with the teacher. Lola made an insightful comment that once children get a taste for learning in collaboration with the teacher they find it difficult to return to being passive recipients of knowledge.

The orientation of these teachers’ dance programmes towards making dance involved initial “knowledge” (Bella) and “management” (Paul) problems but then, as was evident in these teachers’ dance lessons, the process orientation provided the children and teachers with successful and enjoyable dance experiences. Emphasising exploration rather than imitation shifted the children’s relationship with dance and in turn shifted teacher’s relationship with the children in the dance lesson. As Helene commented, “I love watching the children create, because they come up with things that I wouldn’t even think of.”

Management and content knowledge concerns are not unique to New Zealand teachers. Studying effective teaching of dance in the primary schools in the UK, Williams (1989) noted that recognition of the child’s relationship with dance as creator, performer and spectator alleviated some concerns by enabling children to understand and value dance not only as an art form but also as a way of knowing. Eight years later in the UK, Moore (1997) noted that while dance remains a compulsory area in Key Stages 1 and 2 in the Physical Education Curriculum, dance is increasingly “focused upon the expressive, creative and communication aspects of dance as an art form” (p.160). Moreover “there is now some emerging clarity as to the nature and purposes of dance as a subject” (p.160).
Dance in the classroom was supported in principle by the teachers in this study, but simultaneously caused enough personal and pedagogical concerns for them to let it happily slip down the classroom curriculum hierarchy. As a dance advocate, experienced teacher and witness to the educative power of dance, I argue that in supporting teachers to make the relationship between dance and the curriculum the terminology ‘dance education’ should be proactively used and included in teacher documentation concerning dance in order to support teachers to make connections between dance and the curriculum.

The term dance education aligns dance with educative practices and expectations that teachers can relate to, whereas the word dance conjured images and indeed stereotypes which presented barriers to these teachers, and it was not until they reconstructed their ideas of dance for the classroom context that they started to see possibilities for their participation, their teaching and the children’s participation. Dance education as a descriptive term reinforces the collaborative roles of the teacher, the children and the curriculum in the context of the classroom. As such it emphasises the processes inherent in learning to make, present and appraise dance. Lola put it succinctly, “Dance education...to think through movement, allows participation all the way through from idea to process to product.”

When the teachers asked the children to make a dance and explore movement, as each teacher did in this study, the children’s relationship with dance was re-directed from dancing to creating. The children were asked to focus upon making rather than learning dance, and their ideas and movement became the focus rather than the teacher’s. Such a shift altered the dynamics and issues in the classroom. The boys and the girls explored ideas and movements, as opposed to learning steps correctly and with the ‘right music’, something so many of the teachers worried about. But most importantly teachers had time to stand back and ‘see’ the children and their dance; they were able to challenge and adapt with the children and help in their refinement of thinking. What the teachers did was establish the classes’ shared meanings of dance that were accepting of the children’s movement rather than focusing only on ‘others’ stylised movement. Helene was aware of the need to make the dance classroom secure.
or ‘safe’, where risks or ‘unknowns’ were balanced with the ‘known’ (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Helene noticed that the children’s relationship with dance was shifting. This was typified by a conversation she recalled having with a boy in her class at the end of several lessons:

Well, Alexander (10 years old)... He’s a little bit hesitant with some of these things. Thinks he knows it all really. But he came up to me and said the other day ‘Oh Ms Helene, when we go to the hall today, can we do dance?’ I thought ‘oooh. Here is a boy who likes to play mini-ball and rugby and says can we do some dance’. Wow, that is a break through.

Alexander became a motivator to participate in dance. Fostering Sam’s, Alexander’s and others’ personal relationship with dance occurred through repeated invitations to contribute and risk their ideas and movements. One can expect that in a class of 28 children there will be 28 different relationships with dance based upon diverse experiences and contexts. While this may seem daunting for the teacher, it is more useful to regard such diversity as a resource with which to fashion new meanings of dance. Being alert to the diversity and ‘seeing’ the relationships is about ‘seeing’ the children and ‘seeing’ their dance risks. I believe that ‘seeing’ and managing children in their diversity is expertise that primary school teachers can and should have, and which is under-utilised in relation to teaching dance because they are so often blinkered by dominant constructions of dance.

This study has revealed a need to value and direct children’s dance ideas through curriculum and management structures so as they get the time and space to learn from each other. The child is not docile (Prawat and Floden, 1994), nor should children be expected to be. They are constantly adapting and interacting within social discourses offered by the curriculum, teachers, and each other. It requires time and space to create a learning environment in which diversity can exist, and finding this is a very real curriculum management issue.

Structuring and harnessing dance opportunities with acknowledgement of children’s diversity presented far greater issues for teachers than, “how do I motivate them?” (Helene) or “how do I control them” (Paul). In respect to Eisner’s (1998) concept of
connoisseurship, teachers energies were best directed towards ‘perceiving’ – looking at the children’s relationship with dance before attempting to motivate or control them. Classrooms become a meeting place for different meanings of dance when teachers allow for collaboration and discussion resulting in shared meanings of dance. Social meanings that are created by the children and the teacher are valuable and occur through a process of negotiation that requires articulating ideas, listening, problem solving, leading, compromising, and reasoning or, as Dewey (1938) succinctly stated, democracy. Inviting diversity and democracy into the dance classroom requires degrees of tolerance and compromise.

The pedagogical and pragmatic issues for teachers that stem from the discussion above relate to challenging the dominant constructions of dancers and dance, broadening the notion of what dance is in the classroom. There remains a need to continuously negotiate what dance means for the members of the classroom, so as to create a safe but educationally challenging environment, broadening the scope of dance from step-centric western theatre traditions, notably ballet and MTV dance sequences, to include the creative and cultural contributions of the classroom members. Teachers need to mix and match their teaching styles in accordance with the children and the dance being taught. To teach dance is more than knowing and translating the steps, it is more importantly, to provide space and time for children to create and present dance that expresses their thinking and their culture through their body.

The teachers’ (albeit tentative) use of the dance curriculum in this study enabled their children to participate in dance in the classroom as creators, performers and spectators, and thereby placed the children in a different relationship with dance. The new relationships had greater resonance with broader curriculum and educational goals, where diverse opportunities to learn, to know self and others was what teachers aspired for. In respect to the broader curriculum context, Bella commented, “Dance develops personal infrastructures that help the child in their creation of knowledge across the curriculum.” Bella had become alert to the place of dance in the curriculum, not only for dance specific knowledge, but also the development of
“infrastructures” or life long learning skills. In fostering children’s relationship with the dance curriculum, Bella noted flow-on benefits for children in respect to the wider curriculum. Lola, Kate, Gessie, Ethel, Helene, and Mick also saw dance as being beneficial for its ability to connect children with other curriculum areas. Helene used dance to reinforce and evaluate children’s understanding of mathematics; Ethel spoke of dance as the entry point for the study of other cultures; Mick and Paul agreed that they would in the future value dance as a way to help specific students connect to other curriculum areas in which they struggled.

Perhaps because of a lack of confidence in this subject area, teachers in this study repeatedly sought curriculum-planning advice. Purposeful aims and clear lesson structures provided frameworks for teachers to orientate children’s experience and energy. As within other curriculum areas, once the teachers established clear aims and structures, classroom interactions took on a life of their own, children found the experience meaningful, and teachers could collaborate as learners with the children. Even while collaborating with the children, the teacher’s role remains fundamental; directing, challenging, and melding children’s energies and ideas into educational experiences that advance children’s knowledge of themselves and others.

Children’s attitudes and relationship toward dance changed into positive enthusiasm for dance during this study. I posit that this change occurred in response to teachers offering process-oriented dance programmes that focused upon creating, sharing and discussing their dances. In these programmes, the children had the opportunity to negotiate a meaning of dance that was inclusive of their personal identity. Barriers were reduced as diversity and ideas were welcomed.

Both performative and participatory engagement with dance is necessary for children to develop their dance literacy (Hong, 2000) or discipline knowledge (Fortin, 1993). However, this study found that dance education with a focus upon participatory processes dovetailed with teachers’ larger rationales for education. Once the teachers found a way to develop shared classroom meanings of dance, the scope for dance and the learning opportunities were realised. This was in spite of immediate pedagogical
barriers that dwelled in stereotypes of gender, ability and behaviour. When the emphasis was placed upon the pedagogical practice of constructing knowledge, then dialogue and negotiation of meanings and actions became evident.

5.8 Children and Curriculum

“They got immersed in what they had to do. They got into it. I found that really good, there was pure thinking” (Paul).

This discussion offers further constructivist analysis of the relationship between children and the curriculum. The children’s social contexts provided by their peers, family and cultural milieu influenced how the children in this study related to dance in the classroom and the construction of the classroom’s culture. The childrens’ dialogue with the curriculum informed the teachers’ meanings of dance and their classroom practice, and vice versa. Following this is an exploration of the teachers’ perspective of the children’s relationship with the dance curriculum and their perceptions of the benefits to children from participation in dance education.

Mick initiated a dance programme that aimed to reinforce the ‘artistic’ role of dance in order to make connections to other artwork she had done with the children. She was aware that this would be challenging her dance knowledge and also the children’s perceptions of dance. Mick commenced teaching her programme by gaining the children’s perceptions of dance through a discussion about what, where, how, why, when and through whom the children knew dance. She also established a scrapbook in which dance images and stories in newspapers and magazines were recorded. In this way she successfully encouraged diverse relationships between children and dance to enter her classroom. In the first lesson Mick noted dominant relationships between dance and the children. The mention of ballet led to boys and girls snickering and laughing, though discussion of the haka and hip-hop or break dance met with a good
reception. Mick and I discussed these reactions, noting that these children were fairly ‘street wise’; that several children in the class were Maori; and, socio-economic realities within the community would constrain access to live performances in theatres. Mick was alert to and valued the children’s social and cultural context, and understood that these contexts influenced children’s meanings of dance. Mick was not surprised that most of her children’s experiences of dance would be dominated by what the children deemed to be ‘acceptable’ dances, such as haka and hip-hop, as these came from and were valued within the children’s social contexts as informed by peers and family.

The children’s acceptance of the haka may be understood in terms of its traditional relationship with Maori culture in New Zealand (Karetu, 1993). Moreover, contemporary relationships are kept alive through children’s repeated exposure to the haka on TV and at sporting events. Within Maori culture, men and women perform haka, yet as Karetu (1993) noted, “Haka is the generic name for all Maori dance. Today, haka is defined as the part of the Maori dance repertoire where the men are to the fore with the women lending vocal support in the rear” (p.24). The haka has a long association with men and women playing rugby (arguably New Zealand’s national sport), and the dance’s public profile is maintained and glorified by the All Blacks’ performance of a haka before every game. Moreover, the strong association between ‘iconic males’ such as the All Blacks, the haka, and success, is powerful imagery for young boys in New Zealand. One can see why there is a positive relationship between these children and the haka; interestingly though, not powerful enough to challenge other perceptions of dance in Mick’s, nor other classrooms in this study.

While I mention the cultural context of Maori culture here, Maori culture, issues, philosophies did not emerge as significantly informing most teachers’ meanings of dance in their classroom in this study. Lola, Gessie, Mick and Bella were culturally sensitive and informed, and included Maori language in most classroom activities. That Maori culture was not more prominent in our discussions could have been because I was not alert to the issues, or else the teachers had assimilated their awareness to such an extent that they felt discussion was unwarranted. Nevertheless,
Mick did speak briefly of Maori culture, and so it is touched on here. Further study of the relationship between children (especially boys), haka (dance) and the dance curriculum in New Zealand could help clarify the role of dance in New Zealand society and in New Zealand schools.

The boys and girls had an association with hip-hop dance through popular music culture and again boys were seen as the dominant participants (LaBoskey, 2001). It is a dance form born from the streets of lower socio-economic communities and these children readily identified with it. As Mick found, different dances and their contexts allowed for different relationships to be established with the children, contributing to a specific classroom culture (Bauersfeld, 1995). The children have contexts that shape them and so do the dances they share and value. Mick found that understanding these relationships helped her to connect and to establish a dialogue with the children, “You’ve got to make it interesting for the children.” The dialogue prompted questioning, reflection and debate, opening up interest in each other’s experience of dance. Such a process orientation is epistemologically foundational to constructivist perspectives. Freire (1972), Howe and Berv (2000), Musil (1999), Shapiro (1998), Stinson (1998) and Wertsch and Toma (1995), described this dialogue as characteristic of active learning where the learner is actively engaged in the learning process rather than being a passive recipient of the teacher’s knowledge. Mick found that the children showed an interest when she valued what they knew, validated their experience as interesting and invited questioning.

In this and many other discussions I am cognisant of attending to the boys. Teachers always spoke of the boys as a dominating classroom influence upon all children’s participation in dance. It was this context that made Gary’s participation in Mick and Paul’s dance classes so worthy of comment, and also reminded the teacher and myself that there are many institutional and social forces that shape classroom practices (Bauersfeld, 1995).

Gary was a boy who immediately took to the creative “free” dance that Mick initiated in the classroom. Given the earlier comments about haka and hip-hop connecting with
children, the decision to pursue creative ‘free’ dance may have been seen to be problematic. However, Mick’s rationale was to maintain the artistic focus in line with other curriculum activity and to try something new while she felt supported by my visits to the classroom. Both Mick and Paul were extremely surprised by Gary’s dance work. They noticed his concentration, creativity, enthusiasm, problem solving and explanations, all features that were less than evident in other class work. Gary discovered that he liked dance and that he achieved success, something eluding him in other curriculum areas. When I taught Mick and Paul’s class I was also taken by Gary’s exploration of movement, though I was alert to the monitoring gaze of Gary’s peers.

Gary, like the rest of the class, still required considerable direction in the dance lesson, and when Mick, Paul or I did not offer it fast enough, Gary and other children quickly resumed their attention-seeking antics, characteristic of how I saw them behave in other curriculum areas. Often Gary was clearly more absorbed in the dance activity than others. While some of the class were attentive to the teacher’s instructions, several ‘leading’ children turned their gaze towards the participating students, and indeed the teacher, and taunted them through subtle eye movements, facial expressions and demonstrative laughter. Suddenly, the creative ideas and the bodies holding them were ridiculed, quickly dampening most work and Gary’s work in particular. As a consequence, his behaviour swung to an extreme, which I interpreted as an attempt to regain his credibility within the peer group. The dominant ‘school sucks’ values of the peer group overrode everything that was being achieved in the dance lesson. Gary, acutely aware of the gaze of his peers and the crucial importance of remaining a part of the playground peer group, ridiculed the dance that he was so successfully achieving in the classroom.

In my teaching experience across the curriculum and across age groups, the monitoring effect of peers on the individual in any school activity is powerful, especially amongst early adolescents. From a constructivist perspective, the negotiation of the behaviour or thinking of the group and the individual is in constant interplay and demands the teacher’s dedicated alertness in order to foster and protect
the children’s learning. Gary and his peers above illustrated the point made by Richards (1995), that there are inherent difficulties in learning or accepting others’ perspectives, particularly when they are new.

Gary constructed his understanding of dance in collaboration with others in the classroom. In the first instance, Mick and Paul’s direction informed and supported the classroom’s culture, but then as Gary progressed faster than the norm, other social forces came into play in order to ‘check’ his participation. Social values that may or may not have anything to do with dance contextualise the classroom, requiring alert and sensitive management of every lesson. Classroom discourse is in constant flux where different and contrasting thinking and behaviour creates active (positive and negative) dialogue. As Bruner (1986) observed, “I have come increasingly to recognise that most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of culture” (p.127). Given the issues that sharing and dialogue invites into the classroom, it is nonetheless argued that active learning is what stimulates understanding, albeit requiring sensitive management and direction. The dance lesson can most superbly enable creativity, thinking, enjoyment, and social skills, yet can also quickly present a riot (literally) of confusion, stereotype, myths, jealousies, and fears if the dialogue is prompted but then not protected and managed by the teacher. This is what Dewey (1938) and Howe and Berv (2000) alluded to when they acknowledged the realities of teaching and the need for constructivist pedagogy that is flexible to the ongoing classroom interactions. It is even more important in a dance lesson where social discourse regarding dance is quite often shrouded in gender and physical stereotypes that may repress the individual’s exploration.

Taking a social constructivist perspective helps finetune understanding of how personal and social experiences interact and become internalised by the individual (Mishler, 1986; Schwandt, 1994). Like Gary above, individuals learn and develop through social encounters and through community influences, yet their uniqueness in respect to their lifetime experience, age, development, and gender means that the construction of meaning, not withstanding social discourse, always remains personal. In Mick and Paul’s classroom the group of children represented the norms of the
social community of which Gary was a member. As social constructivists have argued, the act of learning is socially situated, and in Gary’s case the effect was prohibitive on this occasion. Learning potential becomes as constrained as the individual in such cases.

Connected to this is an observation that it requires repeated purposeful and cumulative exposure to new perspectives in order for habits and behaviours of the group to change in a sustained manner. Even then, as Konold (1995) stated, “it is unlikely that we will be able to substantially change what happens in the classroom if everything beyond the classroom remains unchanged” (p.183).

Community, family and peer contexts inform personal constructions of meaning and children’s consequent participation. Beyond the socialising context of peers, exemplified by Gary’s case above, Lola, Gessie and Mick noted the socialising context of the parent.

Occasionally Lola purposefully taught dance at the end of the day (when parents entered the classroom prior to collecting children) in order to observe parents’ reactions to the children dancing, and also to introduce the parents to dance in the curriculum. Lola commented that on the whole parents seemed unsure about what value dance had in the curriculum, but were generally supportive. Lola’s curiosity for parents’ responses may be interpreted and analysed in terms of Lola establishing a dialogue with the wider social group that might enact small shifts in understanding and engender the support for dance that Lola sought. I understood Lola’s rationale more clearly after my experience in Gessie’s classroom. Gessie had just finished a dance session as the 3pm bell rang and a boy (6 years old) very excitedly ran to his father and started talking about dance and motoring to me. This father glared at me and steadfastly ignored his son’s enthusiasm and firmly asked him about the maths homework on the board. I interpreted this fleeting exchange in various ways. It may have indicated gendered expectations of education and dance, complicated exponentially by the addition of dance in the curriculum. It also hinted at an inherent
hierarchy of subject areas within the curriculum (Eisner, 1998a) that define the three R’s as being sacred.

For me, this 5-second moment spoke volumes about the task ahead for teachers. Implementing the dance curriculum will require that teachers be aware of diverse perceptions entering the classroom through children, their family and peers. This awareness is of vital importance when negotiating each classroom’s meanings of dance. Further to this, touching as it does sensitive physical and personal issues, teachers need to reflect on the need to communicate ‘classroom meanings’ beyond classrooms back to parents, siblings and grandparents, and by so doing establish a dialogue between the classroom and wider community. One can only expect changes and understanding to occur when people are invited into conversations, rather than locked out.

Mick was acutely aware of keeping children’s parents informed about what occurred in the classroom. This applied not only for dance, but also for other aspects of the curriculum. However, as the arts curriculum was new, Mick emphasised the need to educate parents as to what the arts were, and in particular what dance in the classroom entailed. In this regard Mick saw public performance of children’s dance work as a powerful means for educating parents and the wider community as to the nature and value of dance in the curriculum. Teachers such as Mick, who are alert to contextual influences upon children’s relationship to dance and the curriculum would benefit and be supported by research into parents’ views of dance in the curriculum, an area that remains relatively unexplored. As a parent myself, I can appreciate parental concerns about what occurs in the classroom. If I were not familiar with curriculum developments, I would want to know what was new, and what benefits my child could gain from dance, especially if they didn’t appear to have time to learn basic literacy skills.

When discussing their rationales for including dance in the curriculum, each teacher commented on aims and purposes of education in general. In short, the focus was on what the curriculum offered the children. The teachers made reference to providing
opportunities for learning, enjoying learning, and providing diverse means for learning in different curricula. Bella commented:

Education is about learning, stimulating, motivating, enjoying... in the variety of areas of curriculum and (essential life) skills such as communicating and socialising... So a lot of education is about taking risk, taking that one step further and being able to see – as an educator, being able to see the transition stages and being able to move children from one place to another onwards. ... But at some point in the day we would perhaps want children to have enjoyment. It depends on the type of learner ... or the activities.

The vehicle for realising society’s educational aims and values is mostly formalised and expressed publicly through curriculum documents. It is curriculum that has traditionally conceptualised what society values in education (Eisner, 1991) and as such may be regarded as a “cultural artefact” (Eisner, 1994, p.8; Gergen, 1995). Lola was astute to the ‘curriculum’ being more than a document, “as [more than] words on the page”, her definition included her personal beliefs and her relationship with the children. Lola defended the dance curriculum, stating that it included “good things”, but firmly argued that education does not equate with implementation of ‘the’ curriculum. Lola believed that “Knowing the document is a powerful thing, knowing what they contain, it's a very freeing thing, because you can start to look at them more critically and put them into your own philosophy, your own big picture.” Lola included herself, her beliefs, experience with dance, and knowledge of the children alongside her reading of the curriculum, and then made judgements about what dance in the classroom meant for that programme and each lesson. The meaning of dance in her classroom was made from a blend of personal dance experiences, educational practice and beliefs, children and curriculum. Lola’s teaching practice and understanding of curriculum illustrated interplay between what Connelly and Clandinin (2000) described as the ‘landscape’ – the social context, alongside the personal context of the teacher.

During this study I was privileged to witness in action the teachers’ and the children’s negotiated experiences of dance and curriculum, and I put these forward as evidence that dance curriculum is not determined by the curriculum documentation alone.
Neither art [dance] nor curriculum exist out there someplace in the world, independent of the people who do the making of them" (Willis and Schubert, 1991, p.11). The actual dance curriculum was demonstrably a product of the classroom.

Mick acknowledged and promoted the relationship of the class with the curriculum when she spoke of starting with children’s ideas. Kate was initially blinded by her perceived lack of dance ability and dance curriculum knowledge, but eventually invited a partnership with the children that consciously drew upon their dance experiences from outside the classroom. Kate and the children used their experiences and beliefs to build dance lessons that were then related to the curriculum. The notion that ‘the curriculum’ is inclusive of its enactment was articulated by May (1991), "Curriculum is the dynamic interaction of persons, artefacts, and ideas in a particular context over time, it is not a script" (p.143).

Given that teachers play an important role in determining what is taught and valued in the classroom, I was interested in what they thought was the value of teaching dance. Especially since several teachers indicated that the curriculum was 'crowded', resources loomed as an issue, and so many thought that teaching the boys would be problematic, it seemed that without their firm commitment, the place of dance in the children’s curriculum and education was fragile at best.

Teachers’ rationales for dance in the curriculum were consistently articulated in terms of what children gained from participating in dance in the classroom. Analysis of the teachers’ responses indicated that they valued dance in terms of having fun; exploring individuality through creative expression; developing personal confidence; exploring ideas, feelings and risks; developing thinking skills; learning physical vocabulary and being physically experimental; and, developing essential life skills, such as problem solving and communication. These rationales are listed here in rank order and account for the dominant rationales discussed by these teachers.
The above rationales as stated by these teachers concur with rationales within the
dance literature (Best, 1985; Brinson, 1991; Fiske, n.d.; Fox and Gardiner, 1997;
Hanna, 1999; Harrison, 1993; Musil, 1999; Smith-Autard, 1994; Stake et al. 1991;
Stinson, 1997; Williams, 1989), and with most of the rationale within The Arts in the
New Zealand Curriculum (2000). The teachers accounted for children’s relationship
with dance in the curriculum through these rationales. Moreover, the relationship
between dance and the curriculum in terms of its value for children’s learning was
most powerfully understood once the teachers themselves had participated in a
classroom dance activity, and also, when they stood back and watched the children
they knew participate in a dance lesson. Again, when the teachers made a personal
connection with dance situated in their classroom they were able to reconcile its value
in terms of curriculum time and aims. More specifically, all the teachers
acknowledged the power of learning by doing dance and this informed their self-
perception.

The repeated reference to ‘fun’ was illustrative of the teachers initial valuing of dance,
while their discovery that dance involved so much ‘thinking’ revealed the teachers’
emerging understanding of dance in the curriculum.

Consistent reference to dance as “fun” was notable in this study. The teachers might
have used the term fun as a generalisation for a raft of benefits only tacitly
understood, but over repeated conversations revealing deepening understanding. The
term fun continued to arise and was referred to by the teachers as an educational aim
and a strategy for eliciting participation and achievement. The teachers in this study
saw fun as valuable in terms of motivation and learning. I believe that this suggests
the accountability driven nature of current curriculum is out of step with schooling
and the teachers’ personal practice in the classroom, which is more related to human
relationships, personal experience and the immediate need to “survive” the day.
Helene commented that teaching was more than curriculum delivery; it included
accomplishment beyond the curriculum, and the means to get there included “fun”.

306
The teachers referred to fun as a positive outcome from children’s relationships with
the dance curriculum, and a reason for further engagement with it. I saw fun in these
classrooms communicated through laughter, play, pleasure, positiveness, engagement,
creativity, sharing, individuality and an overall happiness while doing the dance
activities. I observed that the word ‘fun’ and ‘fun happenings’ were closely linked to
producing, sharing and talking (processes) about dance. Teachers and children’s
comments, facial expressions, lightness of step, ready smiles and laughter, and
stimulated voices exhibited during and after participation in dance lessons told me
that fun and dance thinking went hand in hand. Every teacher, further to the smiles on
their faces, responded to their shared dance activity with a comment to the effect that
dance stimulated “thinking”. The teachers also made similar comments when they
observed me teaching their children. As Paul said, “They got immersed in what they
had to do. They got into it. I found that really good, there was pure thinking.”

Feelings such as pleasure and fun are not to be discounted nor disassociated from
learning, but rather might best be seen as integral to and motivational for learning. In
Fox and Gardiner’s (1997) study regarding the arts and academic achievement they
argued that children are motivated by the pleasure that arts achievement brings them
and may acquire discipline regarding how to learn, which may then be generalized
into other curricular areas. It is my experience that when the teacher shares in such
stimulation they share the excitement of learning and the thrill of teaching. As Lola
commented, fun, laughter, happiness and the associated noise are often perceived to
be evidence of misbehaviour, or at best “frill” curriculum activities. Yet, it was in
those seemingly unruly, creative and mostly private moments of the day that she saw
much of the children’s educational achievements and needs.

These teachers experienced fun and thinking for themselves during the shared dance
activity, and realised for themselves that dance includes intrinsic pleasures that are
motivational (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and that dance also
makes cognitive demands (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1998; McKechnie, 2002). The
thinking was most evident in teachers’ experimentation of movement, their
discussion, their reasoning for selection and manipulation of movement as they found
the form that expressed their ideas. Williams (1989) stated, “In terms of dance this becomes a twofold development of, on the one hand, the pleasure of indulging in expressive bodily activity for its own sake, and on the other, the use and knowledge of bodily activity to create a dance work of art” (p. 181). Reid (cited in Williams, 1989) suggested, “Experiential knowing...whether, in the enjoyment of given, or presented art or in the making of it - involves the whole person, actively feeling in body as well as mind...embodied mind” (p. 181).

Fun has been recognised by educationalists such as Stinson (1997) who suggested the arts curriculum focused heavily upon cognitive aspects of arts education, at the expense of aesthetic intrinsic enjoyment of the arts. Stinson acknowledged the value of the cognitive focus, but suggested that the curriculum was following “culture’s devaluing of sensory pleasure” (p. 64), and she defended dance and dancing for its own sake, and valued fun as being a worthwhile aspect of education. The arts curriculum is in danger of being ‘railroaded’ by society’s ongoing tendency to measure and evaluate teaching and education only in terms of children’s cognitive performance as indicated through the medium of pen and paper (Eisner, 1994), and against standardised ideas of what is achievable and valued. Best (1999), Eisner (1998), Goodman (1978) and Reid (1974) have all argued there are many ways of knowing the self and the world. However, traditions of curriculum knowledge and cognition have been linguistically bound to and hamstrung by their inability to concede to “cognitive pluralism” (Eisner, 1991, p. 39). Linguistic traditions, stemming from Plato’s conception of knowledge, Descartes mind/body dualism, and positivist researchers’ claims for ‘the’ truth, have created a dominant ontology and epistemology that leave a curriculum legacy that “expels the arts from cognition entirely” (Eisner, 1991, p. 38). Given the weight of this history, I acknowledge the work of Janet Adshead (1981), John Dewey (1934), Elliot Eisner (1998), Nelson Goodman (1978) and Rudolf Laban (1948) for their philosophical groundwork and conceptualisation that has paved the way for dance to stand in the curriculum alongside any other curriculum area.
Given the relatively rapid advances in curriculum development, evidenced by new dance curricula emerging around the world, there remains a legacy of an entrenched curriculum hierarchy that is dominated by the three R’s of reading, writing and arithmetic (Eisner, 1994). Every classroom in this present study was organised around these three curriculum areas. Ethel, for instance, was not going to shift her classroom programme away from mathematics, reading and writing. These areas dominated not only the use of time and resources but also pedagogical approaches and the interpretation of the curriculum in general. The text orientation of these curricula relies on the use of appropriate source books and resources. I felt that this contributed to expectations that other curriculum areas should have similar source books and texts. In this study, the less experienced teachers of dance certainly looked for and wanted dance texts and source books.

Political mandates demanding measurement of children’s learning performance and constant evaluation of teacher effectiveness are found around the world in a drive for ‘better’ education (Eisner, 1994; Jesson, 2000; Parry and O’Brien, 2000; Roberts, 1998). I agree with concerns that Stinson (1997) raised about the measurement agenda, and I ponder the question: will curriculum and cognitive accountability capture and value the richness of what dance offers, or will it instead restrain the teaching and learning of dance; ‘dumbing’ dance down to what is able to be measured rather than valuing dance for what it stimulates? Greene (1991), in reference to Mary Warnock’s writing on education and imagination, highlighted the importance of stimulating imagination and maintaining alertness to what could be, not just what is. To this end, Greene (1991) valued the arts in education for extending an invitation to the learners to think, feel and see for themselves, beyond the predictable.

There is a need for teachers to build children’s relationship with the dance curriculum. The new dance curriculum presents a new language. I purposefully borrow Dewey’s (1938), Eisner’s (1998), Goodman’s (1978) and Wittgenstein’s (1953) broad use of the term ‘language’, meaning shared symbol systems born out of action and used in daily practice. Teachers will not only need to become familiar with a new verbal vocabulary as used in the curriculum, but to also grapple with experiential
conceptions of dance movement vocabulary. As Bella suggested, teachers will need to “broaden their perspective of dance” if their teaching practice is to find harmony with their desire to value dance as an inclusive, expressive, communicative and cognitive symbol system that is of educational value for children. These skills are inherent to developing dance literacy (Ministry of Education, 2000), but may also develop wider changes in the general learning experience for children. I advocate for dance because it enables and enlivens learning for children, and expands their vocabulary for living.

5.9 Reflection Upon Methodology

The teachers and I were partners in the research process of this study, and as the study progressed we collaborated in actively interrogating and reconstructing meanings of dance in their classrooms. Constructivist theory provided frameworks and justification for this collaborative approach, and for data collection methods that provided rich narratives of the research experience.

The study involved talking, observing and dancing. As well as providing data, this process substantially deepened the teachers’ and my understanding of teaching dance in the primary school classroom. Gessie, Kate, Helene, Ethel, and Lola felt and explicitly stated that their involvement in this study provided them with professional development opportunities, which they foresaw would enable them to confidently teach dance programmes beyond participation in this research.

Credibility and trustworthiness of the data was sought by employing a research method that valued the participants as partners in the research process and that communicated the teachers’ experience with clarity (Stake, 1994). The interpretations of the data were based upon accurate representations of the dialogue between the teachers and myself, assured through two phases of member checking, triangulation of data, and peer debriefing. The teachers’ feedback confirmed the interpretations had a
‘ring of truth’. I suggest that an indication of this study’s trustworthiness was found in its emerging usefulness for the teachers in terms of professional development. Confirmations from the teachers that the study provided agency (Green, 2001) for them to more confidently teach dance in their classrooms provides some evidence of its relevance to their experience and, I suggest, the credibility of the method and findings of the study. The following section reflects on the data collection activities of: co-structured interviews – ‘talking’; classroom observations – ‘observing’; and, the shared dance activity – ‘dancing’.

5.9.1 Professional Development: Talking, Observing and Dancing

Professional development grew out of the three components of the study, i.e. the dialogue, the observed teaching exchanges and the shared dance. The teachers explicitly noted the side effect of professional development and I also observed shifts in their meanings of dance in the classroom over the course of the study. Kate, Gessie, and Ethel were initially amongst the most apprehensive about teaching dance, and so it was extremely gratifying to see them continue to teach dance beyond this study.

I asked every teacher what they had gained from this study in terms of personal professional development, and what activities they would distil and include in a teacher in-service session if they had to organise one in their school. Helene’s comment summed up most replies:

Making the dance was particularly valuable. Watching you was valuable, and just trying out some different things. Trying out some different ideas. Going through the process...talking and thinking – ‘where am I going to start? OK this might be a good starting point’, and trying that out and thinking ‘that was OK, but it was not quite what I was looking for’. I liked what you picked up when you came out and watched me, and me watching you, talking with you, just having these discussions has been great. The information that you have shown me, and then putting it all together (in the shared dance) last week, ourselves, was probably the real turning point.

Gessie reiterated the value of the personal interaction:
I feel that I’ve got a lot out of this (study). When you go to one of those (in-service programmes) you’ve got all of this knowledge but you don’t know where you fit it in. Here, I’ve told you exactly what I need, and I’ve got what I need. So now I know where I need to go. After this it makes me realise how important it is to almost have like one on one.

I asked Ethel what kind of help she considered would be useful for other teachers? Her initial comment I believe is pivotal to the issue of teachers teaching dance in their classroom, “You never know (what you need) until you’ve tried it”.

Reflection on the teacher’s experiences identified each of the three activities of talking, observing, and dancing with a ‘respected other’ in their own classroom as providing relevant and useful conditions for professional development. I recognise that the professional development outcome of the study was influenced by the teacher’s initial desire and motivation to participate in the study and to learn more about teaching dance in preparation for teaching the new dance curriculum. Musil et al. (2001) cited desire to learn as a motivating factor important to moving teachers towards revealing their teaching, “Desire facilitates openness and availability - a willingness to be vulnerable and to expose oneself to the scrutiny of observation” (p.10). Establishing a relationship of trust with the teachers is another component of this process that I believe is of real importance. The nature of our talking, observing and dancing in the present study is discussed in more detail in the sections below.

5.9.1.1 Talking

Talk is accessible and is the most common means for sharing understanding and experience (Silverman, 2000). Conversations (talking and listening) between the teachers and myself provided the initial means for learning about each other and establishing our relationship. Maximising opportunities to build understanding and trust through the establishment and maintenance of relationships between participants
is fundamental to the constructivist approach (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994; Crotty, 1998; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Heshusius (1995) described the importance of creating the dialogue between self and other by adopting a “participatory mode of consciousness” (p. 36) in which total attentiveness (theoretically) replaces ego concerns, where non-evaluative listening and interest provide the space wherein “true dialogue can occur and the generative condition for real listening, talking, and learning exist” (p.36). Musil et al. (2001) similarly commented on the importance of non-judgemental listening, talking and viewing in their reflective account of peers’ examination of teaching dance. I acknowledge this is easier said than done; nonetheless our conversations were crucial to establishing the dialogue necessary for the data to emerge.

The conversational nature of our co-structured interviews aimed to create a genuine, trusting and non-hierarchical dialogue, where my intent was to be sensitive to what teachers had to say, and where I endeavoured to respond to their talk rather than promote my concerns. I felt that professional development occurred as opportunities were created to have trusted and respectful conversations which focused upon the individual teachers and their classrooms. It was then that the teachers made specific enquiries about content knowledge and content pedagogy knowledge that were pertinent to themselves and their context. In this respect, the focus of the conversations upon the teachers kept in check my own assumptions and antecedent knowledge that could potentially have limited as much as informed perceptions (Eisner, 1998). Such a style of dialogue has implications for teacher professional development; it is all too easy to make assumptions about needs and the delivery of assistance, but honest attention to teachers’ practice and concerns may achieve better results.
5.9.1.2 Observing

The teachers in this study commented that observing and being observed by an experienced dance educator, while unnerving, provided valuable experiences and specific critical feedback and guidance. It was noted that these kinds of experiences were largely absent in the teachers’ pre-service education, and were especially powerful being situated in the teachers’ classrooms.

‘Seeing’ and then talking about the qualities of our conversations, teaching, and dancing drew on and honed our abilities to notice and reflect on the events and qualities observed. Within the educational context Eisner (1998) described the processes of observing qualities as “educational connoisseurship” and the articulation of perceptions as “educational criticism” (p.86). Eisner’s educational connoisseurship is directed towards raising awareness of schooling’s intent, structures, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. His conception of educational criticism operates through the dimensions of description, interpretation, evaluation and themes. Eisner’s processes were implicit within the research process and helped direct the teachers and my ‘seeing’.

The situated nature of the study in teachers’ practice and in their classroom context may have produced authentic research data but also, as Gessie stated, authentic professional development tailored to the individual (Musil et al. 2001). However, the design of this study was not purposefully aimed at altering teacher practice; it aimed to observe it in its classroom context. Teaching knowledge was not threatened by judgement of the teachers’ practice. I began with what Connelly and Clandinin (2000) described as “teacher knowledge...what knowledge is found in teacher practice” (pp.99-100). In this way I attempted to shift expertise away from theory and myself to their practice, thereby aiming to ‘authorise’ their perspective (Green, 2001). The focus on teachers’ meanings of teaching dance as practitioners (Schön, 1983) allowed them to tell me and show me what they did and knew from a place of security. This was particularly important given that, to a greater or lesser degree, each teacher had quickly indicated personal apprehensions. Situating the study in the teachers’ practice
and landscape (Connelly and Clandinin, 2000) promoted authenticity of information by allowing each teacher to emerge as an individual, so that any by-products of professional support could be tailored to their unique needs and classroom context.

The findings of this study confirm that teachers commence teaching with personal beliefs and preconceptions of teaching (Ethell, 1997), and further to this that personal experience of dance informed their beliefs and assumptions about teaching dance in the classroom. Each teacher became increasingly aware of their beliefs and preconceptions, and was more alert to the fact that these were shaped by and negotiated within diverse social contexts as they reflected upon their experiences. Discussion of our lifetime dance experiences initiated an articulation of personal beliefs about teaching dance that may otherwise have remained tacit (Schön, 1983). This study found that the teachers were alerted to their personal relationship with dance as teachers and learners and were sensitized to the interplay between themselves, the children and the curriculum when their beliefs and understanding of dance were made explicit.

Articulation of their beliefs brought into relief the teachers’ values and sharpened their critical analysis and differentiation of the values of others, such as the curriculum writers, the children, and myself. Reflection upon and discussion of each teacher’s personal practice and their classroom context initiated an authentic and meaningful exchange of views and extension of understanding.

5.9.1.3 Dancing

A special feature of this study’s design was the use of a dance education activity as a particular means for articulating and reflecting upon teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms. As each teacher in this study noted, this activity provided rich insights into teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms and elicited substantial professional development.
The body as well as the mind needs to be engaged to fully understand a kinaesthetic activity such as dance. Inclusion of dance in the method acknowledged the ontological position that knowledge is created, and the epistemological view that creation and communication of knowledge may occur through various forms, each allowing for specific ways of knowing (Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 1993, 1998; Goodman, 1978). Dance as a method for inquiry (Barbour, 2002; Brown, 1997; Green and Stinson, 1999; Longley, 2003; McKechnie, 1998; Van Dyke, 1998) and as a means for presenting inquiry (Brown, 1994; Stevens, Malloch and McKechnie, 2001) is increasingly validated and valued as academic discourse, although some academics may continue to raise their eyebrows regarding the place of dance in research methodology.

Reflections upon the shared dance attested to the value of this dance education activity in the present study. When Bella asked to practice our danced sequence time and again she revealed her valuing of mastery of movement for performance. When Helene asked if we could kick our legs in the same direction in unison, I noted her intrinsic aesthetic values and personal stylistic expectations of dance. When Paul silently explored movement and noticed that his explorations were different to Mick and mine yet were not criticised, he realised that he had firm expectations about dance in terms of right and wrong steps. These danced moments founded in authentic experience provided evidence for examination and the “purchase on reality” (Eisner, 1998, p.109) I sought as a researcher. Making several dances provided for structural corroboration and consensual validation (Eisner, 1998) through our discussion and reflection upon interpretations.

The shared dance activity provided the experience of thinking through movement and the opportunity to explore elusive and transitory meanings of dance, which may be held but not necessarily stated. The moving body needed to be experienced so that the teacher could connect with their embodied knowing and be present to the personal kinaesthetic experience. As Stinson (1995) commented, “symbols other than words are often closer to the immediate experience. In the case of dance, we represent internal kinaesthetic experience through movement symbols, using human bodies” (p.44). The use of our bodies and our movement ideas as a means for sharing and
creating meaning expresses core values held by this researcher and are a defining feature of this study of primary school teachers in New Zealand.

The everyday movement thinking (Brown, 1999) of the teachers was valued in this study, which was not seeking the embodied thinking of ‘trained dancers’. This act in itself challenged the teachers’ perceptions of dance and what it is to be a dancer. The shared dance encouraged and included our dance experiences and histories, allowing the teachers and me to “hear the voice of another, the subjective life behind the form of the text” (Barone, 1990, p.307). The physical dialogue - our danced text, provided further opportunities to find out about each other, to interpret meanings and share in meaning making. This activity was dependent on and extended the relationship of trust.

Helene commented that the benefit of this activity, this physical dialogue, was found in the creation of a shared ownership of the understanding of dance, knowing why and how it was the way it was. As Lola said, “Dance education [allows you] to think through movement, allows participation all the way from idea to process to product.” The creation of shared understanding rested on the negotiation and dialogue between individuals as we created a socially shared meaning of our dance. The ongoing construction process provided a felt experience that illustrated by contrast the teacher’s initial meanings of dance that were dominated by styles, steps, and stereotypes.

Several teachers identified ‘feeling dance as a learner’ as being critical to understanding. Bella noted the value of participating in a dance education activity for the insight gained into the nature and amount of work the teacher expects of the children:

It requires a need to focus on self and other’s (use of) space, timing, action and this requires concentration, and the concentration needs sharp listening, looking and feeling, you have to think quite quickly. You have to say, well what does the movement actually mean. There is no slovenliness here. It is not like ‘oh it could be that one or that one’...quickly making a movement, with
what springs to mind first. And that is what we are requiring of children, to do a lot.

Bella went on to describe the ‘wow’ factor of mastering dance and how this feeling became a motivator for participation:

So you are working it out and then you are sort of rehearsing it and the enjoyment is in actually getting it right, and going ‘ahhh, I can do it now’. ...Mastering it and getting it so that each time, each movement feels like that, those little moments that you get, as the whole thing came together. You can imagine how artists must really get that on stage, getting that feeling and doing it together and just ‘wow’.

“The best way to learn is to do it” was how Lola summed it up. Making their own dance gave teachers an appreciation of the kind of thinking and work that dance education requires of children; it made them alert to what it is that the child achieves when they make a sequence of movement. The feeling of ‘wow’ dance activities produced for teachers and children places dance in a powerful position in the classroom, allowing for teaching and learning that can be exciting, stimulating, and challenging, while also personal and social. As Bella stated, “Dance develops personal infrastructures that help the child in their creation of knowledge across the curriculum.” This kind of insight into the power and role of dance in the classroom arose out of the teacher’s participation in the dance activities. Not only did dancing provide insights into teachers’ meanings of dance, it gave teachers a feel for what dance in the classroom entails – a unique active combination of thinking and fun. Such an experience provided professional development and further motivation to teach dance to children.

5.9.2 Constructivist Reflections on the Method Implementation

In further articulating my role in the implementation of the method and the incidental professional development, it is useful to reflect on how I crafted the data collection sessions and lessons. Here I focus upon how I managed the research project process,
rather than what I facilitated. In doing so I return to my knowledge of teaching dance education and use this as a means for directing my reflections.

As described, the sequence of the data collection progressed from talking and observing to dancing. This sequential and cumulative progression supported teachers as they moved from comfort zones to increasingly new and unknown territories of knowledge. Constructivist pedagogy informed my implementation of the research methods and my teaching within the shared dance activity. Constructivist teachers believe that "learners actively construct their own understandings rather than passively absorb or copy their understandings of others" (Simon and Schifter, 1991, p.310). In this paradigm the teacher is mostly regarded as a facilitator of learning (Mayers and Britt, 1995). While I accept this, I also believe, like Dewey (1934) and Howe and Berv (2000), that teaching is more than facilitating learning. Teachers in the classroom are much more than the term facilitator implies. In the same way that thinking cannot be separated from the form through which the thinking is expressed (Eisner, 1998), the teacher's knowledge cannot be separated from their teaching or the classroom learning environment where their knowledge is expressed (nor the researcher from their interpretations). To regard a choreographer only as the facilitator of a piece of art would be to misunderstand the integral and complex role that the choreographer fulfils. Teaching is more than facilitation, which infers using and directing knowledge, values and skills already held by the children. Teaching is a creative and performative craft where the teacher both purposefully and spontaneously creates learning and teaching. Teachers do more than facilitate, they construct education through relationships with children, curriculum and disciplines of knowledge.

As I reflect on my teaching practice within this study, I am continually drawn to the constructivist view that knowledge is created within the classroom. In crafting the partnerships with the teachers and children in this study, I firstly focused on creating an appropriate social and learning 'atmosphere' in the classroom. Helene and I spoke about 'warming up the space', and 'changing the desk bound, quiet, independent learning environment', into the socially dynamic learning environment that dance
requires. Listening to and observing voices and movements gave me cues for how to proceed in each session with the teachers and the children. Feeling and sensing the mood as arms are slumped, bags dumped, and smiles appear. Creating the mood of the sessions commenced with manoeuvring with the ‘current’ and finding the right opportunity to set a direction and build the learning climate I sought. Often I found humour, games and simple movements warmed up the social space of the classroom and the moving bodies in that space.

Problem solving was the foundational learning activity that drove my dance sessions. As children explored ideas in order to solve tasks they were presenting ideas and refining them in negotiation with self and others. Bella commented upon dance’s very tangible ability to engage children in personal and social negotiation, especially when dance requires a bodily commitment to the final form of that dialogue. The action-reflection dialogue encouraged children to explore problems and develop answers that need be neither right nor wrong, but which formed solutions that are reasoned, robust and personally relevant.

Stimulating children’s talk and movement interaction required the children to feel connected to the tasks. As a teacher, I focus on the children’s ideas and needs and use them to go where I want to go. As Lola and I created the ‘ask, use, pattern and reflect’ sequence we realised how vital it was to work with the children as partners and gently direct them to the long-term aims. The stimulation of talk and ongoing action was illustrated expertly in Kate’s lesson where she used existing ‘buzz’ groups of 3-4 children to structure the dance lesson. As I pointed out to Kate, small groups as well as large group discussion structures were strategies that she was familiar with. The provision of such structures can be enough to get the class rolling so that children’s ideas may then take on a life of their own.

Implicit in my teaching was the development of “classroom curricula” (Mayers and Britt, 1995, p. 66) that were constituted by my experience, my conception of the children’s needs and experience and the existing curriculum. I worked within the general curriculum guidelines and shaped the dance programme and lessons to suit the
children and me. I do not subscribe to the ‘top-down’ curriculum hierarchy. I suggest that what is required is for teachers to take responsibility for interpreting the curriculum, and regarding it more as a resource to reference rather than a recipe to follow. As Lola stated, knowing the curriculum was powerful and freeing, but teaching to it was restricting and disempowering.

I do not advocate for ignoring curriculum. As found in this study, the dance curriculum broadened perceptions of dance for the teachers and introduced terms and concepts that once understood made relationships between dance and children more tangible. Throughout my time with the teachers and their classes I used terms such as ‘space, time, and energy’ as found in the curriculum. I also referred to choreographic concepts and structures used in the curriculum and in the dance profession from which they are drawn. In doing this I was demonstrating use of the terminology and asking the teachers to make specific links between their practice, the curriculum and dance within and beyond the classroom. Integrating theory and practice required making sense of things by experiencing and doing them, and coming to terms with traditions of thinking, practice and terminology unique to the discipline.

I believe it was strategically vital to this study that the teachers were comfortable enough to accept that they cannot be expected to know everything, and were able to reach a point where they were confident enough to recognise what they did know as relevant and valid. From this starting point, the teachers commenced teaching dance by utilising structures and strategies they were comfortable with from across the curriculum and then invited the children into a process of creating shared meanings that valued their experience. As some of the teachers found, this was difficult, as it required them to release control of the knowledge authority in the classroom and become a co-learner. The teachers needed to remain the expert in directing learning and providing structures for enabling participation, yet accept that the children’s ideas and solutions to problems were as valid as their own. As Fox and Gardiner (1997) found, this is not only beneficial for the children, “the most powerful environment for learning may well be one that involves an environment/culture where the teachers themselves are also developing their own insight: learning, sharing and strategising”
Newman (1990) supported the need for teachers to challenge and develop personal insights and regard themselves as learners. She observed, "teaching is a learning enterprise" (p.4), and in the dance classroom this involves teachers becoming learners working alongside children as they explore movement problems. The teacher becomes the connoisseur when the relationships between themselves, the children, the curriculum and dance are recognised and crafted in order to maximise learning.

As a teacher I acknowledge that this approach, influenced by constructivist pedagogy, can be demanding, even daunting. Yet nonetheless, I have found consistent success when introducing learning experiences that extend teachers’ and children’s expectations of what dance education and education in general may be. At the end of our last session together Gessie suggested, with a hand gesture, that education was equivalent to holding a small ball, however, in view of the dance experiences gained in this study, she now saw education as much more and extended her arms as if to hold a beach ball.
Chapter Six

Conclusion

"A narrowly defined concept of dance can be the greatest barrier to teaching dance, while dance education is the enabler" (Lola).

The present research examined nine primary school teachers’ meanings of dance in their classroom, with a view to gaining a better understanding of what may create barriers and opportunities for teaching dance. This chapter provides a summary of the research findings, and examines the contribution this research may offer to dance education in New Zealand primary school classrooms. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further study.

6.1 Key Findings

The findings of this study are summed up by Lola’s comment, “A narrowly defined concept of dance can be the greatest barrier to teaching dance, while dance education is the enabler.” This comment succinctly illustrated the paradox that dance itself appears to create both barriers and opportunities for dance in the classroom. Most importantly, this comment revealed the word ‘education’ as a distinguishing context and action that prompted these teachers to reflect upon their lifetime experience of dance and make meaning of their classroom practice. Teachers’ meanings of dance in the classroom were predominantly informed by performative assumptions of dance, and yet as the study progressed, the teachers’ meanings were increasingly participatory. Their educative roles emerged as they included and negotiated their own, the children’s and curricular expectations of dance in the classroom.
I believe that the study demonstrated that meanings of dance can emerge from the classroom rather than be imposed or directed by external expectations and assumptions. When one accepts that the meaning of dance dwells in negotiated classroom relationships and not singularly in the curriculum, the children, the teacher, or the dance, the locus of meaning is shifted from outside the classroom to inside the classroom. This shift reinforces the vital role of the teacher in creating learning and teaching situations where meanings and subsequent barriers and opportunities are made.

The articulation of the findings in this thesis through six relationships: Teachers and Children; Teachers and Dance; Teachers and Curriculum; Children and Dance; Children and Curriculum; and, Dance and Curriculum drew attention to issues that may create barriers and/or possibilities within the classroom. Initially, teachers spoke of dance in the classroom as being variously: pedagogically threatening; inaccessible and mysterious for ‘non-dancers’; the mastery of skills to perform; gendered and problematic for boys; and/or dominated by curriculum ideology and terminology. As the study progressed, the teachers increasingly saw dance in respect to: processes of exploration; communication; expression; diversity of ideas, bodies, and movement; thinking; integration across curriculum; fun; and inclusive of boys and girls. In this way the meanings of dance changed as the teachers and I reflected upon practice and took the epistemological stance of creating a shared understanding inclusive of our own, the children’s, and the curriculum’s expectations of dance. Through the process of talking, observing, and dancing, we called into question dominant stereotypes as we tested and adjusted assumptions about what is dance, who is a dancer, and dancing ability.

It is the contention of this thesis that participatory meanings of dance emerging from classrooms will differ from those imposed by dominant performative assumptions borrowed from professional dance discourse, and may prove to be more educationally sound. Assumptions arising from professional western theatre dance discourse are exemplified by Joe’s quip “So, do I need my tutu?” – his first response to my
suggestion that we share ideas through creating dance. It is a telling, if flippant, quip that I have heard in many different contexts, both here and overseas.

In order to play their role in defining dance’s educative possibilities, teachers need to take responsibility for their professional ability as classroom teachers to create dialogue and understanding, justified in terms of their responsibilities to the children and to the curriculum. The teacher’s craft is not a skill or a product that they will be given, it is a process that they can take responsibility for and construct within the classroom context with the children and the curriculum. When these relationships are negotiated time and again, as the curriculum for dance is enacted in schools, the meanings of dance will grow. Dance in the classroom is but one of many dance discourses; it does not exist in a vacuum. I appeal to teachers to grasp their role in the construction of dance’s meaning in their classroom and in our society.

6.2 Implications

This study opens a window for curriculum planners and in-service providers into the dance classroom in New Zealand. It presents a glimpse of teachers’ practice, their issues, their struggles, and also their triumphs. It offers a view of what some teachers want from dance in the curriculum and an indication of how that may be provided. The research process confirmed for me that meanings of dance in the classroom can and should emerge from classrooms. I suggest that this has fundamental implications for dance education in New Zealand. These implications are noted in respect to teacher in-service support, pre-service training, curriculum design and not least, the teachers’ critical reflection on their classroom.
6.2.1 Teacher Support

Dance education advocates like myself aim for sustained implementation of dance education in schools whereby every classroom teacher takes responsibility for teaching dance. Teachers’ professional development towards this aim may be most effective when it acknowledges interrelationships between teachers, children, dance and curriculum, interrelationships that need to be articulated and negotiated in the context of each teacher’s classroom.

When teachers see themselves as being active in creating meanings of dance in the classroom, then they have space to negotiate the barriers and the opportunities that arise. Lack of confidence and concerns about teaching dance were transformed when the teachers were invited into a process of sharing and creating meanings, wherein they were seen as active partners in their own professional development.

Several teachers in the study indicated that they learned ‘to see and then look beyond’ their own assumptions by being open to classroom interactions that generated learning opportunities and surprises. Sensitivity to classroom relationships allowed the teacher, children and curriculum to emerge as valued coexisting resources in the classroom. This shifted the emphasis from teachers teaching dance as if it were a fixed entity bound in unchanging, unquestioned traditions, to teachers generating interaction and exploring what dance is and could be for those children. Several implications for teachers’ professional development arise from this finding, for example, the need to attend to strategies and processes for initiating interaction, inviting discussion of previous experience (teachers’ and children’s), and examining the dance curriculum for accessible and personally relevant starting points. The response of the teachers to the research process convinced me that focusing on how teachers initiate exploration, rather than teaching towards content-driven outcomes, will provide the most effective support and give a felt insight into the ‘wow’, ‘thinking’, and ‘fun’ that motivates and stimulates children’s participation in dance.
This evidence leads me to suggest that professional development could be tailored to meet teachers in their own classrooms, rather than driven by national models imposing time restraints and predetermined outputs upon professional development deliverers. In broad terms, the emphasis should be upon quality not quantity. This may necessitate the provision of professional development for fewer teachers given limited realistic funding. I am inclined to believe that high quality personalised professional development for key teachers will more successfully sustain the ongoing implementation of the dance curriculum than standardised professional development for all teachers.

The teachers in this study indicated they learned a lot from personally participating in dance education activities; discussing their experiences of the activities; and observing dance education taught by an experienced dance educator. Despite the teachers initially asking to see published dance resources, they mostly did not continue to refer to them, seek to discuss them or indicate that they used such materials to teach themselves or their children. I suggest that monies directed to resource development provide short-term assistance but do not assist sustainable implementation of dance education in the classroom. Resources can, in principle, provide dance ideas, dance images, dance recipes, dance standards and teaching strategies. In the short term, these resources temporarily allow the teacher to hurdle some of the issues that cause barriers for teaching dance, when what might be more sustainable is personal insight into what causes these barriers. What emerged from this study is that teachers are freed up when they gain an understanding of their personal causes of anxiety or enthusiasm, and benefit most effectively from a personalised professional development action plan.

Resources can unwittingly help to maintain the tyranny of ‘given’ meanings of dance that are to be read or discovered by the teacher. The present study argues that classroom meanings of dance can be created on site and reflect meanings brought to it by the teacher, the children and the curriculum. I acknowledge that resources such as video kits, visiting performing artists, ‘how to’ strategy books etc, stimulate and play a part in supporting teachers, yet I argue in light of my findings that these resources.
need to be contextualised in the activity of the classroom much more than seems to be the current practice. When resources are discussed and related to the classroom context, the teachers and children can add that experience to their emerging construction of meaning. I propose that in this manner dance education might be taught in a more sustained manner and be fully valued and utilised as a learning experience that is both true to dance as an expression of people’s ideas, cultures and creativity, and true to education in respect to offering children the best opportunity possible to learn about themselves and the world.

6.2.2 Pre-service Education

Teachers and children bring into classrooms diverse meanings of dance that require inclusion, critique and direction. Acknowledgement of these requires initial awareness that diversity exists and that it is a resource to value. The key process and context that takes the fore is ‘education’, and this must consciously be differentiated from the process of ‘training’ that seems to predominate in dance experiences for many teachers. Epistemologically, the focus is upon creating knowledge as distinguished from being given knowledge. The process of creating knowledge is inclusive of different dance experiences, different bodies, different concerns and ambitions. It is also inclusive of curriculum concepts and terms. Constructivist pedagogy flexes with classroom pragmatics and is valued for maximising participation and learning.

Pre-service teachers should be encouraged to critically examine their own meanings of dance and to be cognisant of the fact that they are not the only holder of meaning in the classroom. Teachers need to be allowed the space to acknowledge and explore their own prior experiences of dance, their fears, concerns and successes. It is with and from these that we teach, we begin, and in beginning we learn what we know and what we need to know next. Reflecting on personal experiences and beliefs about dance may help pre-service teachers to take the initial steps towards teaching dance.
Within pre-service education, curriculum terms and concepts need to be translated from the documents into personal and felt understanding that does not subscribe to a checklist mentality of skills to teach or outcomes to predict. Terms and concepts need to be introduced as structures that with ongoing use and familiarity assist increasingly refined expression of thinking and meaning. As the teachers in this study discerned, the emphasis is upon developing opportunities for individuals to think in, through and about dance, rather than learning to dance.

This thesis argues that teachers' meanings of dance emerge out of negotiated relationships between children, dance and curriculum in each classroom. Teacher education that focuses upon these relationships and subsequent issues might develop teachers who can create dance programmes and sustain them. The impulse of these teachers would be to look to the classroom relationships as their first resource, finding there a recognisable context from which to seek further knowledge and new dance experience with the children.

6.2.3 Curriculum Development

I advocate for the term 'dance education' to be used in curriculum in order to emphasise process orientations and educational values of inclusivity and community. Curricula distil and communicate community expectations of education, being based upon traditions and practices within disciplines of knowledge that are moulded to fit systemic/political needs. However, these documents do not themselves teach, fuel understanding, inspire change, nor represent society's democratic needs. Teachers bring the curriculum to life, to the extent that some say that individual teachers are the curriculum.

The relationship between the teacher and the curriculum should be symbiotic, wherein the teacher and the curriculum 'dance' with each other in fresh and creative ways. This study revealed that teachers and the curriculum do not automatically link in this
way. As Joe, Ethel, Lola, and Helene commented, the ideology of outcomes education tends to disempower and relegate teachers to a position of delivering the curriculum in a technical way, focussing on prescribed end products known as outcomes. These teachers were frustrated by not being trusted to include their own creative ideas and those of the children in the classroom curriculum. Furthermore, the dance curriculum for most of the teachers used terms and concepts about which they had little understanding. In combination, these factors tended to ‘bully’ the teacher, and thereby teachers and curriculum were too often set in opposition rather than in partnership.

Curriculum development and implementation necessitates partnerships with teachers. In the same way that teachers must be aware of who and what is in the classroom, so must the curriculum make provision for diversity among teachers and children. In particular, the dance curriculum of the future could more explicitly and respectfully relate to teachers lack of expertise and lack of confidence to ‘start’, and confront common assumptions in relation to teaching dance.

6.2.4 Teachers’ Critical Reflection of Classroom Relationships

Articulation of the six relationships in this study, illustrated below in Figure 5., provided me with an analytical tool that enabled reflection upon the complexity of meanings interacting within the classrooms. The framework presents alternative pathways for approaching issues that are often seen as barriers to teaching dance.
It is teachers who craft dance in the classroom; therefore, in this study the teacher is purposefully placed in the middle of the framework. It is their responsibility to be alert to the relationships named here, to value these relationships, to manipulate and reconcile the relationships in symphony with and in response to the children, curriculum and dance. I believe that this framework, wherein the teachers’ practice in real situations is given some authority, helped me, and may help other teachers see and speak of dance in the classroom.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Ongoing research may further reveal the practices and complexities of teaching dance in the primary school classroom. In the present study, the articulation of the participating teachers’ meanings of dance in their classrooms through six relationships enabled analysis of emergent issues. Each relationship warrants further research, as does the value of using such a relationship framework.

Specific issues arose in each relationship discussion that presented scope for further research. For example, there is much to learn about what impacts upon boys’ and
girls' participation in dance, and the role dance can play in motivating participation and learning across the curriculum. The role of dance in assisting children, particularly boys who are identified as 'low achievers' or 'behaviour problems' was noted in this study and begs further research. Questions regarding girls' participation also call for further study. For example, how can dance be utilised to challenge stereotypes of female body types? It remains that the teacher is constantly balancing the needs and interests of diverse students, how this is done in the dance classroom requires ongoing attention.

The current study focused upon teachers in their classroom. The interaction between classrooms, the school, the education system and the community presented a raft of contexts and tensions that impacted upon teachers. To gain further understanding of dance in the classroom, research might focus on one classroom and examine contextualising views of children, parents, grandparents, school staff, Board of Trustees, national and regional curriculum advisors, as well as the teacher.

The teachers' ongoing practice and following comments revealed that they completed this study with greater confidence to teach dance in their classrooms. Future research could help to clarify in more detail what initiated the shift in confidence, what secured their confidence, and what presents ongoing threats to their confidence to teach dance. In sum, I advocate for more stories from the classroom that tell of teaching dance.

6.4 Epilogue

As the study neared completion I received feedback/letters from the teachers that summed up their interpretations of the narrative transcripts and the ongoing barriers and opportunities for teaching dance in their classroom. I was gratified to read that the issues and thoughts raised by the teachers at this stage in our dialogue supported my interpretations discussed within the six relationships.
Primary school teachers in New Zealand have been charged with the responsibility of teaching dance in their classrooms. It is hoped that the stories here may provide them with some guidance and support. Teachers will take children on journeys. When the teacher can keep both their own and the children's contexts, needs, and interests in the foreground, and create shared understandings of dance in the classroom, then rich opportunities for education will be presented.

In honouring the teacher's voice as an integral part of this study's methodology, the study closes with excerpts from Helene's letter, as it exemplifies the issues raised but most importantly illustrates the ownership the teachers had of the study.

Dear Ralph

Great to hear from you, I had been wondering where you were with your study. I have been teaching (at a new school)... When I arrived the school was already in negotiation with a woman who was keen to take a series of dance lessons. She proceeded to take a series of 8 lessons, which culminated in a whole school performance. It was interesting working alongside her and seeing yet another variation on teaching dance.

She quickly built up a close, trusting relationship with the children through the use of some fun activities incorporating dance elements. She also used more structured dance exercises that she later used in the performance. (Helene went on to talk of the lessons in detail). Our transcript made for very interesting reading. It was enlightening for me to see the change in my attitude and thinking from the beginning to the end of the process. As asked I have written a brief summary of the main points from my perspective and attempted to note some present barriers and supports to teaching dance.

I thought, from reading and re-reading the transcript, the ...essence of the whole thing is summed up in the quote on page 217: '...the teacher and the children to construct learning and teaching partnerships based upon shared understanding and
common goals.' This point was highlighted further for me while going through my personal dance making process (shared dance). Because, the dance was created by us, I felt an emotional connection, knowing why and how it was the way it was (p.219). This gave me a feeling of ownership and meaning which made the whole experience so worthwhile. For children to experience this same emotional connection that I believe is vital to the success of dance education, they must be 'approached... as partners in the dance making process' (p.220). The teacher's role is to bring: Familiarity with the elements; enthusiasm to inspire and motivate children; and, an accepting environment where children feel comfortable to experiment and trust. These ideas are covered on page 218.

It was enlightening for me to read 'Helene had become the resource she had been searching for', which I guess is what happened. Many of the original barriers I spoke of no longer exist thanks to the work we did...I was interested in your comments on page 221 re- the 'power of doing dance...' and the inference that you originally gathered from that. This was not what I meant and I was pleased to read in the final paragraph on that page that you understood more clearly what I meant: 'the teacher experiencing an aspect of dance education so they are comfortable getting down with the children and doing the dance with them'. Your comments about stereotyping (p.222) were also very valid and I enjoyed your words: 'It is a matter of teachers looking beyond their own ideas of dance, and who the dancer might be and being open to what could occur in the classroom.' And of course this, and much of what we have discussed above applies to all areas of education, no matter what the curriculum focus.

I hope this is helpful Ralph, I find it hard condensing my thoughts into such a short piece...Once again – thanks so much for allowing me to be part of this study. Looking forward to the finished work.

Regards Helene
References


Geeves, T. (1994). *The difference between training and taming the dancer.* In J. Chenery and J. Green (Eds.), The Art of Teaching Dance: Conference papers (pp. 4-13). Brisbane: Australian Dance Council (Qld).


343


346


353


Appendices
APPLICATION TO THE ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH OR TEACHING PROPOSAL INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Notes: PLEASE read carefully the important notes on the last page of this form. Failure to do so may delay the consideration of your application.

1. Title of Project
   Teaching Dance Education: The teachers' perspectives

2. Brief Description of the Purpose of the Project (in lay terminology and for the guidance of the Ethics Committee)
   This research examines some primary school teachers' understandings of dance education in the school curriculum. The focus is on the meanings dance education has for teachers and how these meanings influence the design and implementation of a dance programme in the primary school. Analysis and theorising of meanings assigned to dance education may have implications for curriculum design, content of teacher inservice programmes, and the nature of supporting source books and resource kits.

3. Name of applicant (must be a University staff member)
   Buck R. M. Mr

4. Department: School of Education or School of Physical Education

5. Other investigators or instructors (please specify whether staff or students)
   N/A

6. Projected Start Date of Project: February, 2000 (on ethical approval)
   Projected End Date of Project: 1 November, 2000
Application Form for ethical consideration of research and teaching proposals involving human participants

7. **Funding of Project:** Is the project to be funded in any way from sources external to the University of Otago?
   NO

8. **Type of Project** (e.g. staff research, PhD research, class teaching project, multi-centre trial)
   PhD Research

9. **Aim and Description of Project** (Clearly specify aims. If there is a hypothesis it must be testable. Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria. Identify the end-point of the project)
   This research aims to analyse dance education as taught by primary school teachers. While dance is not new to the school curriculum, it is undergoing a renaissance in the 90's as it becomes re-defined within the Arts curriculum and moves away from the aegis of Physical Education. In 2002 dance will be introduced to all New Zealand schools within the Arts Curriculum. On the whole the vast majority of practicing primary school teachers have little knowledge of dance education and lack confidence in teaching it. This research will begin with teachers' initial conceptions of dance education. It will then provide a more in depth analysis of teacher meanings. By focusing on the construction of meaning, this study will aim to identify the experiences that have shaped teachers' attitudes towards dance education and highlight contextual factors informing their perceptions of dance education. Within this study teachers' current practice will be examined to reveal the complex issues that challenge their implementation of a dance programme.

**Stage One:** This study will commence by visiting 10-15 primary schools in the Dunedin region. Each visit will involve the researcher asking staff to complete a one page survey (5 min). In return for teachers time the researcher will offer a 1½ hour dance education inservice programme available for all teachers in the school. Teachers will be informed of the research and be invited to participate further.

**Note:** This ethics application only applies to stage one of the research, involving teachers completing the survey. Stage Two, as described below will require another ethics application.

**Stage Two:** The second stage in the research aims to involve approximately six teachers from three schools. Each teacher will in effect be a case study providing insights into the dance experience of a range of teachers and current dance education practice. The case studies will include working with the teachers in discussing their practice and potentially designing and implementing a dance programme. The study aims to include teachers that are representative of teacher diversity, involving females and males; teachers interested and not interested in
dance; teachers of various ages. The end-point of the project will be a written account that analysis's and theorise teachers' thoughts, issues and needs.

10. **Researcher or Instructor Qualifications**

What experience do the researchers or instructors have in this type of research or teaching activity? The researcher has the following experience and qualifications that support this study:

**Qualifications**
- B. Ed. Physical Education
- MA Dance Studies

**Experience**
- Registered teacher
- Has taught secondary, primary, and special needs students in Australia and New Zealand
- Has written the Australian Dance curriculum, Queensland Dance Curriculum, Member of Reference committee advising New Zealand Arts Curriculum
- Provided inservice to primary school teachers implementing dance programmes throughout Australia from 1991 to 1997
- Currently lecturing in dance education at University of Otago
- Presented papers and workshops on dance education at international, national and local conferences
- Has written two dance resource video kits (book, video and poster) specifically for teacher's reference.

11. **Participants**

Note: This term means any person:
- whose behaviour, actions, condition, state of health etc the researcher proposes to study; or
- whose personal information the researcher proposes to collect or use; or
- other than an instructor, who participates in a teaching activity that requires ethical clearance;
and includes subjects, clients, informants, students and patients.

a. **Population from which participants are drawn**
   The participants in this study are primary school teachers.

b. **Number of participants**
   Initially, the anonymous survey and inservice stage of the study may involve up to 150 teachers from primary schools within the Dunedin region. The case study component of the research will involve approximately six teachers.

c. **Age range of participants**
   The age range of participants will vary from approximately 22 years to 65 years of age.

d. **Method of recruitment**
   The method of recruitment will be voluntary. The researcher will in the first instance make contact with the principal of the school in arranging the teacher survey and inservice. Following this, with the principal's approval, teachers will be invited to volunteer to be further involved in the study. Teachers selected as case studies in the study will meet with the researcher and their principal to clarify both the teachers and researchers involvement.

e. **Please specify any payment or reward to be offered**
   No payment or tangible rewards will be provided. However, all teachers in the school will be offered a 1½ hour dance inservice programme. Teachers further involved as the case studies may gain assistance in writing and implementing a dance education programme.

12. **Methods and Procedures:**
   The tasks that the participants will be asked to do include:
   a. Complete a one page anonymous survey (attached)
   b. Participate in a 1½ hour dance inservice session. This is a practical session that will focus upon using 'everyday' movement in a dance education context.
   c. Voluntarily indicate willingness to be further involved in the research by completing a separate expression of interest page.
Precautionary measures include:

a. The school principal and staff will be informed of research intent and the survey.

b. The school principal and staff will be informed of dance inservice content and given opportunity to state reasons for non or partial involvement.

c. Practical components of inservice will be facilitated in compliance with safe dance practice.

13. The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 impose strict requirements concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. These questions allow the committee to assess compliance.

Note: Personal information is information concerning an identifiable individual

a. Are you collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned? YES

b. If you are collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned, specify the steps you are taking to ensure that the participants are aware of:-

   • The fact that you are collecting the information
     I will be informing the school principal and teachers personally, verbally and in writing that I am collecting information for use in my PhD research.

   • The purpose for which you are collecting the information and the uses you propose to make of it
     I will be informing participants that this is a PhD study, and that all information gained is anonymous. Data gained from the anonymous survey will assist in the selection of six or more volunteer teachers to participate in the study.

   • Who will receive the information
     The researcher will collect surveys as completed. He and his supervisors will be the only persons with access to these surveys.
The consequences, if any, of not supplying the information

There are no consequences for teachers not completing the survey. They may return a blank survey as they wish.

d. Please outline your storage and security procedures to guard against unauthorised access.

All information will be secured in a locked cupboard within the researcher's office within the University of Otago.

e. Please explain how you will ensure that you collect or use only that personal information which is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant and not misleading:

I will ensure that the information gained is as accurate as possible by informing the teachers to provide honest and frank responses. If a teacher is feeling awkward about responding then they will be asked to hand in a blank survey.

f. How will you use the personal information?

I will use the information as a starting point in identifying teacher's further participation in the study.

g. Who do you propose will have access to personal information, under what conditions, and subject to what safeguards against unauthorised disclosure? In what form do you propose to publish any personal information?

After a 5 year period, the researcher will dispose of (shred) the surveys.

14. Potential Problems:

No problems are foreseen as the survey is anonymous.

I foresee no other potential problems. In the event of physical practical participation participants will be reminded to self monitor their participation. This practical dance inservice will be designed to accommodate abilities and lifestyles of non-dancers.

15. Informed Consent Please attach the information sheet and the consent form to this application. The information sheet and consent form must be separate.

16. Debriefing Where participants have not been informed fully of the nature and purpose of the research, or where in the course of the project some degree of deception is involved, the researcher must provide participants with an explanation of the research goals and procedures when the procedure is completed. Researchers also have an obligation to be available after participants have participated in the project, should any stress, harm, or related concerns arise.
Participants must have the opportunity to obtain information relating to the outcome of the project if they wish. Where relevant, explain how these matters will be dealt with in the proposed research.
A summary will be made available for participants on completion of the study.

17. Fast-Track Procedure
Do you request fast-track consideration? NO

18. Other committees
If any other ethics committee has considered or will consider the proposal which is the subject of this application, please advise details:

19. Applicant's Signature: .................................................................
   Date: ............................

20. Departmental Approval: I have read this application and believe it to be scientifically and ethically sound. I approve the research design. I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the Ethics Committee with my recommendation that it be approved.

   Signature of *Head of Department: .....................................................
   Date: .............................

*In cases where the Head of Department is also the principal researcher then the appropriate Dean or Assistant Vice-Chancellor must sign*

Please attach copies of the Information Sheet and Consent Form
ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A
  Information Sheet for Participants and Consent Form

Attachment B
  Teaching Dance Education Survey

Attachment C
  Information Sheet for Board of Trustees and Consent Form

Attachment D
  Expression of Interest to Participate Further Form
TEACHING DANCE EDUCATION: THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE.

Information sheet for participants.

Thank you for showing an interest in this study. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to complete the survey we thank you. If you decide not to complete the survey there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of the project?
This research aims to examine some primary school teachers' understandings of dance education in the school curriculum. The intent of the survey is to gain a 'snapshot' of attitudes, understanding and experiences that inform your teaching of dance, thereby aiding the selection of approximately six teachers as the research participants. The research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree.

What type of participants are being sought?
The study will include approximately 150 primary school teachers in the Otago region.

What will participants be asked to do?
Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to complete the attached anonymous survey. This should take 5-10 minutes.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?
The actual survey forms will be securely stored within the university with access limited to the researcher and his supervisors. These surveys will be destroyed after a five year period. The data gained from the surveys will assist in refining and determining stage two of the research. This will include approximately six volunteer teachers working with the researcher, possibly designing and implementing dance education programmes. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?
You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

**Details of remuneration.**
In appreciation of your time in completing the survey, the researcher is offering a complimentary 1½ hour dance inservice session for staff of your school.

**Further Involvement?**
If you wish to participate in further aspects of this study please complete the separate 'Expressions of Interest' form.

**What if participants have any questions?**
If you have any questions about this study, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

**Researcher:**
Ralph Buck
Dance Studies Programme
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin
Ph: (03) 479 8965

**Supervisor:**
Prof. Keith Ballard
Dean, School of Education
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin
Ph: (03) 479 8802

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago.
Consent Form for Teachers

I have read the information sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I understand:

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed;
4. A written survey will be used to collect information.
5. That no remuneration is offered.
6. The results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved.

I agree to take part in this project.

......................................................... ........................................
(Signature of participant) (Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
TEACHING DANCE EDUCATION SURVEY

Please complete the following questions as fully as possible. All questions relate to yourself as a teacher in this school.

1. Male  Y  Female  Y

2. I am in the following age bracket:
   - 19-20  Y
   - 21-25  Y
   - 26-30  Y
   - 31-35  Y
   - 36-40  Y
   - 41-45  Y
   - 46-50  Y
   - 51-55  Y
   - 56-60  Y
   - 61-65  Y

3. The year group I predominantly teach at present is:

4. I believe dance education is a valid curriculum subject area: (tick one box)
   - Yes  Y
   - No  Y

5. I believe dance education as a curriculum subject area is concerned with teaching students about........

My attitude towards teaching dance education within my class is........

Identify any lifetime experience (event, class, person, etc) that has shaped your attitude (positive or negative) towards dance. Please outline the factors that made the experience memorable........

6. Does dance education offer any benefits to your students:
   - Yes  Y
   - No  Y

   Please comment or list benefits:........

7. Are there any issues/barriers that discourage you from teaching dance education:
   - Yes  Y
   - No  Y

   If yes please list:........

369
Teaching Dance Education: The Teachers' Perspective

Information Sheet for the Board of Trustees.

Thankyou for showing an interest in this study. The following information and attached survey outlines the aim of the project and the extent of teacher’s involvement.

What is the aim of the project?
This research aims to examine some primary school teachers' understandings of dance education in the school curriculum. The intent of the survey is to gain a 'snapshot' of attitudes, understanding and experiences that inform teaching dance, thereby aiding the selection of approximately six teachers as the research participants. The research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree.

What type of participants are being sought?
The study will include approximately 150 primary school teachers in the Otago region.

What will participants be asked to do?
Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to complete the attached anonymous survey. This should take 5-10 minutes.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?
The actual survey forms will be securely stored within the university with access limited to the researcher and his supervisors. These surveys will be destroyed after a five year period. The data gained from the surveys will assist in refining and determining stage two of the research. This will include six volunteer teachers working with the researcher, possibly designing and implementing dance education programmes. You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?
You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Details of remuneration.
In appreciation of your time in completing the survey, the researcher is offering a complimentary 1 1/2 hour dance inservice programme for staff of your school.

Further Involvement?
If you wish to participate in further aspects of this study please complete the separate 'Expressions of Interest' form.
**What if participants have any questions?**

If you have any questions about this study, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

**Researcher:**
Ralph Buck  
Dance Studies Programme  
University of Otago  
PO Box 56  
Dunedin  
Ph: (03) 479 8965

**Supervisor:**
Prof. Keith Ballard  
Dean, School of Education  
University of Otago  
PO Box 56  
Dunedin  
Ph: (03) 479 8802

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Teaching Dance Education: The Teachers' Perspectives

Consent Form for Board of Trustees

We have read the information sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All our questions have been answered to our satisfaction. We understand that we are free to request further information at any stage.

We understand

1. The teacher’s participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
2. That the teachers are free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
3. Any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.
   A written survey will be used to collect information.
4. That no remuneration is offered.
5. The results of the project may be published but teachers and this schools anonymity will be preserved.

We agree to take part in this project.

.................................  .................................
(Signature of Chairman,  (Date)
Board of Trustees.)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the
University of Otago
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE FURTHER

Stage two of this study will involve working with six teachers (approx.) with a range of experience in dance from a range of schools.

The aim of the study is to examine some primary school teachers' understandings of dance education in the school curriculum. The researcher will work with each teacher.

The researcher will work with the teachers in their school environment, possibly designing and then implementing dance programmes.

Prior to any involvement all ethical procedural and logistical details will be outlined and agreed to by the teacher, their principal and the Board of Trustees.

What's in it for you? If you participate in the study, you will have at the end of the study received some assistance in exploring and implementing dance education within your classroom.

Yes, I'm keen to participate further.

If you would like to be further involved, please complete the following form and return to Ralph Buck.

Teachers Name: ........................................

School: ........................................

School address: ........................................

Phone: ........................................

Agreement statement:

I am interested in participating further in this study and would welcome further information.
Tick one Box:

I am very experienced in teaching dance. Y
I am positive towards dance and have some experience in teaching dance. Y
I am positive towards dance but have no experience in teaching dance. Y
I am ambivalent towards dance but enjoyed dancing as a child. Y
I am ambivalent towards dance. Y
I am a non-dancer and know very little about dance. Y
I am struggling with dance being included in the curriculum. Y
I am openly negative about dance in the curriculum. Y

Please complete and return to:

Ralph Buck
Dance Studies Programme
School of Physical Education
University of Otago
PO Box 56
DUNEDIN
Ph: 03 479 8965, Fax: 03 479 8309, Email: rbuck@pooka.otago.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Appendix B
Application Form for ethical consideration of research and teaching proposals involving human participants

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

APPLICATION TO THE ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH OR TEACHING PROPOSAL INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Notes: PLEASE read carefully the important notes on the last page of this form. Failure to do so may delay the consideration of your application.

1. Title of Project
Teaching Dance Education: Teacher theories and practice.

2. Brief Description of the Purpose of the Project (in lay terminology and for the guidance of the Ethics Committee)
The purpose of this research is to better understand primary school teachers' views of what inhibits or supports their teaching of dance education in their classroom. In valuing the teachers' 'voice', the teachers' practice, and the teachers' lived experience, a qualitative methodology is employed. Teachers' meanings of dance education will be explored and then discussed in respect to how these meanings influence the design and implementations of a dance programme in the primary school. Analysis and theorising of meanings assigned to dance education may have implications for curriculum design, content of teacher inservice programmes, and the nature of supporting source books and resource kits.

3. Name of applicant (must be a University staff member)
Buck R.M. Mr

4. Department: School of Physical Education

5. Other investigators or instructors (please specify whether staff or students)
Prof. Keith Ballard, Dean, School of Education
Assoc. Prof. Terry Crooks, Co-Director, Educational Assessment Unit.

6. Projected Start Date of Project: February, 2001 (on ethical approval)
Projected End Date of Project: 1 December, 2001

7. Funding of Project: Is the project to be funded in any way from sources external to the University of Otago?
NO

8. Type of Project (e.g. staff research, PhD research, class teaching project, multi-centre trial)
PhD Research

9. Aim and Description of Project (Clearly specify aims. If there is a hypothesis it must be testable. Specify inclusion and exclusion criteria. Identify the end-point of the project)
This research aims to analyse dance education as understood and taught by primary school teachers. While dance is not new to the school curriculum, it has undergone a renaissance in the 90's as it becomes re-defined within the Arts curriculum and moves away from the aegis of Physical Education. In 2003 dance will be introduced to all New Zealand schools within the Arts Curriculum. Many practicing primary school teachers have little knowledge of dance education and lack confidence in teaching it. This research will begin with teachers' initial conceptions of dance education and what supports or inhibits their teaching of it. It will then provide a more in depth analysis of teachers' meanings. By focusing on the construction of meaning, this study will aim to identify the experiences that have shaped teachers' attitudes towards dance education and highlight contextual factors informing their perceptions of dance education. Within this study, teachers' current practice will be examined to reveal the complex issues that challenge their implementation of a dance programme.

Stage One: This survey has been approved by the ethics committee (No 00/016). It involves visiting 10-15 primary schools in the Dunedin region. Each visit will involve the researcher asking staff to complete a one page survey (5 min). In return for teachers' time the researcher will offer a 1½ hour dance education inservice programme available for all teachers in the school. Teachers will then be invited to participate in research case studies.

Stage Two: The case study research will involve approximately six teachers from three to six schools. Each teacher will be a case study providing insights into the dance experience of the teacher and an understanding of current dance education practice. The case studies will include talking and working with teachers in the area of the dance curriculum. The researcher will observe and analyse the teachers dance education practice and then possibly work with the teacher on designing and implementing a dance programme.

The study aims to include teachers who are interested and not interested in dance. Following completion of the research process with each teacher the researcher will write an account that analyses and theorises teachers' thoughts, issues and needs.

10. Researcher or Instructor Qualifications

What experience do the researchers or instructors have in this type of research or teaching activity? The researcher has the following experience and qualifications that support this study:

**Ralph Buck**

**Qualifications**
- BEd Physical Education
- MA Dance Studies

**Experience**
- Registered teacher
- Has taught secondary, primary, and special needs students in Australia and New Zealand
- Has written the Australian Dance curriculum, Queensland Dance Curriculum, Member of Reference committee advising New Zealand Arts Curriculum
Application Form for ethical consideration of research and teaching proposals involving human participants

- Provided inservice to primary school teachers implementing dance programmes throughout Australia from 1991 to 1997
- Currently lecturing in dance education at University of Otago
- Presented papers and workshops on dance education at international, national and local conferences
- Has written two dance resource video kits (book, video and poster) specifically for teacher's reference.

Prof. Keith Ballard
Keith Ballard has extensive experience in research with teachers in classroom setting. His publications include theoretical work on qualitative methodology and field based studies in primary schools.

Assoc. Prof. Terry Crooks
Terry Crooks is an associate Professor of Education at the University of Otago, and co-director of the Educational Assessment Research Unit and the National Education Monitoring Project. His research interests include the validity of educational assessments and their impact on learners. In recent years he has taught courses on educational assessment, on learning and motivation, and on critical analysis of teaching. He has served as president of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education, on several national committees or working parties relating to assessment in education, and on the Board of the NZCER.

11. Participants

Note: This term means any person:

- whose behaviour, actions, condition, state of health etc the researcher proposes to study; or
- whose personal information the researcher proposes to collect or use; or
- other than an instructor, who participates in a teaching activity that requires ethical clearance; and includes subjects, clients, informants, students and patients.

a. Population from which participants are drawn
The participants in this study are primary school teachers from the Dunedin region

b. Number of participants
Six primary school teachers.

c. Age range of participants
The age range of participants will vary from approximately 22 years to 65 years of age.

d. Method of recruitment
The method of recruitment will be voluntary. The researcher will in the first instance make contact with the principal of the school to arrange the teacher survey and the related inservice dance session. Following this, with the principal's approval, teachers will be invited to volunteer to be further involved in the study. Teachers selected as case studies in the study will meet with the researcher and their principal to clarify both the teacher's and researcher's involvement.

e. Please specify any payment or reward to be offered
No payment or tangible rewards will be provided. However, teachers involved in the case studies may gain a written dance education programme and personalised inservice over an extended period, focusing upon strategies for teaching dance in the classroom.

12. Methods and Procedures:
The tasks that the participants (teachers) will be asked to do include:
1. Participating in co-structured interviews of which the number and length being determined by the teacher and researcher.
2. Maintaining a personal diary.
3. Participating in a dance-education workshop facilitated by the researcher. The workshop may be videoed and photographed depending upon the teachers willingness and comfort.
4. Planning and implementing a dance education programme in their classroom.
Precautionary measures include:
5. The school principal, staff and Board of Trustees will be informed of research intent and the above procedures.
6. Practical components of the dance workshops will be facilitated in compliance with safe dance practice.
7. All interview transcripts recordings, video recordings and data in general will be confidential to the participants, the researcher and supervisors.
8. All procedures within the research will be planned in consultation with the teachers and with respect to the schools' timelines, rhythms, programmes and protocols.
9. Students and parents will be informed of the research.
10. Parents of students within the teacher's classroom will be asked to sign a consent form that permits incidental videoing of their students during class work.

13. The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 impose strict requirements concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. These questions allow the committee to assess compliance.

Note: Personal information is information concerning an identifiable individual

a. Are you collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned? YES

b. If you are collecting personal information directly from the individual concerned, specify the steps you are taking to ensure that the participants are aware of: -
   • The fact that you are collecting the information
     I will be informing the school principal and teachers personally, verbally and in writing that I am collecting information for use in my PhD research.
   • The purpose for which you are collecting the information and the uses you propose to make of it
     I will be informing participants that this is a PhD research study, and that all information gained is anonymous. Data gained will be a part of the PhD data analysis and may be used as data within conference presentations, journal articles and other publications. All persons and schools involved will select pseudonyms that ensure anonymity within the greater research and education community.
   • Who will receive the information
The researcher will collect all data as completed. He and his supervisors will be the only persons with access to this data.

- **The consequences, if any, of not supplying the information**
  There are no consequences for teachers not participating in the research. They may participate at the level they find most comfortable and choose to terminate any involvement at any stage.

c. **Please outline your storage and security procedures to guard against unauthorised access.**
   All information will be secured in a locked cupboard within the researcher's office within the University of Otago.

d. **Please explain how you will ensure that you collect or use only that personal information which is accurate, up to date, complete, relevant and not misleading:**
   I will ensure that the information gained is as accurate as possible by encouraging the teachers to provide honest and frank responses. If a teacher is feeling awkward about responding or participating they will be encouraged to feel comfortable about limiting or stopping their involvement. By collecting extensive material over a substantial length of time teachers will be provided with opportunities to state, reflect and re-state their views and ideas in a trusting and collegial atmosphere. All teachers will be given several opportunities to read transcripts and any personal quotes used within the thesis.

e. **How will you use the personal information?**
   The material will be theorised and examined as part of this thesis. I will use the information as a starting point in identifying issues and themes that support or inhibit teachers in teaching dance education. The material will be analysed using a constant comparative data analysis method.

f. **Who do you propose will have access to personal information, under what conditions, and subject to what safeguards against unauthorised disclosure? In what form do you propose to publish any personal information?**
   - After a 5 year period, the researcher will dispose of all data.
   - Access to data will strictly be limited to the teacher, the researcher and the research supervising committee within secure and private environs.
   - Personal and school information will be published under anonymous pseudonyms.

14. **Potential Problems**: No problems are foreseen, as:

1. The teachers and schools involved will be fully informed of the research and how they can terminate involvement.
2. The researcher has considerable experience in teaching, and working with teachers in school contexts.
3. The supervisory committee are intimately aware of the teaching context and provide a 'birds eye' view of the research.

I foresee no potential problems during practical activities. Even so, during physical practical participation, participants will be reminded to self monitor their level of physical involvement. Practical dance inservice will be designed to accommodate abilities and lifestyles of non-dancers.
I will be initiating several case studies acknowledging that some, for whatever reason, may be cancelled or interrupted. Maintaining a sensitivity of the school context and teachers comfort is vital in facilitating the research successfully.

15. **Informed Consent** Please attach the information sheet and the consent form to this application. The information sheet and consent form must be separate.
    Please see the attached Information sheets and Consent Forms.

16. **Debriefing** All personal data and its analysis will be made available for participants to comment upon throughout the study. The final thesis and tangible products such as dance programmes will be given to the teachers within the study. The teacher/s and their Principals will be given the opportunity to personally discuss the project at its completion.

17. **Fast-Track Procedure**
    Do you request fast-track consideration? NO

18. **Other committees**
    If any other ethics committee has considered or will consider the proposal, which is the subject of this application, please advise details:

19. **Applicant’s Signature:** .................................................................
    Date: .............................

20. **Departmental Approval:** I have read this application and believe it to be scientifically and ethically sound. I approve the research design. I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the Ethics Committee with my recommendation that it be approved.

    Signature of *Head of Department: .............................................................
    Date: .................................

    *[In cases where the Head of Department is also the principal researcher then the appropriate Dean or Assistant Vice-Chancellor must sign]*

    Please attach copies of the Information Sheet and Consent Form


ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A
Information Sheet for Participants (Teachers) and Consent Form

Attachment B
Information Sheet for Board of Trustees and Consent Form

Attachment C
Information letter for Parents of Students that includes a Consent Form
TEACHING DANCE EDUCATION: Teacher theories and practice.
Information Sheet for Participants (Teachers).

Thank you for showing an interest in this study. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to participate there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of the project?
Teachers' views on what inhibits or supports their teaching of dance education in the school curriculum will be examined. The intent of the research is to study teachers' attitudes, understanding and experiences about dance and dance education. The research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree.

What type of participants are being sought?
The study will involve working with primary school teachers in their classrooms.

What will participants be asked to do?
Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to participate in the following activities:

1. Discussions with Ralph Buck on the topics of dance, education and experience.
2. Practical dance education workshops facilitated by Ralph Buck.
3. Plan and implement a dance education programme for your own classroom with assistance from Ralph Buck.
4. Use a diary, noting thoughts and insights throughout the research process.

To complete some of the above activities you occasionally will be asked to leave your classroom and daily teaching duties. Funds will be given to the school to provide teacher relief on these occasions. While the majority of work will occur during school hours, it is quite probable that some 'out of hours' time will be required. These times will be planned in advance and with respect to your needs and personal context.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?
The data will be in the form of your words, actions, dance, and teaching activity that is noted by yourself and Ralph Buck. With approval by yourself, some discussions, activities and classroom teaching will be audio taped, photographed and/or videotaped. This will be done only with your approval and the recordings will be strictly confidential as with all aspects of the research. The data collected will be examined and analysed by Ralph Buck and written about as part of this research and any other subsequent publications.

All teachers, schools and students names will remain anonymous within this research and any other writing emanating from the research. All data used such as excerpts of transcripts, videotapes and photographs will be offered to you for comment and approval. All data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet and destroyed after a 5 year period.
Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?
You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Details of remuneration.

There is no remuneration for the teachers involved in the study. However, when teachers are asked to participate in activities that take them away from their classroom, remuneration will be given to the school to fund teacher relief.

At the completion of the study teachers may have gained considerable dance education inservice, a written and tried dance education programme.

Further Involvement?
If you wish to participate in of this study please complete the separate Consent form.

What if participants have any questions?

If you have any questions about this study, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Researcher:
Ralph Buck
Dance Studies Programme
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin
Ph: (03) 479 8965
Email: rbuck@pooka.otago.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Prof. Keith Ballard
Dean, School of Education
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin
Ph: (03) 479 8802

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
TEACHING DANCE EDUCATION: Teacher theories and practice.

Consent Form for Teachers

I have read the information sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I understand:

- My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
- Any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed;
- Information will be collected through extensive discussions, dance workshops, and planning and teaching of dance activities. These above activities maybe recorded on audio or videotape.
- No remuneration is offered.
- The results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved.

I agree to take part in this project.

................................................................. ........................................
(Signature of participant) (Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Thank you for showing an interest in this study. The following information outlines the aim of the project and the extent of teacher’s involvement:

**What is the aim of the project?**
Teachers' views on what inhibits or supports their teaching of dance education in the school curriculum will be examined. The intent of the research is to study teachers' attitudes, understanding and experiences about dance and dance education. The research is being undertaken as part of a doctoral degree.

**What type of participants are being sought?**
The study will include approximately 6 primary school teachers in the Otago region.

**What will participants be asked to do?**
Should you agree to your school taking part in this research a teacher or some teachers at your school will be asked to participate in the following activities:

1. Discussions with Ralph Buck around the topics of dance, education and experience.
2. Practical dance education workshops facilitated by Ralph Buck.
3. Plan and implement a dance education programme for their classroom with assistance from Ralph Buck.
4. Use a diary, noting thoughts and insights throughout the research process.

In completing aspects of the above activities the teacher/s will sometimes need to leave their classroom and daily teaching duties. Funds will be given to the school to provide teacher relief on these occasions. The principal and teacher will ensure that there is no disruption to the children's classroom programme.

**What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?**
The data will be in the form of words, actions, dance, and teaching activity that is noted by the teacher/s and Ralph Buck. With approval the teacher/s discussions activities, classroom teaching will be audio taped, photographed and/or videotaped. It is important to stress that this will be done only with their approval and will be strictly confidential as with all aspects of the research. The data collected will be examined and analysed by Ralph Buck and written about as a part of this research and any other subsequent publications.

All teachers, schools and students names will remain anonymous within this research and any writing emanating from the research. All data used such as excerpts of transcripts, videotapes and photographs will be offered to the teacher/s for comment and approval. All data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet and destroyed after a 5 year period.
Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?
The teachers may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any
disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

Details of remuneration.
There is no remuneration for the teachers involved in the study. However, when teachers are
asked to participate in activities that take them away from their classroom remuneration will
be given to the school to fund teacher relief. At the completion of the study teachers may
have gained considerable dance education inservice experience and a written and tried dance
education programme.

Further Involvement?
If teachers at your school wish to participate in this study could you please complete the
separate consent form.

What if participants have any questions?
If you have any questions about this study, either now or in the future, please feel free to
contact either:

Researcher:
Ralph Buck
Dance Studies Programme
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin
Ph: (03) 479 8965
Email: rbuck@pooka.otago.ac.nz

Supervisor:
Prof. Keith Ballard
Dean, School of Education
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin
Ph: (03) 479 8802

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the
University of Otago
Consent Form for Board of Trustees

We have read the information sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All our questions have been answered to our satisfaction. I understand that we are free to request further information at any stage.

We understand:
1. The teacher/s participation in the project is entirely voluntary.
2. The teacher/s are free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
3. Any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.
4. Remuneration is offered for teacher relief as required during the study.
5. The results of the project may be published but teachers and this school's anonymity will be preserved.

We agree to take part in this project.

................................................. ........................................
(Signature of Chairman, Board of Trustees) (Date)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Otago
Dear Parents/Guardians
My name is Ralph Buck, I am a lecturer in dance at the University of Otago. Over the past ten years I have been teaching dance to children and teachers in many schools throughout Australia and New Zealand. I am undertaking some research with classroom teachers. I am a trained teacher with experience in primary and secondary schools. This research is about the new Ministry of Education Arts Curriculum, which includes dance.

Your child's teacher has agreed to take part in this research. The study is about how teachers teach dance and how to support them in their teaching. The work that the teacher does as part of the research is part of the classroom curriculum.

I will make some videotape recordings of the teacher. Although the video is about the teacher, some children in the class will be included as they take part in the lesson. The video may be viewed by the teacher, the children, my supervisors - Prof. Keith Ballard and Assoc. Prof. Terry Crooks and myself. The video will be stored securely and not shown to others.

I am writing to ask if you would agree to your child being in the video recording. I would also ask your child. If you do not agree, then your child will still take part in dance lessons.

I may want to use some video material to talk to other teachers and researchers about teaching dance.

Thank you for considering this request.

Please complete the following two items and return to your child's teacher.

1. I agree that my child may be included in videotaping of dance lessons.

   YES/NO

   Child's name:............................................................... 

   Parent(s) name(s):......................................................

   Signature:....................................................................

389
2. I agree that videotape that includes my child may be used in talks to teachers and researchers about teaching dance.

YES/NO
Child's name: .................................................................
Parent(s) name(s): ............................................................
Signature: ...........................................................................

If you would like to know more about this study please feel welcome to contact me on 03 479 8965. Thank you for your time and support.

Yours sincerely

Ralph Buck