Toward Inclusive New Zealand Dance Education Strategies

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Strategies

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Abstract

Inclusion of students with impairments in New Zealand (NZ) dance education needs attention. The aim of this research is to explore how curriculum can better ensure inclusion of all children into dance education. Data is collected using the qualitative research approaches document review and preliminary movement research. I focus on official documents such as: the Ministry of Education owned *New Zealand Curriculum* (2007), *Arts Online* (2007b), *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (2000), and Bronwyn Hayward’s *New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy* (2010). These documents are analysed to identify curriculum discourses and how the doctrines might better prepare teachers for meeting the demands of different abilities in dance. A critical review of these texts examines barriers or enablers for the participation of students with impairments. Attention is given to how the documents guide school teachers’ ideologies and practice and might influence the culture of education. This study provides insights into possible curriculum reform, and for improving teacher education.
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The New Zealand Context and Beyond

Developing ‘schools for all’ is important because schooling is linked to human economic and social development goals. But at the same time, it is apparent that many school systems perpetuate existing inequalities and intergenerational under-achievement. The reasons for this are complex, but it often relates to deeply embedded attitudes to, and beliefs about, human differences. Nevertheless, dealing with exclusion, marginalization and underachievement is not only the right thing to do; it makes sound economic and social sense. Failure to develop schools capable of educating all children not only leads to an educational underclass, but also a social and economical underclass which has serious consequences for society now and in the future. (Rouse, 2008, p. 3)

The above quote is from education expert Martyn Rouse (2008) and encompasses the worldwide necessity of achieving inclusive school education. Now a core learning area in the New Zealand (NZ) school curriculum, dance is not exempt. This research aims to uncover whether official dance curriculum documents contribute to excluding students from experiences in dance education. Document review is used in the form of critical discourse analysis as the methodology. The New Zealand Curriculum (2007), Arts Online (2007b), The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000), and The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010) are analysed in this way. These documents are important because they provide guidelines for teacher lesson plans; for instance, they offer examples of educational activities, achievement objectives, units, and embedded in the doctrines are suggested pedagogical values, philosophies and attitudes. Thus the documents can be highly influential for teacher practice. The following questions guide the research: how might official dance curriculum documents influence and improve practices of inclusion for students with impairments in NZ? What barriers might these documents create? Do they enable and ensure the participation of all students? How might these documents be improved in terms of inclusion? The research critically analyses how the NZ curriculum can better ensure inclusive dance environments.
The direction of this research is driven by my personal dance experiences and involvement in inclusive education settings. The transition from being a competitive tap and jazz dancer (two particularly prescribed dance forms) to participating in the open-minded environment of dance at the University of Otago revealed for me the extended possibilities of dance. Having a learner-support professional as a mother, I grew up alongside inclusive education advocates. I adopted their inclusive philosophies, and later went on to study aspects of inclusive education at tertiary level. Consequently I have a determination to promote equal opportunities in dance for all.

This first chapter will introduce the social history and political backdrop of the study. NZ’s current integrated dance scene, key dance companies, and the challenges of disability in dance education settings are introduced. Chapter one extends the discussion to a wider global context, teacher preparation for effective inclusion, and the power of discourse, attitudes, assumptions and values.

Chapter two provides an overview of NZ dance education history, and reviews literature on NZ integrated dance strategies and approaches; integrated dance companies are explored in more detail. This discussion dovetails into an international conversation regarding integrated dance practice and the cultural politics of dance and disability. Recurring themes extrapolated from the literature are discussed in order to inform possible future NZ dance curriculum reform and to improve practices of inclusion in the dance classroom.

Chapter three explains the qualitative methodological approaches employed by this study to answer the research questions. Curriculum research, document review, and critical discourse analysis (CDA) are introduced to help articulate the research approach and primary data collection method. Information about my preliminary movement research as well as ethical risks and research limitations are discussed.

Chapter four uses selected excerpts to analyse the level of inclusivity in the curriculum documents. Advantages, limitations, and nuances of student-centred teaching that might influence inclusivity are explored. This section comments on the importance of curriculum reviews, and teacher knowledge and skills for inclusion.
In the concluding chapter I summarise the intent, purpose, method, content, and findings of my work. Important philosophies of integrated dance are summarised, and dance is shown as an opportunity for education in the alternative intelligences. Recommendations for curriculum reform as well as future research are suggested. Finally, the concluding chapter discusses personal growth that I have achieved from this research, and expresses ways in which I hope readers will benefit.
Defining Impairment, Integrated Dance, and Inclusive Education

Before introducing the study’s social history and political backdrop, it is important to define some terminology used; ‘impairment,’ ‘integrated dance’ and ‘inclusive education’ will be defined here. Miyahara, Briggs and Kolb (2012) say that “Impairment is defined as a loss or abnormality of physical bodily structure or function” (p. 18). ‘Impairment’ is a constant biological fact separate from ‘disability’ and can be physical, cognitive, or sensory (Valle & Connor, 2011). ‘Disability’ is avoidable and is caused by the failure of others to accommodate these natural differences, for instance individual prejudice, inaccessible buildings, and segregated education (Priestley, 2003). Thus my work uses the terminology, ‘students with impairments,’ in preference to ‘students with disabilities.’ This terminology does embrace a wide range of impairments; however it must be noted that some of my findings and conclusions cannot possibly apply to all forms of impairment.

‘Inclusive education’ integrates students with and without impairments (Slee & Gourley, 2010) and aims to maximise effective academic and social participation of all children. All students are addressed; this is contrary to ‘special education,’ where students with impairments are singled out and pathological and deficit differences are emphasised (Higgins, MacArthur & Rietveld, 2006). ‘Special education’ is used as a means of social control where students with impairments are separated from the students without (Purdue, 2006; Slee & Gourley, 2010). It is important to recognise that in reality achieving inclusion is a significant challenge for teachers, especially without additional adult support in the classroom. This makes for a daunting task, particularly within significantly diverse classrooms and without any special training or guidance. Thus recommendations from theory are not necessarily reflected in practice.

Integrated dance is a contested term that is pertinent to this work. Integrated dance is eloquently defined by Miyahara, Briggs and Kolb (2012) as involving “a mixture of people with and without disability, thus symbolically representing the wider population and society more accurately than its counterparts in mainstream dance” (p. 16). They compare it to the disability social movement, which seeks a more inclusive society through integrating people with and without disabilities (Briggs, Kolb &
Miyahara, 2012). Zitomer and Reid (2011) identify more scholars who define integrated dance in a positive manner, describing it as dancers with and without disabilities engaging together (Dey 2003; Helfenbaum 2009; Kaufmann 2006; Nonhebel 2007) and all unique contributions being valued (Benjamin 1993: 2002; Williams 1999). Worth (2000) calls it a cultural and artistic union of dancers with and without disabilities that utilises diversity and difference. She believes “it is simply about dancing together” (Worth, 2000, p. 30).

Chance (2000), however, troubles the term ‘integration,’ which in the disability sector suggests that integrating into society is a right of people with disabilities. Chance prefers ‘reverse integration’ which she describes as “the idea that the dancers without a disability entered into an activity that they did not automatically own. In other words, they were the people having to do the integrating and find their place within a ‘normality’ defined by the others” (Chance, 2000, p. 36-37). Reverse integration takes the focus off the participants with disabilities and their efforts to become involved in a ‘normal’ dance situation, and instead suggests that the dance class is a collaboratively owned experience that all dancers work together to create. Similarly, ‘integrated’ is defined by the Online Oxford Dictionary as bringing “people or groups with particular characteristics or needs into equal participation in or membership of a social group or institution” (2014). Again this emphasises the entrance of minority groups into a normal situation. One problem with integrated dance terminology, then, might be the way in which it highlights the dancers with disabilities as the ‘other’ joining the ‘norm.’ The next section provides an overview of integrated dance in NZ’s arts industry.

The Challenges for All-Abilities Dance

NZ currently has a widespread and ever-increasing focus on integrated dance. The development of the New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010), as well as Touch Compass and Jolt Mixed Ability Dance Companies are major contributors. Informal community classes and national workshops have stemmed from these companies. Cotton and Kopytko (2011) are excited about these developments, saying
that “it is an exciting time for disability performing arts. In Christchurch alone there has been the development of new theatre and dance groups and an initiative towards setting up a fulltime training course in performing arts for people with disabilities” (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011, p. 9). This is positive for dance educators who can gain much knowledge from current integrated dance philosophies.

A most recent development is the *New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010)*, introduced by Bronwyn Hayward as part of her research on integrated dance. The desired outcome is increased participation in dance performance and recreation by disabled New Zealanders. It envisions that people who choose to dance are able to do so regardless of age and/or ability. There is a goal for all supporting organisations to make the participation of disabled New Zealanders in dance a priority. Strategies are based on increasing visibility, skill, accessibility, connections and viability of integrated dance. The strategy states that “goals will be met when disabled people determine that the strategies have led to viable integrated dance communities and a measurable increase in participation by people of all ages and abilities” (Hayward, 2010, p. 8). Noted is the fact that a wide range of New Zealanders can take part in the strategy in order to bring change. It makes a call for a Dance Reference Group, and states this as key for moving the strategy forward and monitoring success (Hayward, 2010). Additional to this strategy, below are two major dance companies challenging notions of who can dance and definitions of dance; Touch Compass Dance Company, and Jolt Mixed Ability Dance Company.

Auckland based Touch Compass envisions “a seamless society that redefines what dance is and who can dance. We’re inspired by the idea of an inclusive, fully accessible society where the creative talents of all its participants, including those with unique function, can be realised” (Touch Compass Dance Trust, 2009). The company aims to overcome physical and psychological barriers, to welcome anyone who is passionate about it to dance (Chappell, 2000). Overcoming disability is not paramount, but Touch Compass wants to encourage NZ society to value the diversity of its people (Touch Compass Dance Trust, 2009). A key message of integrated dance is that accepting and embracing difference is not ignoring it. A community can then celebrate
these differences and the unique contributions that they bring (Chappell, 2000). The company tours with community classes, workshops and performances. Their community classes are described as “an opportunity for anyone who loves to dance, no matter what their ability, to come along and have a go” (Touch Compass Dance Trust, 2009).

Lyn Cotton, founder of Christchurch based Jolt Mixed Ability Dance Company (since 1998) says that they are influenced by one of England’s leading mixed ability dance companies, Amici, who centre their work on celebrating difference through dance. Disabled, non-disabled, amateur and professional dancers are integrated to create Jolt’s ‘mixed ability’ element. Collaboration, mutual respect, openness and awareness are basic principles of Jolt. The company encourages development of mutual experiences, and not imposing movement on one another. Teaching technique is less a focus than unique movement exploration from members, which is a key influence in their choreography. Cotton says that this freedom and unpredictability allows creativity and true connections between dancers. Connections also involve the tutors, support workers, financial support, families and other supporters who create a sense of community. The original vision was “to create a regular dance class that would develop skills and offer opportunities for young people with a passion for dance to train and perform” (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011). Regular integrated dance classes and workshops are offered through their education programme, and issues of disability and movement boundaries are addressed through dance (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Jolt Dance, 2014). Pedagogies exemplified by Touch Compass and Jolt can provide useful information for school dance education. The existing NZ integrated dance context and political movements exemplify ideologies that can help guide this curriculum analysis.

Considering this presence of integrated dance in NZ, inadequate inclusion in dance education is surprising. A disconnect between the arts industry and school dance education is apparent. NZ based Samu (2011) analyses NZ school education and alerts us to the issue of inadequate inclusion. She explains that our society is becoming more diverse, and thus interaction with people different to ourselves is becoming more commonplace; and teachers must be prepared to respond. However, academic test
results show that NZ education broadly has failed to react. Samu (2011) describes New Zealand's education system as ‘“high quality’ – the top students do very well on the test, presumably reflecting the effectiveness of the teaching they received – but ‘low equity’. The students who perform poorly are well behind those who perform well. Given the over-representation of Maori, Pacific, special needs and students entrenched in poverty within this band of student performance, it is clear that teaching is not effective for many students from these groups of learners” (p. 182). Samu (2011) argues that teachers are under prepared for effectively teaching a diverse classroom. This problem is also noted in the United States of America, as McCarthy-Brown (2009) says that, “discrimination is pervasive throughout our society, and the world of dance is not exempt” (p. 124). Scholars encourage fine-tuning our analysis when it comes to diversity issues (Ainscow, 2007; Kuppers, 2000; Risner, 2006, 2007; Rouse, 2008), and possibilities for this are discussed next.

**Expanding the Notion of Diversity**

Responding to diversity and inclusion needs of students is a global challenge. Providing equitable educational situations and solving diversity problems are identified by US based Risner (2006, 2007) and Kuppers (2000) as a consistent concern in dance education. Risner says that the Equity Task Force of the US Department of Education gave ‘equity’ the following definition; “equitable access to and participation in all management and program functions regardless of special characteristics including but not limited to gender, race, color, national origin, disability and age” (Risner, 2006, p. 105). Kuppers (2000) writes that people are commonly refused from dance schools because they have different bodies. UK based Rouse (2008) and Ainscow (2007) also identify inclusion as one of the most important challenges for schools worldwide, as it is implicated with educational, social, and economic underclass (Rouse, 2008, p. 3-4). Ainscow (2007) argues that there is both a human rights perspective and a point of view of effectiveness. Barriers to inclusion are evident both nationally and worldwide, and causes of this situation must be identified and challenged.
NZ dance advocates, Cotton and Kopytko (2011), suggest that the deficiency of integrated dance in schools may be due to a lack of networking, saying “there is a need to develop an infrastructure to support new initiatives and allow opportunities for the sharing of resources, expertise and experience. A database of groups, regular opportunities to conference and a working committee, which can initiate ideas on a national level and network with associated groups, is needed” (2011, p. 9). The suggested collaborative and networking situations can also be used to help close teacher knowledge gaps that are related to inclusive education. Literature shows inadequate teacher preparation as a further catalyst for insufficient inclusion.

Under-preparation of educators to teach diversity is a problem identified by many scholars (Aiello, 2012; Connell, 2009; Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey & Simon, 2005). Aiello’s (2012) study represents physical education teachers who claimed they required more training to teach students with disabilities; the low participation rate of students with disabilities was directly related. A study by Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey and Simon (2005) showed that a course about teaching diverse students helped to reduce teachers’ anxiety and increase their receptivity of diverse students. Connell (2009) explains that low teacher confidence means deficient skills in both content and pedagogy; this teacher uncertainty confirms that inclusion is yet to become successful. Teachers in his study praised pedagogical knowledge, which includes skills to adapt pedagogical strategies and approaches for diverse abilities (Connell, 2009; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011). Tertiary courses must provide appropriate training to achieve this. This study builds on issues of teacher education and support that is covered in the literature. It seeks to discover how curriculum can better support and encourage teachers to adopt inclusive practices, and briefly explores the level of inclusivity taught in NZ tertiary dance courses.

Scholars recognize that pedagogical knowledge is largely excluded from tertiary dance education. This is concerning, because it is widely argued that inadequate skills in pedagogy is a larger problem than low content knowledge (e.g. Warburton, 2008). A perception of excellence being technique-based has contributed to favouring the “artistic production of the “dancer” while grossly underestimating the meaningful learning
processes in dance arts education” (Risner, 2008, p. 77). Gilbert (2005) believes we need teachers “who understand learning processes, child development, critical pedagogy, dance techniques, choreographic principles and processes, somatic practices, dance history, cultures, and philosophy” (p. 33). However, research shows that teacher training and pedagogy take on a minor role in comparison to technique and artistic excellence in most tertiary dance courses (Gilbert, 2005; Risner, 2008); and this presents barriers for inclusion. This work observes the lack of pedagogical teacher training that is noted in the literature, and this prompted my investigation of tertiary dance education content. The inquiry aims to identify areas of necessary improvement, and may lead to future change.

Teachers who have insufficient pedagogical knowledge tend to focus solely on technical achievement. Gilbert (2005) claims this can create discrimination and hierarchies. For instance, Kuppers (2000) says that particular dance techniques require particular body types; this can promote exclusion, as different bodies are not deemed pliable. As we so often see, ‘normal’ bodies are most common on the stage (Kuppers, 2000). Clearly, a focus on technical perfection can be problematic for inclusion (Callahan-Russell, 2004a; Gilbert, 2005; Kuppers, 2000) and for meaningful education (Gilbert, 2005; Hagood, 2006; McCarthy-Brown, 2009). Callahan-Russell (2004a) explains that focusing solely on technique can limit our ability to communicate personal feelings; it thus inhibits unique movement signatures and causes us to miss great possibilities. Also, simply focusing on steps and routines requires only the back part of the brain cortex, and consequently leads to passive learning (Gilbert, 2005). Gilbert believes that receiving knowledge is emphasised over using knowledge too much in schools. Hagood (2006) joins this argument in saying that teaching for technical achievement is a common approach because it is easier for teachers to execute than creating challenging learning. He says that,

Dancing to the music, imitating a favourite movie star, and constructing fantasy visions of the body are much easier roads to travel than is a struggle to bring huge life events into art and to make art in such a way that it is not simply a reflection about what we feel about that, but rather
brings that into some context in which it can be absorbed and understood at a new level. (Hagood, 2006, p. 34)

Demonstration and imitation approaches are also often how teachers have been taught dance themselves, and they perpetuate this. In McCarthy-Brown’s (2009) experience, focussing on technique drove a number of her students to drop out of her program. The literatures’ critique of focussing on artistic excellence in dance education (e.g. Callahan-Russell, 2004a; Gilbert, 2005; Hagood, 2006; Kuppers, 2000; McCarthy-Brown, 2009; Risner, 2008) provides a springboard for this curriculum document analysis.

**Inclusive Language and Practices**

Deep educational structures like discourses, attitudes, assumptions, and values can work to promote exclusion and prevent inclusion. This means that curriculum researchers, developers and advisors need to review the attitudes and assumptions that are tied up in curriculum and other written documents. McDonnell (2003) explains this theory in saying that,

One of the real dangers in the current period of development is that while the surface structures are changed, the existing deep structures will remain in place. Moreover, if the deep structures of special education – those issues that underlie relations of power, control, dominance and subordination – are not identified and transformed, exclusion and marginalisation will be reproduced even under the most well-intentioned and well-supported of programmes. (p. 267)

This means that deep educational structures that are embedded in curriculum documents and tertiary education, for example, must reflect inclusive philosophies before NZ dance education can achieve full inclusion. My research builds on this requirement and identifies current values, discourses, attitudes, and assumptions of the
curriculum documents. Hopefully this can help reveal necessary changes to curriculum documents that are required for them to sufficiently reflect inclusivity, and avoid exclusivity. Once curriculum documents are accurate, dance can more easily become a haven for educational inclusion.

Dance education research shows that dance can welcome inclusion and enhance educational quality (Barylick, 2004; Connell, 2009; Deluca, 1993; Kuppers, 2000). Connell (2009) explains that dance often holds an ethos of valuing inclusion and individuality, contrary to its physical education counterparts, which can focus on competing with others. Furthermore, dance is one of few subjects that use the body for learning (Barylick, 2004); it thus provides an opportunity to explore intelligences that are otherwise commonly missed in education. There are a number of intelligences, but most schools only take linguistic and logical mathematical intelligences seriously (Deluca, 1993; Robinson, 2006). This denies students from spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. The problematic situation contributes to the labelling of students who are less competent in the ‘addressed intelligences’ as having lower intelligence (Deluca, 1993). Deluca exerts that,

Many children who are more developed in the unaddressed intelligences find it difficult to perform in the addressed linguistic and logical forms of intelligence, and they experience early school failure. These students are often singled out for remediation, special education or slower tracks, and learn very early in their educational experience that they are being labelled as different as well as unsuccessful. (p. 51)

Dance gives these students the opportunity to tap into kinaesthetic and other related intelligences. Evidently, benefits arise that are unique to dance.

With these strengths, if dance is partnered with an inclusive politic, it has several educational benefits. In the following excerpt, Millar and Morton (2007) articulate the benefits of implementing inclusion in the classroom.
Inclusion has been shown to provide positive gains for students, teachers and society in general. Karagiannis et al. (1996) find that including students with disabilities in the regular classroom is beneficial as all students gained academically and socially and they all had a greater understanding of diversity. Positive gains were also noted for teachers when they had students with disabilities in their classes. They increased their professional skills, worked more collaboratively with others, and had a greater awareness of policies and change. In society, inclusion also reinforces the idea that difference is accepted and respected and that despite difference, everyone has equal rights. (p. 167)

Dance and inclusive philosophies clearly make a strong educational team. The combination can achieve benefits that are unavailable in other areas of education. My intention here is not to romanticize inclusion, but simply present its benefits. However, it is important to simultaneously acknowledge challenges that might arise when implementing inclusion. For instance, presenting new ways of learning for students might prove problematic at first, and achieving inclusion is a work in progress.

To reiterate, integrated dance is well developed in NZ dance companies and organisations outside of school education (Kopytko, 2010). School education in NZ and other western countries has, however, failed to respond to the wide-ranging nuances of diversity and to promote inclusion (McDonnell, 2003; Millar & Morton, 2007; Rouse, 2008). This deficiency may be due to both a lack of networking and collaboration, and the under-preparation of teachers. Pedagogical discourses, values, attitudes and assumptions can affect levels of inclusion in schools. Thus these aspects must reflect positively in surface structures such as curriculum documents and teacher preparation. Dance education seems an appropriate and welcoming area in which to introduce inclusive practices. Curriculum documents seem an appropriate starting point to analyse the reproduction of exclusion; hence identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the documents could provide educational opportunities and benefits for teachers and students.
The next section provides an exploration of the social history of NZ dance education, and an overview of current integrated dance literature. Major turning-points, celebrations, and challenges of dance in education are shown. Milestones and limitations for curriculum development and implementation are covered. Key players in this dance education journey are mentioned. It will cover NZ scholarship as well as literature from other western contexts. Philosophies and approaches of integrated dance practice that are outlined in the literature are identified. Further, cultural politics of dance and disability from the literature are discussed. The section concludes by drawing possible implications of integrated dance practice for NZ dance education. Significant events have influenced curriculum development and reform; and how integrated dance and teacher education are implicated in this history are explored in this study.
Chapter Two: NZ Dance Education and other Global Contexts: Challenges and Possibilities of Integrated Dance Education

New Zealand Dance Education: A Brief Historical Overview

This section provides a brief historical overview of dance education in New Zealand. It should be noted that it is not comprehensive, but covers information that is pertinent to this thesis. Inclusive education indeed originates from the realm of education and not dance; however, this work purposefully focuses on tertiary dance (and thus physical education) institutions as opposed to colleges of education. Consequently, some key educators and moments might be missed in this overview, and these create opportunities for future research. Examining the social history of dance education, Buck (2006) notes how the discipline was initially nurtured by its older sibling physical education (see also Bolwell, 2009). In discussing a historic spearhead of dance education, Phillip Smithells, Booth says that “neither narratives nor memorials can guarantee what individuals or communities remember and, in this sense, history, as representations of the past, is always fluid” (Booth, 2013, p. 394). With that in mind, the historical backdrop of dance education in NZ provides important insights about the current curriculum.

Early 1900’s male military and physical training in schools (Hong, 2002; Stothart, 2000) was soon replaced by modern physical education, when an enlightened Royd Garlick was appointed the Department of Education’s Director of Physical Education in 1912 (Bolwell, 2009). Simultaneously The 1909 English Syllabus was implemented, which valued folk dance; it was thus added to the Physical Education scheme of work in 1925, and folk dance characterised dance education until the 1950’s (Ashley, 2012b; Hong, 2002). Folk dance helped to establish school dance education, but may have inhibited inclusivity due to its rote-learning approach (Ashley, 2012b). Further physical education developments were driven by a professional association for physical education (now Physical Education New Zealand, PENZ) that formed in 1936 (Stothart, 2000).
Phillip Ashton Smithells was appointed superintendent of the Department of Education physical education branch, formed after the facilitation of the 1937 Physical Welfare and Recreation Act (Bolwell, 2009; Booth, 2013; Stothart, 2000). Around the same time, The Thomas Report (1942) introduced school certificate, a central school curriculum with physical education as a core subject, and advocated for properly trained physical educators (Bolwell, 2009; Stothart, 2000). In response, Smithells founded the University of Otago’s School of Physical Education in 1948 (Bolwell, 2009; Stothart, 2000); and the dance component inspired Alison East to establish NZ’s first contemporary dance diploma beginning in 1988 (Horsley, 2005). In these roles, Smithells disseminated contemporary physical education approaches and significantly enhanced teacher education and support. He introduced the English Syllabus of Physical Training for schools (1933) (Bolwell, 2009; Stothart, 2000), which remained NZ’s model of physical education until the 1940’s (Ashley, 2012b).

As non-dancing director of the New Dance Group, Smithells helped form and pioneer modern dance in NZ (Bolwell, 2009; Booth, 2013). Creative dance thus gained value during the 1950’s, and became one of seven official physical education components in the 1987 Physical Education Syllabus. This can be viewed as a positive step towards inclusion, with many scholars labelling creative dance as an accessible dance approach (e.g. Benjamin, 2002; Cone & Cone, 2011; Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002). However, dance remained optional, which meant that teacher delivery was inconsistent, and folk and Maori dance forms remained the prominent student dance education experience (Hong, 2002). Hokowhitu (2004) argues that Smithells’ advocacy for culturally inclusive education (Bolwell, 2009; Booth, 2013) materialised as tokenistic, non-contextual, western interpretations of stick games, poi, and other Maori traditions (Hokowhitu, 2004), and related challenges are discussed later in more detail. Smithells inspired dance to become part of the NZ school curriculum, embraced more open dance styles, and encouraged the development and support of teachers; he thus created opportunities for more advanced future development in these areas.

Later key developments for physical education include the award of bursaries status (1989), and the introduction of the Health and Physical Education in the New
Zealand Curriculum (1999) policy document, established in accord with The New Zealand Curriculum Framework (1993) (Stothart, 2000). Dance maintained its place in this document, even though it was soon to become separate from physical education (Ashley, 2012b; Buck, 2006). Physical education played an important role for incorporating dance into the NZ school curriculum, and increasing the visibility and perceived possibilities of dance. However, under the physical education umbrella, the full breadth, meaning, and educational potential of the art from were largely disregarded (Buck, 2006; Hong, 2002; Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013).

The 1990’s curriculum reform thus increased the validity of dance education. For the first time in NZ dance became a core, compulsory subject in its own right within the arts essential learning area (Ashley, 2012b; Buck, 2005; Hong, 2002; Renner, 2012; Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). A statement of policy and intent for dance education was written into the new The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) document, mandated by government in 2003 (Ashley, 2012, 2012b; Buck, 2005, 2006; Hong, 2002). From then dance was compulsory for primary and intermediate, and optional for senior levels (Ashley, 2012b; Bolwell, 2009; Hong, 2002). Buck (2005) claims that “this document represents a landmark in New Zealand’s dance education history, being the first of its kind to enter schools” (p. 3). Theoretically it meant that dance was of equal status to other school curriculum subjects (Hong, 2002). Teachers could finally focus on a more holistic approach to dance and cover its full breadth (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013).

Contemporary educational ideologies were embraced by the new document; Ashley (2012b) says it “brought with it a twenty-first century, postmodern view of society and education” (p. 5); and Buck (2006) explains that it focused on contemporary developments of “students’ literacy for engagement with dance practically or theoretically”, “personal holistic knowledge of self”, and “knowledge of cultural and social diversity in New Zealand” (p. 710). Cultural pluralism was encompassed by the Understanding Dance in Context (UC) strand (Ashley, 2012, 2012b), which envisions students to understand the functions and contexts of dance (Buck, 2005).
Teachers faced many challenges for implementing dance curriculum; the method and time allocations of dance education remained at the discretion of individual teachers and schools (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). The manner and quality of dance curriculum implementation was thus dependent on individual expertise (Buck, 2005; Hong, 2002). This challenge was intensified for generalist primary school teachers who may have no dance knowledge or experience at all; and this is a real concern (Buck, 2003). Further, Buck (2006) says this is a dance curriculum issue worldwide.

NZ Pakeha teachers also faced challenges with implementing the new curriculum’s culturally pluralistic ideologies. Deficiencies in teacher skills, knowledge, and cultural literacies are preventing successful applications of the UC strand; some teachers simply do not teach it at all, and some adopt culturally insensitive teaching methods (e.g. rote learning codified dances and prioritising skill acquisition over contextual understanding) (Ashley, 2010, 2012b). Teaching a Maori dance (for example) out of context is not cultural education at all, and does not help to teach culturally diverse students inclusively (Hokowhitu, 2004). If context is stripped, then so is the meaning of the dance for students (Ashley, 2012b). These challenges for dance curriculum implementation are closely implicated with teacher training, support, and professional development issues. Hokowhitu (2004) ultimately situates the main problem within teacher education, stating that “plainly, the failure of state education to appropriately educate Maori reflects a general ineptitude of tertiary institutes to adequately educate teachers who are able to provide contextually driven curriculum” (p. 81). These teacher education inadequacies are a major limiting factor for achieving inclusive dance education.

Ashley (2010) proposes that the lack of review and evaluation in dance education presents further challenges for consistent teacher delivery. She says that more vigorous review processes from the Education Review Office (ERO), Ministry of Education, and NZ school management teams could help to “build robust pedagogical practices in dance across formal educational sectors; create opportunities to monitor, improve and sustain quality of dance education in schools; improve the facilitation of guest experts; and offer information to support school teachers and principals about
teaching quality” (Ashley, 2010, p. 212). This might also negatively implicate the quality of teacher education, as we cannot monitor aspects that are in need of improvement; this study shows that one of these areas is indeed inclusion.

Some efforts to overcome these challenges have been made; Renner (2012) recalls that “in the early years of arts curriculum implementation, centrally-funded professional development, new resources, and teacher education programmes helped to prepare and support teachers for teaching dance in the classroom” (p. 1). Patrice O’Brien and Suzanne Renner are acclaimed in Turner’s (2012) work for fulfilling the integral roles of translating the new curriculum into practice. O’Brien filled positions including Auckland College of Education dance lecturer, Ministry of Education dance advisor for National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) implementation, and national dance secondary facilitator (Turner, 2012). Renner’s contributions include roles such as Dunedin College of Education lecturer, involvement in Te Ope o Rehua (Toi Maori performing arts committee) and various creative NZ funding panels, regional and national dance curriculum facilitator, and involvement in the development of NCEA achievement standards in Maori-medium dance (Otago Bulletin Board, 2013). She has also recently (in November 2013) been awarded the Kowhiti Lifetime Achievement Award in Maori Contemporary Dance at the Kowhiti Atarau Festival of Indigenous Contemporary Dance in Wellington (Otago Bulletin Board, 2013).

Unfortunately, today’s government supports literacy and numeracy subjects over the arts, meaning that funding, time and energy for the arts are scarce (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). Government funded professional development opportunities, programmes, and advisory services for teachers have been terminated. Because of this, Renner (2012) expresses concern for the sustainability of NZ dance education. Fortunately, the centrally driven New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), and NCEA advisory services do still exist (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). Interestingly, Radio NZ (November, 2013) recently reported that teachers are finding little gain in new writing, reading, and maths standards. Fortunately, some non-governmental organisations continue to provide professional development opportunities such as Dance Aotearoa New Zealand (DANZ), and the Teachers’ Refresher Course
Committee (TRCC) (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). DANZ is also working diligently to improve dance education opportunities, including lobbying dance education to the government (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013).

Since the 1990’s curriculum reform and 2003 mandate, more NZ dance education developments have been made. *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)* was released; a single document that describes all eight compulsory school subjects together (Ashley, 2012, 2012b; Bolwell, 2009; Cheesman, 2009, Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). Simultaneously, NCEA dance achievement standards were developed (Ashley, 2012b; Bolwell, 2009; Hong, 2002). Dance was deemed a university entrance subject (Bolwell, 2009) in 2006 (Ashley, 2012b; Cheesman, 2009), and a senior scholarship subject by 2010. Melchior exclaims that “by the end of 2008, it was the fastest growing curriculum subject in New Zealand schools” (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013, p. 93). Unfortunately, today in 2013, teachers still face challenges of individual curriculum implementation, exacerbated by a lack of guidance and advice (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). Thus, the fact that the newest 2007 arts curriculum document appears to be a “pared down” version, with much less detail, is a worry (Cheesman, 2009). In terms of dance education today, Melchior says that “in theory, dance is firmly established in the curriculum, but in practice the ideal of dance as an integral part of every child’s learning is still a long way off” (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013, p. 100).

Historical dance education events are implicated with curriculum reform, teacher education, and inclusive dance practices. Key curriculum moments include physical education curriculum governance, *The Thomas Report (1942)*, *The 1987 Physical Education Syllabus*, the 1990’s curriculum reform, development of *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* and *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)* documents, NCEA dance standards, and university entrance (2006) and scholarship (2010) status for dance. These curriculum developments had various effects on NZ teacher education; establishment of tertiary dance and teacher preparation courses, and varying professional development and support opportunities. Integrated dance and inclusion in dance education has also been affected by these events. With dance teacher education
courses available, all curriculum requirements should be getting successfully implemented; however recent scholarship (e.g. Ashley, 2010, 2012b; Hokowhitu, 2004) shows that this is not the case, and tertiary institutions are failing to prepare our teachers to educate inclusively. Also, NZ government is failing to provide sufficient support services. Furthermore, flaws in current curriculum documents are surfacing, which may be preventing inclusivity in dance teacher practice; and these are discussed throughout this thesis. This historical overview has examined some key events and players in NZ physical and dance education that may have implications for the levels of inclusivity in dance education today and in the future. Next, integrated dance literature from NZ and broader contexts is examined.

A Review of Integrated Dance Literature

The following literature explores integrated dance education in NZ and other global contexts. First, the philosophies and approaches of the companies such as Touch Compass and Jolt are explored. Secondly, NZ scholars extend the discussion of integrated dance past specific companies, and towards teaching approaches and strategies (Chappell, 2000; Cheesman, 2011; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Hong, 2000; Powles, 2007).

After seventeen years in existence, Touch Compass has built up an extensive positive reputation throughout NZ. An award winning company, Touch Compass has toured NZ with performances such as Triple Bill and Harmonious Oddity. Their awards include the World Down Syndrome Day Masquerade Ball Achievement Award, 2008 Attitude Arts Award, 2008 Tempo Dance Festivals Awards, 2008 Attitude Supreme Award, 2007 Tempo Dance Festivals Awards and 2007 honourable mention in the New Zealander of the Year Awards Arts Category Section of the North and South magazine (Touch Compass Dance Trust, 2009).

Powles (2007) outlines some of the principles of the company and trust, Touch Compass. They value community, co-operation and support within the company. All
members are considered as professionals. Each individual member being truly appreciated is imperative to the company values. Powles (2007) says that, “it is the very mix of the personalities and skills that work” (p. 22). Powles (2007) notes that Catherine Chappell explains about the company, “everyone has contributed and brought their own unique take on how they are in the world” (p. 22). The emphasis here is that each individual’s unique contribution is important in shaping the company. Founder of Touch Compass, Chappell (2000) provides an overview of the company and describes her own involvement. The values, philosophies, politics and challenges of the company are introduced. Effectively including people with all body types is integral to their work. Contact improvisation and aerial work are identified as the company’s characteristic choreographic styles. With similar philosophies to Touch Compass, Jolt mixed ability Dance Company is discussed by Cotton and Kopytko (2011), shown below.

Lyn Cotton, the founder of Jolt mixed ability Dance Company, said that the key aim of the company is to “encourage people to connect on many different levels: to self through increased body awareness, to creativity through response to music, and to other people through improvisation. Classes do not focus on technique, but rather explore movement through mirroring and extending the unique qualities of each individual” (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011, p. 9). Further, the company aims to challenge perspectives about disability and contemporary dance. The philosophies of Jolt reflect those of integrated dance; that includes a process of collaboration, celebration of difference, mutual respect, openness, self-awareness, and communication. Cotton believes that mixed ability dance values creativity and avoids imposing structures on students. She also places importance on the role of the teacher to facilitate inclusion (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011).

Jolt’s performance company developed in 2002 (Jolt Dance, 2014) with the aim to “not only create dance works of the highest standard, but also to celebrate the unique qualities of the dancers and challenge perspectives about disability and contemporary dance” (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011, p. 9). Also an educational ensemble, it offered two adult classes, two children’s classes and one teenage class by 2004 (Jolt Dance, 2014). They are an award winning company (Jolt Dance, 2014), receiving the NZ Recreational
Association Outstanding Programme Award for Excellence, Commitment, Best Practice and Quality Performance for their education programme. A Jolt Youth company was also established in 2007 (Jolt Dance, 2014). Among other high achievements, they performed for the 2005 Special Olympics (Jolt Dance, 2014); and Cotton explains “it was a highlight for Jolt, not only because it involved performing to over 500 people, but because in many ways it symbolised what Jolt was all about, combining young and old, amateur and professional dancers with and without disabilities in a celebration of difference” (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011, p. 9). The philosophies and educational approaches of integrated dance are also discussed by NZ scholars.

For example, Cheesman (2011) seeks “an explanation of what works within dance making practices with these integrated classes, to foster a performance of possibilities giving voice to all participants” (p. 30). Her research in NZ explains how one might create an inclusive dance class. The work gives examples of the structure, content, teaching pedagogy, philosophies and processes used to reach final products and participant responses in her own classes. She argues that her improvisation-based class is open to anybody. In order to demonstrate the format, successes, and failures of her inclusive workshops, Cheesman (2011) gives a detailed description of a past lesson. The need to challenge the current, narrow vision of what constitutes dance, and who can dance, is identified. She says that physical ability is often equated with aesthetic quality, which is reinforced by the conventional perception of a dancer “as white, female, thin, long limbed, flexible, able-bodied” (Albright 1997, p. 17 in Cheesman, 2011, p. 29). This means that typically, desirable aesthetics require a perfect body in conventional terms, and this needs to be challenged. Integrated dance philosophies encourage the challenging of conventional assumptions, and this ideology can help school dance education become inclusive.

Longley (2003) also supports and advocates for inclusion in the New Zealand school curriculum, and explores strategies for implementing inclusive choreographic structures. Somatic education for a holistic education is valued in her work, and dance is shown to promote students’ total wellbeing. A specific choreographic process and performance is analysed. Strategies for teaching and connecting diverse dance students
are produced from her study. Like many other integrated dance scholars (e.g. Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Kuppers, 2001; Whatley, 2007; Zitomer & Reid, 2011), Longley (2003) believes that inclusive dance practice can help to disrupt conventional perceptions of dance, and to embrace different bodies and abilities.

The above scholars demonstrate the strong presence of integrated dance, and the pedagogical call for a rethinking of the purposes of dance education in NZ. They discuss issues and make recommendations surrounding integrated dance practices. Powles (2007), Chappell (2000), and Cotton and Kopytko (2011) introduce philosophies and approaches from specific NZ integrated dance companies. Through personal experiences, Cheesman (2011) and Longley (2003) explore effective approaches to teaching an integrated or inclusive dance class. According to Kopytko (2010), however, disability issues explored within this field of integrated dance have not yet successfully extended to NZ school dance education. Kopytko (2010) suggests that this is due to a lack of collaboration between organisations who have had success in integrated dance, and those who still need work. These scholars call for a move away from elitist, exclusive paradigms, and suggest approaching dance in meaningful ways to include people with unique movement function. Their recommendations, philosophies, and approaches are rich resources for education in NZ. This NZ research dovetails into international debates about disability and dance.

For example, Goodwin, Krohn and Kuhnle (2004) study wheelchair-only classes and explain it reduces outside judgement and increases empathy; and the participants who use wheelchairs found extensive benefits of this class style. The dancers revealed that the experience provided a) unconditional acceptance, b) a dream come true, c) opportunities beyond the wheelchair, and d) a stronger sense of self. Goodwin, Krohn and Kuhnle (2004) also believe that wheelchair dance enhances muscle strengthening, flexibility, balance training, improved posture, manoeuvrability with wheelchair, coordination of movements, self esteem and confidence, socialisation, team work, cooperation, and expansion of self expression.
Freire (2001) also teaches students with physical impairments, and argues that dance educators should be able to teach different bodies. Conventional definitions of dance and assumptions about who can dance are challenged by Freire (2001). Laban, Contact Improvisation and Body-Mind Centring are introduced as accessible dance forms. She describes a dance class that includes a blind student, in order to demonstrate that teachers and students alike can learn valuable lessons from including students with disabilities.

Whatley (2007) also values dance for differently abled perspectives, and explores “why it is that disabled dance students find participation so difficult and the challenges faced by mainstream tutors in delivering dance techniques for disabled students” (p. 6). Fifteen young female students’ learning experiences in a dance technique class are observed. Whatley (2007) claims that the pressures of having a conventional dancerly body silences dancers with disabilities, and she aims to give them a voice. The article examines relationships between disabled dancers and spectators. She notes that it should be a concern that there is a lack of disabled dancers in England’s tertiary dance courses.

Zitomer and Reid (2011) also aim to address the stereotypes about dancers with disabilities, and advocate for integrated dance classes that create interaction between disabled and non-disabled students to help reduce prejudice. The ability of integrated dance classes to positively change students’ perceptions of disability and dance ability is argued. Furthermore, they can help redefine what constitutes dance. Conversations with students before and after participation in an inclusive dance class are compared, and show a positive improvement in most children’s perceptions of both dance ability and disability. However, there were exceptions. Zitomer and Reid (2011) identify the need to re-define what counts as dance; and suggest models of dance that are achievable for everyone.

Vellucci (2005) argues that drastic changes to a dance class are not necessary to facilitate inclusion; this is supported by advice from dance professionals who work with different bodies and abilities. Specific approaches and strategies for teaching students with disabilities are discussed, and suggest that teachers should approach these students
as they would any other. Benefits of students with disabilities participating in dance are outlined to further encourage teachers to be inclusive; these include access to a different kind of intelligence, lessons being transferrable to success in other subjects, and socialisation opportunities.

Hayes (2010) also supports integrated dance, and says that teacher education is necessary for achieving this goal. She explains that many dance teachers feel under-qualified or under-skilled. The irony is that ten percent of students in classrooms have a disability of some kind, whether we realise it or not. Therefore, Hayes (2010) offers some strategies to help teachers. The importance of communicating with the students themselves is acknowledged. Ultimately, Hayes argues that all teachers can accommodate most students by planning pedagogical approaches.

Cone and Cone (2011), Kaufmann (2006), and Benjamin (2002) all offer theories and practices for meaningful inclusion, and support the use of both open exploration and creative movement. Benjamin (2002) places emphasis on the value of improvisation. He advocates four principles: respect oneself, respect individual differences, encourage individual freedom of choice and refrain from the use of force. His focus extends to the historical context of disability issues and dance; and examines “how our bodies work, to understand and be comfortable with how they may differ, and to seek in everybody the fullest possible expression of what it means to be human” (Benjamin, 2002, p. 6). Cone and Cone (2011) argue that all dance can be modified to respectfully include students with varying abilities, and that this is a teacher’s responsibility.

International integrated dance literature highlights ample teaching methods as well as benefits of the dance form. Redefining conventional perceptions of dance and disability is clearly a common trajectory in critical dance education research, and it provides perspectives on ways to remove these unhelpful ideologies and practices. The literature suggests that integrated dance itself can help change perceptions and reduce prejudice. However, it proposes that teacher education is necessary, and many feel unprepared. This is just one challenge that is identified for inclusion. Notable is the scarcity of any critique of integrated dance in the literature; however, some limitations
of the practice are surely inevitable. One might be that additional support persons are necessary but unavailable, for instance. Widespread and adept responses to diversity are made clear; these models and perspectives can inform NZ dance education practice. This study, looking at curriculum, aims to dissect how these ideologies and teaching approaches might be passed on through the NZ curriculum. The work specifically looks at how detrimental or empowering viewpoints might be transmitted to teachers.

International challenges from the literature such as redefining conventional perceptions of dance and disability, and providing adequate dance teacher education, reflects challenges unique to the NZ context. For instance, the challenge of translating integrated dance industry successes into school education, and re-thinking the purposes of dance education. Unfortunately tertiary level teacher preparation courses are shortening due to financial strains (Cheesman, 2009), and also new government priorities have resulted in diminishing funding for teacher professional development and support (Renner, 2012). The following articles delve into deeper cultural politics of dance and disability that should also be considered by dance educators.

Understanding the Politics of Disability and Dance

Scholars are in the process of redefining dance and disability (Kuppers, 2000; Kuppers, 2001; Kuppers & Marcus, 2009; Risner, 2007; Risner & Stinson, 2010). Kuppers (2001) argues that performance involving disability helps to challenge negative assumptions of disability, and redefines what dance is, and who can do it. The theatrical performance, ‘Bilderwerfer,’ and film performance ‘Outside in’ are used as examples to demonstrate this relationship between disability and performance. Examples of undesirable narratives of disability are given. She explains in specific detail how both theatrical intervention and film in dance can challenge stereotypical narratives of disability. She moves beyond the notion of dance for people with impairments as therapy, and instead explores this dance as performance; and criticises fitting unique bodies into a balletic method. Instead, other scholars and Kuppers champion
improvisation as an empowering approach. Risner (2007) identifies that these critical social issues pointed out by Kuppers are rarely included in dance education literature.

Risner (2007) identifies the absence of social, political, cultural, and economic aspects in dance education literature. Thus the “primary aim of this chapter is to summarise the existing literature in critical social issues in dance education” (Risner, 2007, p. 965). Issues such as the social construction of gender, gender equity, feminism, multiculturalism, relations between race, gender and sexuality and differently abled bodies are discussed. He posits that differently-abled dance practice is rooted in the adaptive physical education movement. A need to disturb current social constructions of disability and conventional perceptions and expectations of dance is highlighted. Building off this study, Risner and Stinson (2010) call for the consideration of critical social issues in dance education.

Risner and Stinson (2010) assert that dance educators are failing to think about larger social issues. They say that inclusion requires the challenging of current structures, and that dance education needs to create a more just, fair and compassionate world. The authors believe that pre-service teacher programs need attention. Issues of social justice in dance education are covered, with a large emphasis on multiculturalism. Scholarship on disability as a social justice issue in dance education is summarised, albeit a small paragraph. Differently abled bodies are endowed with an ability to disrupt conventional expectations in dance education (Risner, 2007; Risner & Stinson, 2010). Issues of different bodies in dance are also covered by Kuppers (2000).

Kuppers (2000) argues that “an accessible dance culture needs not only accessible techniques, work spaces training facilities and stages, but also wider educational work on the level of dance literacy, our ability to read dance and appreciate its manipulation of bodies, spaces and time” (p. 119). The article introduces the social and medical models of disability and their relationships with dance education. She discusses how particular dance techniques tend to require particular body types. Challenging these traditional perceptions of what constitutes artistic excellence is identified as crucial for inclusion. Kuppers (2000) explains that dance can be a medium to challenge current negative perceptions and meanings of disability. The challenging of
current assumptions and perceptions surrounding disability and dance is further encouraged by Kuppers and Marcus (2009) below.

Kuppers and Marcus (2009) identify that the first function of their essay is to take the weight of discomfort pressed on people with disabilities, and release it into play. Kuppers sees poetry as suited to dancing and performing differently. Marcus shares some disability issues that are rooted in his own poetry. They express issues that they personally have with other peoples’ assumptions and perceptions of disability. These personal issues are made playful, however, through poetic writing. A suggestion of viewing disabilities in alternative ways, instead of through the lens of stereotypes, expectations, tragedy, loss and rupture, is made. Related to the above scholarship, Green (1999) discusses issues of body image in dance.

Green (1999) discusses social views about the ideal dancer’s body. She states that she is “particularly interested in investigating how the body is shaped by society and the dance world, in which performers constantly strive for perfection” (Green, 1999, p. 80). Somatic practice is used as a tool to help investigate how students perceive their bodies. They mainly conform to this unnecessary and unattainable need for perfection. Comparisons are drawn between typical traditional western dance classes and somatic dance classes; she favours somatic classes’ open views of dancers’ bodies. The obsessive focus on the external body, pressures of disciplined behaviours, and teacher-student power relationships are discussed in relation to this. Students in the study suggest methods for overcoming social views about an ideal dancer’s body, and these are presented by Green (1999). Miyahara, Briggs and Kolb (2012) also investigate perceptions of dancing bodies, and this begins to demonstrate how NZ is implicated in the wider political backdrop.

New Zealand scholars Miyahara, Briggs and Kolb (2012) provide an investigation of New Zealand integrated dance. The disability and dance context is set by exploring some history. They locate integrated dance within the social movement and model of disability, and this is distinguished from the medical model. More recent comprehensive and independent models are also introduced. Definitions of disability are troubled for the purpose of their investigation. The article discusses various viewing
strategies for integrated dance. It provides a discussion of perceptions of an ideal dancing body, and this is linked to specific dance forms using body descriptors like ‘classic,’ ‘exclusive’ and ‘homogenous.’ Ways in which the disabled body can confirm or challenge these perceptions are discussed. The authors conduct a critical analysis of two works by Touch Compass integrated Dance Company, to see how these choreographies might reinforce or dispel negative cultural representations and constructions. The scholars argue that it is important for choreographers to take this into consideration.

It is important to acknowledge NZ’s involvement in this wider political scene. NZ integrated dance companies such as Touch Compass and Jolt are doing much to direct our dance industry (and wider society) towards a more open-minded viewpoint of both dance and disability. Miyahara, Briggs and Kolb (2012) recognise Touch Compass’s increasing awareness of the effects that their choreography has on public perceptions of disability and dance, and this is showing in their work. Performances from these companies can help to challenge negative assumptions of disability, narrow visions and expectations of dance and who can do it, (Kuppers, 2000; Riser, 2007; Risner & Stinson, 2010), and re-direct the ways in which people view disabilities from stereotypes, expectations, tragedy, loss, and rupture, to more positive and empowering ones (Kuppers & Marcus, 2009).

While this dance industry is taking significant steps forward, NZ tertiary dance and teacher education faces challenges just as in other countries (Risner & Stinson, 2010). The 2000’s saw a significant growth in tertiary dance possibilities, and this was very positive. Now in 2013, there are opportunities to study dance right from early childhood to doctoral study (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). However in the realm of teacher education, circumstances for arts education have declined. From 1996, four-year teaching degrees rapidly began to reduce to three-year courses. Tertiary educators were expected to deliver material to large class numbers in order to cut costs. Clearly, this reduced quality of education for pre-service teachers, and time allocations for the arts condensed (Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013). As a tertiary dance teacher educator, Cheesman (2009) exerts that “clearly it seems that the thrust is for
schools to develop their own programmes, but my dilemma as an educator of preservice primary trainees is how I equip them to do just that in dance in the twelve hours dance allocation, within this forty-eight hour compulsory arts course in the first year of a Bachelor of Teaching degree” (p. 5). Moreover, diminishing government funding and support deepens the challenges for arts education (Renner, 2012).

Above, political integrated dance scholarship highlights a need to interrupt deep educational structures; for instance, conventional discourses and paradigms. It views the practice as having a capacity to improve wider social and cultural issues associated with disability. The next section discusses common themes found across the literature, and ways that curriculum documents can respond to these.
Themes in the Literature and Pedagogical Suggestions and Tools

**Teacher responsibility.** Silences of inclusion in the curriculum suggest that it is not imperative for all teachers to adopt this practice. However, integrated dance literature clearly argues that inclusion is a teacher responsibility. Inclusivity involves using a self-critical lens (Cheesman, 2011; Risner & Stinson, 2010), adaptation (Hayes, 2010; Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002), flexibility and creativity (Cone & Cone, 2011). Flexibility also means being open to learning whilst teaching (Freire, 2001) and therefore accepting mistakes and consequently improving (Hayes, 2010). Teachers should advocate for necessary student support (Cone & Cone, 2011). An inclusive teacher provides various options for learning (Vellucci, 2005; Whatley, 2007), and accepts all movement interpretations (Cheesman, 2011; Zitomer & Reid, 2011). Role modelling inclusive philosophies and practices is important (Zitomer & Reid, 2011; Whatley, 2007), and employing visiting artists, or teachers who have impairments themselves, can help with this (Zitomer & Reid, 2011). Adopting an ethos of teacher responsibility in the curriculum may help inclusion to be portrayed as an explicit responsibility of all teachers.
Student-centred dance education. Integrated dance literature strongly argues for a student-centred learning style for inclusion. Seeking familiarity with students, and responding to this educationally, is essential for meaningful communication (Cone & Cone, 2011). This can be achieved through focussed observation and listening techniques. Talking to students, their families, other teachers, ‘special education’ staff, and teacher aides can help to discover students’ individual requirements (Hayes, 2010; Vellucci, 2005). Learning styles, preferences, needs and personal attributes that should be considered for teaching, can be discovered in this way (Whatley, 2007). For instance, it is important for teachers to respond to students’ varying sensory needs (Cone & Cone, 2011). Examples are students who have aural or visual impairments, or heightened sensitivity to noise. Post-class discussions can allow for students to share their thoughts about activities (Cheesman, 2011), and for teachers to give positive feedback to students (Cone & Cone, 2011). Cheesman (2011) and Cone and Cone (2011) recommend greeting all students personally and meaningfully upon their arrival to class, and setting up processes for students to greet each other (Cheesman, 2011).

Teaching approaches that allow choreography to come from the students will help ensure student-centred learning (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011). Cheesman (2011) suggests activities that give students opportunities to experience other students’ movements. Nuances of student-centred teaching and learning are already present in the curriculum documents, but strategies and approaches from the literature can help to enrich these; learning examples, units and sequences, and achievement objectives in the curriculum might then better encourage student-centred teaching and learning.
**Diversifying lesson content and delivery.** Drastic changes are unnecessary for creating an inclusive classroom (Vellucci, 2005). Exploration of simple learning strategies and modes can help (Whatley, 2007), and the following scholars provide some examples. Cone and Cone (2011) and Whatley (2007) both suggest maintaining the purpose of dance lessons, but simultaneously adapting tempo, space, and complexity of steps, for example. Teachers can either offer these modifications, or allow the students to choose their own (Zitomer & Reid, 2011). Time given for learning or performing movements can be increased, coordination requirements reduced, and movement sequences shortened. Sizes, weights, colours, textures, lengths and widths of equipment can be varied in order to cover all students’ preferences (Cone & Cone, 2011). Verbal directions can be adjusted to include students’ differing functions (Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002). Content should be repeated and reinforced (Cheesman, 2011; Whatley, 2007). Cone and Cone (2011), Hayes (2010), and Whatley (2007) all suggest creating a familiar class structure and routine in order to provide security. Wall displays or individual schedule folders can be used to make regular lesson routines and structures visually accessible to students (Cone & Cone, 2011). Most importantly, students should find classes enjoyable (Cheesman, 2011; Zitomer & Reid, 2011).

Curriculum documents could reflect diversity of lesson content and delivery by providing multiple options, offering adaptations, and various delivery methods within lesson plans, examples, units, and achievement objectives. The next section shows that teachers must be aware of the techniques that they choose for lesson content, with scholars arguing that some can be disabling. It is important to note that recommendations may suit some and not others; teachers should continue to differentiate to suit their unique students.
Diversifying understanding of technique. Particular techniques are perceived to require specific body types (Kuppers, 2000). Striving for technical excellence can be a disabling task, as movement requirements may be impossible for some. If this pressure is removed, then students can be more confident that they are competent (Zitomer & Reid, 2011). Contrasting to technical perfection, open-ended exploration is one tool, which encourages the view of all movement being ‘right’ and valuable (Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002). Petersen and Kaufmann (2002) explain that “if students feel they can’t be “wrong”, the fear of failure disappears” (p. 17). Building on this, valuing the process over a technically perfected product can be a more inclusive activity (Cheesman, 2011). Essentially, leading assumptions of what constitutes dance must be challenged (Risner & Stinson, 2010), and alternatives valued.

The goals that are set by curriculum documents can be informed by this argument. For instance, achievement objectives could avoid exemplifying rigid and prescribed physical technical perfection. Learning examples, lesson plans, and units of work could focus more on personal movement exploration to reach final choreographies. Next, dance forms that welcome different bodies and abilities are identified.

The value of creative movement. Improvisation is valued for integrated dance, as it avoids technical pressure and increases accessibility (Benjamin, 2002; Cheesman, 2011; Freire, 2001; Kuppers, 2001). Contact improvisation (Freire, 2001; Kuppers, 2001), creative movement (Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002; Kaufmann, 2006), Laban movement, and body-mind centering (Freire, 2001), are also identified as accessible dance forms. Kuppers (2001) explains that contact improvisation has no ideal body type and no pre-requisites. Petersen and Kaufmann (2002) explain that “creative movement promotes diversity in the essence of its very definition – wherein each student is encouraged to be different, unique and creative” (Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002, p. 19). Importantly however, not all classes of these styles will promote inclusivity. Variations in teaching styles and lesson objectives may indeed contribute to the contrary.

These inclusive dance forms typically avoid the pressure of technical perfection, and allow personal movement vocabularies to be meaningfully utilised. Dance
curriculum documents can improve from this by using these dance forms in learning examples and units of work. Proficiency in and understanding of these dance forms could be used for achievement objectives. These dance forms embrace the opportunities that different bodies bring; and this is a philosophy deemed as important for inclusive dance.

**Embracing different bodies and abilities.** The philosophies that are echoed throughout integrated dance literature are centred on celebrating difference through dance (Chappell, 2000; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Powles, 2007). Discovery of personal uniqueness is supported and encouraged. Inclusive classes acknowledge and celebrate students’ individual qualities (Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002). Classes that value a culture that is open, explorative (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011), accessible (Kuppers, 2000), and specific to the class (Cheesman, 2011) are important. Kuppers (2000) explains that “an accessible dance culture is not exclusive; it will not condemn certain techniques and celebrate others. Instead, it will see all dances and techniques as founded in their specific ‘dancerly body’ and audience address, and will not elevate one dance form’s ideal to cultural dominance so that it becomes a measuring tool” (Kuppers, 2000, p 129). Inclusive class cultures might be more effectively disseminated into teacher practice if it is encouraged in the curriculum documents. This philosophy is tied up with positive attitudes towards dance and disability, discussed next.

**Changing our ideologies and attitudes in dance education.** Teachers’ positive attitudes towards student achievement are deemed as important in integrated dance scholarship. Cone and Cone (2011) articulate that “the teacher’s positive attitude toward teaching students with disabilities forms the foundation for designing and using appropriate accommodations when needed. In these classes students are respected for their personal learning styles, and success is defined using individualised standards” (p. 24). Thus an inclusive teacher must believe that everyone has something valuable to offer (Goodwin et. al., 2004). Open and flexible ideologies about dance should therefore be adopted. For example, an understanding that each movement can be executed in many different ways is beneficial (Cone & Cone, 2011). Teachers should recognize that all movement has potential as dance, meaning their classes would never focus on what
people cannot do (Cheesman, 2011). Regardless of physical function, everybody can
dance (Zitomer & Reid, 2011). This attitude is necessary for all students with or without
impairments.

The curriculum documents already devote a section to attitudes in education;
however it could further encourage inclusive teacher attitudes if it included evidence
about the importance of positive attitudes towards student achievement. This section has
highlighted the opportunity for integrated dance literature to inform the content of dance
curriculum documents; and help introduce an inclusive ethos into NZ dance education.
The next section discusses some implications that integrated dance practice can have for
NZ dance education.

**Implications for New Zealand Dance Education**

Above, the literature review section first examined work surrounding
philosophies and approaches specific to some NZ integrated dance companies
(Chappell, 2000; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Powles, 2007). Second, it looked at other
NZ scholars’ discussions of integrated dance (Cheesman, 2011). Next, international
debates about dance and disability were dissected, and these covered philosophies,
approaches, teaching methods, benefits, and personal experiences of the dance form
(Cone & Cone, 2011; Freire, 2001; Goodwin, Krohn & Kuhnle, 2004; Hayes, 2010;
Whatley, 2007; Vellucci, 2005; Zitomer & Reid, 2011). The review then delved deeper
into the cultural politics of dance and disability (Kuppers, 2000, 2001; Kuppers &
Marcus, 2009; Miyahara, Briggs & Kolb, 2012; Risner, 2007; Risner & Stinson, 2010).
Ideas from the integrated dance literature can have positive implications for NZ dance
education.

Currently, NZ integrated dance companies and school dance educators operate
in a disconnected manner (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011). However by collaborating more,
the professional knowledge and skills that are held by the companies can positively
influence the level of inclusivity in school dance education. For instance, schools and
universities can employ integrated dance practitioners to conduct professional development; and under-skilled or unconfident staff, school principals, pre-service teachers, and curriculum developers can benefit. Effective strategies, skills, and approaches, as well as appropriate attitudes, values, and philosophies for integrated dance can be transmitted in this way. Educating school principals about inclusive practices can affect an entire school’s ethos. Similarly, educating curriculum developers can affect the philosophies that are embedded in curriculum documents.

Furthermore, integrated dance practitioners can work directly with students as guest educators or artists. Many companies already encompass educational programmes, meaning the necessary steps to implement this are already largely in place. Performances in schools can help to disrupt conventional attitudes and perceptions about dance and disability, and help to reduce prejudice (Cone & Cone, 2011).

Finally, the literature offers widespread benefits of integrated dance; this can help to educate staff, parents, and students, who have concerns about implementing inclusive education. For inclusion to become successful, everyone must be committed. However, it is inevitable that people will have concerns if they know little about the concept. Clearly, integrated dance can have positive implications for applications of inclusion.

Several researchers in NZ (Cheesman, 2009; Hong, 2002; Longley, 2003; Millar & Morton, 2007) have conducted curriculum research from the following angles: in 2009 a comparison of the 2000 and 2007 dance curriculum documents, in 2002 an overview of dance in the New Zealand curriculum and The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000), in 2003 ways in which inclusive and somatic dance education can achieve the holistic education goals of The New Zealand Dance Curriculum (2000), and in 2007 a review of inclusivity in the New Zealand curriculum. However issues of inclusivity in current dance curriculum documents and how these might affect teacher practice have not been simultaneously examined. Also, most dance education and integrated dance research focuses on other countries, but this work hones in on the NZ context. This work therefore fills a literature gap by dissecting possible curriculum interpretation and suggesting new semantics for ensuring inclusion. Literature explored
in this work has shown the many educational benefits of dance, and especially the opportunity to tap into unconventional intelligences. Students are at a significant educational disadvantage if they are excluded from this type of education; and this forms the motivation for my study. A focus on official education documents seems an appropriate starting point for reaching the worldwide quest for inclusion. They are designed by the Ministry of Education (an influential force for teachers) as a support system for teachers nationwide, and are thus likely to inspire the practical thinking and lessons of many dance educators nationally. It is important to establish a strong foundation (curriculum documents) in order to construct a strong and functional structural body (teacher practical applications). We can start from the bottom and work our way up. The next section describes the methodology used to answer the research questions. Data collection methods, analysis and interpretation for this study are identified; also, ethics and research position are discussed.
Chapter Three: A Methodological Approach for New Zealand Dance Curriculum Research

I have employed a qualitative research style to answer the primary research question, ‘how might official dance curriculum documents influence and improve practices of inclusion for students with impairments in NZ?’ Using a document review method and critical discourse analysis as a tool, the following key curriculum documents have been analysed; the Ministry of Education owned The New Zealand Curriculum (2007), The Arts Online (2007b), and The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000), and Bronwyn Hayward’s The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010). Document review was chosen under the conviction that underlying curriculum documents must effectively encompass inclusion, in order to become successful with practical applications of inclusive dance education.

This work focuses on real-life issues in order to instigate social change and increase social equality; these are common characteristics of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). It aims to create a platform of knowledge that is necessary to make positive adjustments (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010) to NZ dance curriculum documents. The intention of these curriculum modifications is an increased participation rate of students with impairments who wish to take the school dance subject.

Qualitative research has flexible boundaries, and this has complicated my choice of methodology. A broad variety of approaches, answers, and researcher interpretations, makes drawing common features of qualitative research difficult; however we do know that a main concern is interpreting the social world (Mason, 2002). Another commonality is using human interactive research methods, such as phenomenology and ethnography (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Mason, 2002). Discourse and content analysis (grounded in semiotics) have, however, been more recently encompassed by qualitative research (Mason, 2002). This study is positioned in the latter, more recent approach.
Curriculum evaluation is extremely important for future implications of dance education. As Blumenfeld-Jones and Liang say, “we must evaluate what exists in order to determine what to do next, what to change, and what new curriculum efforts we might develop” (2007, p. 246). This curriculum research focuses on just a small element of the complex field. As explained by Marsh (2010), the term curriculum is used in a multitude of situations and can be interpreted in many ways. Explicit, formal or planned, null, operationalised, experienced, and hidden, are five parts of curriculum that are identified by scholars (Blumenfeld-Jones & Liang, 2007; Marsh, 2010). This study examines explicit (written) and null curriculums as opposed to operationalised, experienced, and hidden.

Included in explicit and null curriculums are aspects physically written or missed, respectively, from the written NZ curriculum documents. First, it is important to understand that curriculum documents represent the ideal, and not necessarily the actual curriculum (Marsh, 2010). It does not extend to teacher delivery methods (Blumenfeld-Jones & Liang, 2007), but this may be an area for future research focus and include more human interactive methods; for instance interviews and participant observation. Formal written curriculum documents provide substance and guidance for teacher lesson preparation, as well as expectations of tasks used to meet specific goals and standards. They can include goals, objectives, content, teaching techniques, evaluation, assessment and resources (Marsh, 2010). Some, like those used in this study, are official government issued documents that outline how and what to teach. Marsh describes the written curriculum as “the product of creative planning by others” (2010, p. 90) that aim to help other teachers navigate the what, how, and when of teaching. Written curriculum documents help teachers to create coherent, purposeful learning activities. Inclusion-related shortcomings in the documents can therefore directly promote exclusive teaching practices. Consequently, explicit and null curriculum research could be fundamental for the movement towards full inclusion in NZ school dance education.
Data Collection and Analysis: Combination of Movement Research and Document Review

Document review (the primary mode for this study) is dubbed by Marshall and Rossman (2006) as “a method for describing and interpreting the artifacts of a society or social group” (p. 108). Ideas, values, and attitudes that are embedded in permanent written form are revealed; the impressions that these make on corresponding social groups make this type of work important (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a combination of linguistic and social analysis, and is used as a tool for document review in this research. This tool aims to illustrate “how the semiotic, including linguistic, properties of a text connect with what is going on socially in the inter-action” (Fairclough, 2001a, cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 240). Discourses in documents that influence social interactions and create power relationships are explored. In line with my study, CDA focuses on positive social change. Guiding this research is Taylor’s (2004) framework; this involves analysing and interpreting document information in terms of language and word choice, whole text organisation, and grammatical and semantic features. Analysing language choice (including vocabulary and terminology) helps interpret the discourses that are found in documents, and uncover subconscious meanings behind these decisions. Reviewing whole text organisation determines curriculum values that are portrayed by structure, narrative and arguments. Inspecting grammatical and semantic features helps determine the voice and mood of the text, and how information is represented (Taylor, 2004). Taylor’s (2004) framework was intended as a rigid structure for my study. However, as my investigation progressed, a more fluid process developed and allowed some improvisation. This increased the flow and development of my thought processes and ideas. Next, my research process is outlined.

Data was obtained through document review, but also preliminary research conducted for this study involved participant observation and movement research. Over the course of semester one, 2012, I partnered with a fellow dancer with an impairment, Jenny Newstead, weekly in the University of Otago’s Dance Lab studio sessions. Facilitated by Dr. Ojeya Cruz-Banks, this group met twice weekly to collaboratively
develop contemporary dance skills. Jenny Newstead and I further collaborated to create a short integrated dance film. Exploring contact improvisation and partnering lifts became focal points of our meetings. A journal entry that is included in my data chapter might help to help understand this collaborative process.

I continued this integrated dance exploration with five solo studio sessions wherein I assumed the role of a dancer with an impairment. For example, I adapted and modified existing sequences (that were not originally created to accommodate students with impairments) for dancers with physical impairments. Insights into these studio sessions are also shown with a journal entry in the data chapter.

These three experiences gave me insights into integrated dance. I realised how challenging a regular dance class can be for students with impairments. Furthermore, it taught me how integrated dance practice can fuel creativity and promote alternative thought patterns. The movement research also enhanced my understanding of information from the literature. Movement research is integral to my dance research because loosely, as scholars suggest (Cancienne & Snowber, 2003), we can only access the knowledge of the body by living it. They say it can also promote connections between the body and mind.

**Data Analysis**

This section outlines my data analysis phase. Data predominantly consisted of previously published documents; I did however collect information from informal email enquiries, and journal entries based on preliminary movement research. Email communication involved discussions about the level of inclusivity of particular tertiary dance courses. I enquired in this way to seven tertiary dance institutions in NZ, and received responses from five of these.

I adopted a coding process that involved the following actions: identifying codes, grouping codes, descriptive coding, and analytic memos. I used this process to navigate and make sense of the ideas in the curriculum documents in relation to my
study. This process created a starting point for my research, but also helped to shape “an analytic frame from which you build the analysis” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 45). ‘Codes’ were simply words used to track key ideas and themes in the documents; examples include ‘achieving,’ ‘expectations,’ ‘lifelong-interest,’ ‘arts-employment,’ and ‘development’. Analytic memo writing and descriptive coding are both annotative processes that helped me to develop my ideas. Saldana (2009) explains that the purpose of analytic memo writing is:

To document and reflect on: your coding process and code choices; how the process of enquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in your data – all possibly leading toward theory. (p. 32)

Analytic memos can also help to reflect on and write about personal ties to the work; research questions; networks, links, connections, overlaps, flows; emergent or related existing theory; problems; personal and ethical dilemmas; future directions; and the final report (Saldana, 2009). Descriptive coding helps to form ‘bread and butter’ categories for further analytical work. Saldana (2009) gives a clear description and purpose of this, saying that:

Descriptive coding summarizes in a word or short phrase – most often as a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data. To clarify, Tesch (1990) differentiates that “it is important that these [codes] are identifications of the topic, not abbreviations of the content. The topic is what is talked or written about. The content is the substance of the message”. (p. 70)

The next step was to group my codes into categories or major headings. These served as umbrella terms for related codes. For example, the codes mentioned above: ‘achieving,’ ‘expectations,’ ‘lifelong-interest,’ ‘arts-employment,’ and ‘development;’ were grouped into the category: ‘Presumption of Competence.’ I also undertook a further process of re-coding and re-categorising multiple times. This involved refining
initial codes and categories in order to reach lucid terminology, and thus ensure a smoother analysis. Saldana (2009) speaks clearly on the subject, explaining that:

As you code and recode, expect – or rather, strive for – your codes and categories to become more refined. Some of your first cycle codes may be later subsumed by other codes, relabelled, or dropped altogether. As you progress toward second cycle coding, there may be some re-arrangement and reclassification of coded data into different and even new categories. Abbott (2004) cleverly likens the process to “decorating a room; you try it, step back, move a few things, step back again, try a serious reorganisation, and so on”. (p. 215 cited in Saldana, 2009, p. 10)

Analysis was performed simultaneously with coding and recoding. Extrapolating common ideas, key words, and patterns in the documents, as well as using analytic memos and descriptive coding to reflect on these, helped me to develop theoretical categories for my analysis. Marshall and Rossman (2006), McMillan and Schumacher (2010), and Saldana (2009) all agree that intertwining coding and analysis is common for qualitative research, and they inform one another. Data analysis is explained by Marshall and Rossman (2006) as “bringing order, structure and interpretation to a mass of collected data.” They express that this process is “messy, ambiguous, time consuming, creative and fascinating” (p. 154). In other words, it is a complex job. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explain that “most qualitative researchers have learned that there are no set of standard procedures for data analysis or for keeping track of analytical strategies. Making sense of the data depends largely on the researcher’s intellectual rigor and tolerance for tentativeness of interpretation until the analysis is completed” (367). My project can certainly relate closely to these claims, with coding and recording becoming the medium for my analysis. Developing themes also became important for the structure of my work; as Charmaz (2006) says, “coding generates the bones of your analysis. Theoretical integration will assemble these bones into a working skeleton” (p. 45). Eventually, three themes were developed from my coding and recoding system:

- Developing More Critical Understandings of Diversity and Inclusion
• Paying Closer Attention to the Nuances of Student-centred Learning
• The Importance of Teacher Skills and Knowledge

These themes provided a structure for my enquiry and data analysis chapter. ‘Developing More Critical Understandings of Diversity and Inclusion’ enabled analysis of diversity and inclusion discourses running through the curriculum documents. ‘Paying Closer Attention to the Nuances of Student-Centred Teaching’ helped explore the level of student-centred knowledge in the documents and how these might influence teacher practice. ‘The Importance of Teacher Skills and Knowledge’ directed an enquiry into the adequacy of curriculum documents to guide teachers towards inclusive practice. It also raised questions about the effectiveness of tertiary dance education to produce inclusive teachers. I selected document excerpts that best supported each discussion. These excerpts were then analysed within the related theme to explore the research question: how might official dance curriculum documents influence and improve practices of inclusion for students with impairments in NZ? In order to cross-check my findings and conclusions, I presented this work at the 2013 Tertiary Dance Educator’s Network New Zealand Aotearoa (TDENNZA) Conference at the University of Waikato. Within a post-graduate student panel I was able to field questions and discuss my research with NZ dance education scholars. The next section discusses research position and ethics.

**Research Position and Ethics**

Ethical risks were kept to a minimum for this study; this is because my primary data collection method, document review, is unobtrusive and non-reactive (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). My preliminary research involved close collaboration with Dunedin dancer, Jenny Newstead. However my main research project did not involve human interaction. Nevertheless, my research positioning may have detrimental implications for some individuals. Examples include NZ Maori, and dancers with impairments, and this is discussed further below.
Several life experiences inspired my research; this section provides a brief overview of these events to help demonstrate my research position. I trained in tap and jazz dancing from the age of seven. My main motivation at the time was achieving technical perfection for high exam grades and competition results. McCarthy-Brown (2009) describes a similar experience, remembering that “technique had been a gatekeeper and was esteemed by my teachers as the answer to becoming the best dancer possible” (p. 121). However, my notion of dance expanded whilst studying performing arts at the University of Otago. I developed an understanding that technical perfection is just one aspect of dance, and embraced the belief that everyone can dance.

I have a strong passion for advocacy in inclusive dance education. This was impelled by studying the area, and I was inspired by my mother who works in the learner support area of a secondary school. She has a keen interest in helping all children learn. Both of these experiences have increased my sensitivity to educational exclusion due to impairment. They have also fuelled my belief that the NZ dance curriculum documents may have deficiencies that are contributing to this exclusion. I have adopted an understanding that all people have a capacity to learn, and hence I have developed a standpoint as an advocate for promoting equal opportunities for education.

I also draw from my experiences as an able-bodied dancer, and a NZ Pakeha. I acknowledge that I have limited understanding for the physical and emotional challenges that some dancers with impairments might experience. My consequential biases bring advantages and disadvantages in terms of the research findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Again, interactive research methods with a broad range of dancers would have provided insight into their perspectives of dance participation. However, this additional task was beyond my research scope and is a possibility for future research.

I had limited related experience with school teaching, and in integrated dance practices, at the time of this study. Knowing this, I felt a bit speculative analysing curriculum in order to give suggestions for guiding and improving teacher practice in terms of inclusion. Some of my findings and conclusions may therefore appear naive to experienced teachers and integrated dancers. I did, however, cross-check my research
with various mentors who were experienced dance educators as well as scholars. I aspire to become a qualified dance educator myself; and I expect that opportunities for further inclusive dance education research will arise once I am in the teaching profession. This will also present opportunities for testing my own findings. The next section introduces possible research limitations for this work.

Research Limitations

Although the methodology for this study was selected under careful consideration, some limitations do exist. Document review as a method triggered limitations for this work. Firstly, it prevented access to some desirable data during the project. For example, the following questions were unanswered: To what extent do curriculum documents guide teacher practice and lesson planning? How many students with impairments are being excluded in dance education, and why? How many students with impairments are being included in dance education, and is it meaningful? Where do teachers find the support to do so? Interviews with teachers as well as participant observation in the classroom, for instance, might have assisted in answering these questions. Teachers have a complex job; interviews with experienced teachers might have helped to ground the idealism of theory. In addition, my findings and conclusions could have been further cross-checked by teachers and students in this way.

Secondly, the subjectivity of document research created a further methodological limitation. As Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain, materials are open to interpretation by the reader, which can become a limiting factor. This increased the risk of researcher misinterpretation. However, I did cross my analysis with multiple mentors and shared my research at the 2013 TDENNZA conference and festival at the University of Waikato.

Nevertheless, time restrictions allowed for only limited investigation into my research area. I chose document review because it connects with inclusive education issues at a foundational level; it makes sense to work from the bottom up. An
opportunity for future research (using a human interactive methodology) that aims to explore real-life school dance classroom situations is highlighted by this limitation.

A second methodological limitation was the difficulty of accessing specific information about NZ tertiary dance courses. I did obtain limited data via email communication with some tertiary institutions; however responses lacked detail regarding the course content, and how it was delivered. Furthermore, some did not reply at all. Course outlines were available online for many courses, but these were also brief. Thus document review was an insufficient method for analysing tertiary dance content. Further research involving interviews with lecturers and tutors, as well as participant observation in the tertiary dance class, is evidently viable.

A third methodological limitation was having minimal prior research to draw upon. To my knowledge, this and Longley’s (2003) master’s thesis are the only two NZ dance curriculum studies that explore issues of inclusion. Some earlier research does, however, interrelate with my work. For instance, integrated dance, NZ dance curriculum, NZ curriculum and inclusion, and inclusive education are all previous research areas that were helpful for my project. Clearly, more research in the area of dance curriculum and inclusion would be valuable in the future.

This research can have positive implications for NZ dance education. It anticipates helping to build the appropriate knowledge base to enable inclusion-focused NZ dance curriculum reform. I aspire to become an advocate for inclusive dance education, for which I hope to develop some suitable skills and knowledge from this work. As a result I will disseminate my findings at inclusive education and dance education conferences, and eventually publish the study in scholarly journals. Essentially, this research aspires to contribute to the educational movement towards inclusive education, by positively influencing the foundational structures such as dance curriculum documents.
Chapter Four: Critical Dance Curriculum Reviews for Safeguarding Inclusivity in the Classrooms

This chapter answers the primary research question: how might official dance curriculum documents influence and improve practices of inclusion for students with impairments in NZ? Other related questions are: What barriers might these documents create? Do they enable and ensure the participation of all students? How might these documents be improved in terms of inclusion? As the literature review points out, dance education debates in terms of disability and inclusion are hot topics world-wide; however, this thesis ruminates upon the unique NZ context. The following Ministry of Education owned documents are in focus: The New Zealand Curriculum (2007), Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000), and Arts Online (2007). Bronwyn Hayward’s New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010) is also considered. The Ministry of Education can be a highly influential force for teachers. Therefore, exposure to particular attitudes and ideas in the dance curriculum documents might influence the level of inclusivity in teacher practice. The themes that emerged from the document analysis were the following:

- Developing more Critical Understandings of Diversity and Inclusion
- Paying Closer Attention to the Nuances of Student-Centred Learning
- The Importance of Teacher Skills and Knowledge

I begin by outlining the purpose and content of each document. Next, journal entries from my preliminary movement research that helped inform my analysis are outlined. Then, I analyse selected excerpts to explore the implicit and explicit educational ideologies, and potential teacher interpretations. The ideas surrounding diversity in the documents are examined to identify advantages and limitations for dance education inclusion. I also explore here the nuances of student-centred teaching and learning that could ensure better inclusion prescribed by the dance curriculums for
practice in classrooms. To conclude, I summarise the findings and implications of the study, and comment on the importance of on-going curriculum reviews.

The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)

The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) is the original core curriculum statement for the arts comprising of the disciplines dance, drama, music and visual arts. With the development of the more current, less detailed The New Zealand Curriculum (2007), the 2000 document can now be viewed and used as a support document for this. Mandatory requirements, skills and knowledge for arts education are pinpointed within the document. It shows more clearly how learning can back the essential skills, attitudes and values that are identified in The New Zealand Curriculum (2007). Achievement objectives are assigned to each discipline in terms of four interrelated learning strands. Learning examples for each level are provided; these illustrate educational activities that meet the requirements of The New Zealand Curriculum (2007). They can act as guides for teachers who are planning lessons and interpreting achievement objectives. Information is also offered on implementing programmes in the arts, planning school programmes, assessment, using arts with other essential subjects, the arts and the essential skills, attitudes and values, and links with artists in the community. Important considerations when implementing programmes are demonstrated, such as: using appropriate terminology, culturally inclusive programmes, gender issues, gifted and talented students, students with ‘special education’ needs, health and safety, copyright laws and ethical issues.

The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)

The one and a half page arts section of the New Zealand Curriculum (2007) is brief. Written by the Ministry of Education, this document explains what the arts are about, why students should study the arts, how the learning area is structured, and an explanation of what dance is. It finishes with the arts curriculum achievement
objectives, organised in the strands within each level. Cheesman (2009) argues that this 2007 version has deleted a lot of useful detail, to the extent that it devalues the nature of dance. While this information may be covered in the general areas of the arts, she still sees it as a significant issue. However one could dispute this claim since the Ministry of Education did not intend to replace the 2000 document with the revised 2007 one, but instead they were meant to be read in conjunction (Ashley, personal communication, August, 2013). While this may be so, it is clear than even experienced dance educators perceive the new documents to be a replacement, and so it is likely it is being used in this way. For instance, Whyte, Melchior and Cheesman (2013) say that “The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) was launched in 2007, replacing all previous curriculum statements” (p. 93). Furthermore, not only dance, but all of the curriculum areas were given reduced coverage in the revised document (Ashley, Personal Communication, August, 2013). Cheesman (2009) also has concerns about the obvious push that the curriculum is making for schools to develop their own dance programmes, when they are not being provided with appropriate skills, knowledge, or advice to do so.

Arts Online (2007)

Developed and launched by the Ministry of Education in 2001, the goal of this partially interactive website is to assist arts educators with the implementation of school arts education. It is the main provider for support for the arts in New Zealand. Overviews of the curriculum’s vision, principles, values, and key competencies are given. These should underpin all decision making in schools. The document identifies what students will learn throughout school experiences. It outlines achievement objectives, support materials, units of work, access to outside resources, interactive unit planners and advice, and ICT resources. Professional readings are suggested, and these cover a wide range of issues pertaining to dance education. Information and principles surrounding assessment are specified. Methods for learning in collaboration with practicing artists are discussed, and professional art works are made available. Interactive tools are supplied; these include a teacher resource exchange, as well as question, answer and discussion forums. Arts Online (2007a) also provides access to
interactive arts communities. For example, one can sign up to the ‘dancenet’ email community, which enables the sharing of emails, ideas and questions between members.

**The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010)**

The purpose of Bronwyn Hayward’s (2010) recent policy is to increase the participation of disabled people in dance in NZ. It envisions that anybody who wants to dance can do so, regardless of age and ability. Interviews and surveys were conducted with disability service providers, disability organisations, disabled people, and dance organisations, in order to reach the final product. These groups were also involved in a document draft consultation process. Four main strategies are identified for achieving the document’s goal; these are labelled as, Visible, Skilled, Accessible, and Connected. Visible sees that “integrated dance is a recognised part of the wider dance industry” (Hayward, 2010, p. 5). Skilled ensures that “educated, ongoing training is supported” (Hayward, 2010, p. 5). Accessible aims to ensure that “dance spaces, information and experiences are all accessible” (Hayward, 2010, p. 5). Connected foresees that “networks, organisations and partnerships are developed and utilised” (Hayward, 2010, p. 5). Hayward notes that this strategy depends on each focus area being effectively implemented for it to be viable. Two preliminary research journal entries are provided next in order to help clarify the movement processes that partially informed my analysis.

**Journal entry one: Collaborative Studio Session.** Today’s session was my second collaboration with Jenny where lifting was the focus. I felt more comfortable today, as I knew I could trust Jenny to hold my weight. I found this trust to be the key enabler to our collaboration. Yesterday our work was stagnant, it didn’t flow. Upon reflection this was because a) I haven’t had much experience with lifting, and b) I have never worked with Jenny before. I was aware of the physical impairment she has in her legs and did not know her related limits. I found that I was thinking about what movement was coming next too much. Today I realised this and tried to let my body just do its thing. Jenny made some helpful suggestions. She suggested that I closed my eyes and to just feel the way. This was a helpful strategy for avoiding over-thinking. It allowed my body to move in a natural way with Jenny’s. She also said aloud that I
could trust her. This verbal communication before we began moving together was a break-through for our collaboration. We began freely pouring weight into each other and building momentum, which helped glide into smooth lifts (07\textsuperscript{th} May 2012).

Journal entry two: Solo Studio Session. In today’s solo studio session I built on an energetic movement sequence learnt in an invigorating afro-contemporary dance class run by Ojeya Cruz-Banks last week. After warming up and settling into my own comfortable body-movements for the sequence, I modified the movements based on particular criteria. These criteria had the aim of experiencing pre-existing choreographies from the perspective of students with various impairments. The three different criteria I gave myself were performing the sequence a) without the working use of my legs, b) with closed eyes, and c) without the use of my right arm. The first task prompted a floor-based version of the movement sequence, which opened up new and unexplored ways of moving across the room for me. In the second task, while at first very cautious, I found my body relaxed into the movements more, and I felt an increasing flow. After firstly struggling to teach my body to refrain from using one of my arms in the third exercise, I continued to feel that my movements were unbalanced. I felt as though my arm was needed for an extension here, or a sweep there, to feel as though movements were complete and satisfying. I found all of the tasks initially difficult, as they challenged my natural instinctive body movements. However after spending enough time experimenting with these new ways of moving, I found my mind and body opened up to many new movement possibilities. The boundaries for movement became a lot less restricted during this studio session, proving a great exercise for both the mind and body. These exercises allowed and will continue to allow my body to venture freely into new ways of moving (21\textsuperscript{st} May 2012).

The following section will dissect and interpret excerpts from the documents, and explore the discourses of diversity and inclusiveness, to suggest how the documents could be developed. I discuss the ways that curriculum can influence, improve, or create barriers towards practices of inclusion for students with impairments in NZ dance education; in doing so I raise a number of
critical perspectives regarding diversity. Chosen excerpts will be used to highlight the points in focus, and these will be labelled with and referred to by numbers. The first part highlights enablers for diversity and inclusion in the documents, and the second part identifies barriers.

**Developing More Critical Understandings of Diversity and Inclusion**

Acknowledging and responding to student diversity is a key theme in the Ministry of Education owned documents, and is the main purpose of *The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010)*. The three Ministry of Education documents acknowledge both general student diversity and students with impairments specifically. I analyse five curriculum excerpts in this section.

This *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* document excerpt highlights a goal to make links with artists in the community.

1. *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* provides rich opportunities for schools, artists, and arts organisations to collaborate in learning experiences for students. Although some teachers of the arts are practising artists, students will also benefit from opportunities to interact with and learn from artists and others outside schools with local cultural knowledge, arts sector experience, and arts-related skills.

As part of their learning in the four strands of each arts discipline, students may, for example:

- participate in skills-based workshops or demonstrations with artists from the local community;
- seek advice and feedback from practising artists when planning and undertaking new projects;
- take part in community projects with an arts component;
- view, listen to, and respond to live performances or presentations;
• participate in partnerships between their school and community agencies involved in the arts;
• interview artists about social and cultural influences and other references in their work.

Teachers may invite artists into their classrooms or arrange for students to visit them in their own environments. Artists may also participate in residency projects, where they work with a school or cluster of schools for an extended period. In such situations, schools should ensure that expectations are reasonable and agreed in advance.

Artists or arts organisations may approach schools directly, offering performances, workshops, or other activities. These opportunities may help schools meet curriculum requirements in the arts and in other areas, such as English or social studies. Touring artists provide opportunities for students outside main centres to experience exhibitions and live performances. Schools should require such programmes and activities to demonstrate high artistic and educational standards, to suit the age groups for which they are intended, and to take account of the gender, cultural backgrounds, and special needs of students. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 103)

Also, in The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) selection below, there is a ‘high expectations’ principle to ensure that students’ individual circumstances do not negatively affect their achievement. This is one of eight principles that are identified as foundations of curriculum decision making.

2. The curriculum supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal excellence, regardless of their individual circumstances. (Ministry of Education, 2007a, P. 9)

Both of the extracts above encourage high expectations for student performance and achievement. Excerpt One places value on high artistic and educational standards,
and Excerpt Two values personal excellence for all. Exposing these morals in the documents can help encourage teachers to display high expectations, and presume competence of their students. Many scholars claim that maintaining high expectations and optimistic beliefs about students (regardless of their current learning capacities) will positively influence achievement levels (Florian & Linklater, 2010; Hart, Drummond & Macintyre, 2007; Snow, 2007-2012). MacArthur (2009) explains that teachers need to view all students as capable, active learners. For instance, if teachers provide students with simple, meaningless activities, then they will achieve exactly that; simple, meaningless activities (Henderson, 2011). Instead, teachers should set challenging, meaningful, and engaging work, and truly believe that their students can accomplish it; then students are more likely to respond positively and rise to the occasion (Fitton, 2010; Inclusive teaching, 2003; Wallace, 2010). When adopting this positive attitude towards student achievement, teachers can help stimulate an improvement in practices of inclusion (Kasa-Hendrickson, 2005; MacArthur, 2009; Snow 2007-2012). In places, the documents do certainly model positive attitudes towards student diversity. This was demonstrated in Excerpt One, and is also explored in the next section.

The age group, gender, cultural background, and special needs of students are all identified in Excerpt One as aspects of diversity that should be considered when developing classroom programmes. With the documents encompassing this obligation, teachers might be persuaded to take the diversity of their specific students into serious consideration; they can then shape lessons accordingly. Student-specific class work is essential for inclusion, as well as meaningful education for all (Robinson, 2013). Unfortunately, many teachers take issue with this responsibility, with the belief that their practice and thus lessons have become perfected with experience, and should remain unchanged (Kluth, Biklen, English-Sand & Smukler, 2007; Ryndak, Orlando, Storch, Denney & Huffman, 2011). Such matters increase the worth of curriculum documents that encourage teachers to positively respond to classroom diversity. The next excerpt and discussion demonstrates how the dance curriculum documents at times directly concentrate on educating students with impairments.
Excerpt Three is from the document the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)*. The following information focuses on students with ‘special education needs.’

3. Education in the arts disciplines provides all students, whatever their abilities, with opportunities for cognitive and emotional development. Dance, drama, music, and the visual arts enable ideas and emotions to be expressed in ways alternative to conventional means of communication. Through involvement in the arts disciplines, all students can develop ideas, initiate interactions, and express and share their feelings.

Students with ‘special education’ needs include those with physical and intellectual disabilities, sensory impairments, communication difficulties, medical and related conditions, and learning and behavioural difficulties. Although special education needs may affect students’ ability to learn in particular areas of the school curriculum, they may still achieve highly in one or more of the arts disciplines. Schools should aim to identify such students as early as possible and to consult with parents, other teachers, and specialist educators in order to ensure that planning and assessment approaches take account of their particular needs and circumstances.

Whatever their capabilities, students with special education needs should have opportunities to progress and achieve in the arts disciplines. This may require individualised programmes and specialised material or equipment. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 105)

The documents strive to ensure that recognition of student diversity does not cause lesser opportunities or exclusion from classroom activities. High achievement for all students is encouraged in both Excerpts Two and Three; the first supports personal excellence, and the second promotes cognitive and emotional development, both irrespective of diversity, personal circumstances or abilities. Therefore, teachers should not refuse any student from arts education opportunities for any reason. A student’s physical injury, for instance, must not affect a teacher’s attitude or action towards their achievement potential; this is an idea supported by Snow (2007-2012) and Biklen and
Burke (2006). Instead, an inclusive teacher would consider possible actions that enable the student to fulfil their potential in alternative ways (Riley & Henderson, 2011).

In the preliminary research that employed integrated methods for dance, I discovered new movement possibilities and unlocked for me an abundance of alternative ways to create and perform dance. These are ways in which teachers can adapt lessons in order for students to reach their highest potentials. I consequently developed a new viewpoint that integrated dance helps to extend the boundaries of what is dance success. I started to grasp the way integrated dance can amplify creative possibilities and enhance alternative thinking processes.

Excerpt Three suggests that communicating with students’ (who have impairments) family members and relevant colleagues can help to increase inclusion. It states that “schools should aim to identify such students as early as possible and to consult with parents, other teachers, and specialist educators in order to ensure that planning and assessment approaches take account of their particular needs and circumstances” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 83). This communication can help students with impairments to receive the best possible opportunities by correctly catering to their self-perceived needs. This is important because unwanted support can be more of a hindrance than a help (Mortier, Desimpel, De Schauwer & Van Hove, 2011; De Schauwer, Van Hove, Mortier & Loots, 2009; Davis and Watson, 2001). Prezant and Marshak (2006) explain that “some forms of help open doors and expand options, while other forms can be experienced as oppressive” (p. 31). However with useful communication, a common goal can be achieved between all parties involved (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Hayes, 2010; Vellucci, 2005). The fact that familial and collegial communication is suggested in the documents means that teachers might be more aware of the approach; teachers will thus be more likely to apply it in practice. Communicating with the students themselves is also essential for successful inclusion. As explained next, dance lends itself to this necessity.

Excerpt Three shows that dance provides an alternative to conventional forms of communication. It pronounces that “dance, drama, music, and the visual arts enable ideas and emotions to be expressed in ways alternative to conventional means of
communication” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 83). Cotton and Kopytko (2011) explain that dance is sensory, and thus verbal communication is not necessary (but can still be used if desired). For instance, relationships can be communicated by touch (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011). Through dance, students can also successfully communicate with teachers and peers about their preferred movement and learning styles. This is useful for students who have conventional communicative impairments such as speech and gestural movement. With this communicatory tactic being stated in the documents, teachers may become more attuned to different communication methods; they can then use these with students, which can ultimately lead to improved inclusive practice. Clearly, embracing the ways that students communicate is important for inclusion.

By encompassing the value of positive teacher attitudes towards and support for students, the documents have the ability to raise teachers’ awareness of their personal responses to students’ unique circumstances. This ideology can help prevent exclusion and improve practices of inclusion in dance education. The importance of inclusion is reinforced within various excerpts by using inclusive language; this includes both whole phrases and single terms, and is discussed next.

Inclusive language-use in the documents can help to build an ethos of commitment towards inclusion in the classroom. This excerpt from The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) demonstrates that the document holds a value on inclusion.

4. The New Zealand Curriculum applies to all English-medium state schools (including integrated schools) and to all students in those schools, irrespective of their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, belief, ability, or disability, social or cultural background, or geographical location. The term “students” is used throughout in this inclusive sense unless the context clearly relates to a particular group. (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 6)

Clearly, the Ministry of Education aims for curriculum implementation to be inclusive. To reinforce this inclusive philosophy, the documents sometimes use the phrasing ‘all students’, and this is exemplified in Excerpts Two, Three, and Four above.
Excerpt Two claims that the curriculum “supports and empowers all students to learn and achieve personal excellence” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, P. 9), and Excerpt Three states that arts education “provides all students, whatever their abilities, with opportunities for cognitive and emotional development” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 105). By placing this adjective in front of the word ‘students,’ the documents can help reduce the risk of teachers excluding any single student. It reinforces the idea that every student in the class must be involved in all classroom activities, and given all available opportunities, regardless of diversity.

The term ‘inclusion’ is another example of positive language-use in the Arts Online (2007) document. Converse to singling out individual students and their differences, this term identifies all students together in the class (Higgins et. al., 2006). This mindset perceives the integration of both students with and without impairments as an ordinary experience (Slee & Gourley, 2010), and thus increases the likelihood of equal opportunities for all. Language is further implicated with inclusivity in the following example.

The next excerpt from The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) affirms the power of language for inclusion, with an aim to embrace students’ own languages; it also extends to acknowledging other differences.

5. The curriculum is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory; it ensures that students’ identities, languages, abilities, and talents are recognised and affirmed and that their learning needs are addressed. (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9)

In Excerpt Five, The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) asserts an open attitude toward student diversity by pronouncing that it is non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory. This highlights the intention of the Ministry of Education to embody and promote inclusive philosophies for NZ education. NZ educators will be exposed to this document objective; and this may help encourage teachers to implement inclusive practices. Ideally, this exposure to positive document values will increase the number of
teachers who incorporate inclusive attitudes, and an open attitude towards diversity will become widespread throughout NZ schools.

The diversity-focused excerpts above provide a multitude of positive enablers for inclusion. Simply, the fact that the documents mention diversity (with some emphasis on students with impairments) and dance education is a good sign. This discussion has highlighted some ways that NZ curriculum documents embody inclusive values, and how this might work to improve practices of inclusion in NZ dance education. These include high standards and expectations, an open attitude towards diversity, inclusive language choices, and student-specific programme planning. Importance is placed on ensuring personal circumstance does not negatively affect a student’s education. Dance is promoted as an alternative form of communication. Communication with the students’ caregivers and support staff is encouraged. These principles of inclusivity offer positive examples for teacher practice. Curriculum documents provide a foundation for teacher programme planning, based on Ministry of Education recommendations and requirements. Thus incorporating inclusive philosophies in the documents will potentially have a positive influence on teachers practicing inclusively. Improvements of inclusivity in NZ dance education would be less likely if these values were absent from the documents. Unfortunately, the documents also expose teachers to ambiguities for inclusion, as discussed in the next section.

Avoiding Diversity and Inclusion Ambiguities

Aside from the small sections based on educating students with impairments, diversity in the curriculum documents is heavily focused on cultural diversity, and especially Maori culture. Cultural diversity is indeed an important consideration for dance educators (Ashley, 2012; Hokowhitu, 2004; McCarthy-Brown, 2009). However, it is important that other aspects of diversity are also in consistent focus, such as differences in terms of bodies and abilities relevant to students with impairments. Hence, the documents at hand do highlight the need to expand our notions of diversity
in NZ; from cultural diversity to other varieties of student difference. Helping to reduce the student achievement gap is a good reason for expanding our ideas of diversity. Once we understand that diversity is a broad and complex phenomenon, we can then embrace all forms of difference. Our approaches to education can then be individualised, and can engage our specific students’ curiosity, individuality, and creativity, which is deemed important by Sir Ken Robinson (2013). My preliminary movement research confirmed for me that individualising work can indeed help capture these three traits (curiosity, individuality, and creativity) of inclusive education; it emphasised the learning benefits for all students that can be presented by integrated dance.

This research suggests a need to develop a section for the documents that disseminates information about inclusion and integrated dance; this would help to transmit the knowledge between all dance educators now and in the future. Current segments that are based on educating students with impairments do help to acknowledge diversity in terms of different bodies and abilities. They neglect, however, to provide much useful advice on how to practice inclusion in terms of students with impairments. Unfortunately, these small passages are insufficient for achieving the broader perception of diversity that is needed in NZ education. The segments thus require some development in order to include more meaningful and useful insights, as discussed next.

Portions of the documents that are devoted to educating students with impairments (such as Excerpt Three) are positive, yet appear somewhat tokenistic. While the documents do acknowledge the necessity of inclusion, they do not clarify ways in which to achieve this goal. These sections tend to suggest to teachers that applying inclusive practices is the right thing to do, but is not essential. Instead, one reads that teachers ‘should’ apply inclusivity, a lack of guidance toward this, and an under-commitment to this goal, which is demonstrated by contradiction, explained in more detail below.

An unsupported claim in the documents (stated in Excerpt Five) is the non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory standpoint. It is clear from this statement that the Ministry of Education understands the importance of being non-discriminatory;
however, this is counteracted by the use of unintended inequitable language in various learning examples. A lesson plan from *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* document suggests that students should “explore the element of body awareness by stretching, bending, and twisting while standing, kneeling, and walking” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 22). Unfortunately, this learning example excludes (and thus discriminates against) students who cannot stand, kneel, or walk due to unique body function. If this activity was rephrased as, “explore the element of awareness by stretching, bending, and twisting at three various levels,” then all students could execute this activity in their own ways. This approach is known as an ‘open-ended direction’, and is identified by Petersen and Kaufmann (2002) as an important strategy for inclusion in the dance class. ‘Open-ended direction’ removes any notion of ‘right’ and ‘wrong.’ I personally found this method useful for enhancing creativity and movement possibilities in my own preliminary movement research. The potentially exclusive language that has been discussed here is scattered throughout the documents; it is discriminatory to students with some impairments. Inappropriate language choices create even further ambiguities for inclusion in the documents, and these are discussed below.

The phrase, ‘special needs,’ is used to refer to students with impairments in Excerpt Three. When used in relation to students with impairments, the term ‘special’ is loaded with exclusive values and is the counter-part to ‘inclusion’ (Kearney & Kane, 2006). In contrast to ‘inclusive education’, ‘special education’ places the problem with the child; it is concerned with emphasising their pathological and deficit differences (Higgins, MacArthur & Rietveld 2006). By separating students with impairments from those without, ‘special education’ becomes a form of social control (Purdue, 2006; Slee & Gourley, 2010). In this situation, they are often provided with different, insignificant and less constructive treatment (Purdue, 2006). It might be confusing for teachers, then, when the curriculum documents use the word ‘special needs’ to promote the inclusion of students with impairments.

As renowned education reform advocate Ken Robinson (2013) explains, human beings are naturally different and diverse. However, our education system is based on
conformity. For example, in a ‘special education’ approach, the response to this diversity is to withdraw students from the class. Once these students are out of the way, classes can continue to complete work that is based on conformity (often in the form of core subjects). However, schools should give equal weighting to all subjects across the curriculum; a result would be enhanced levels of engagement, curiosity, individuality, and creativity, and thus higher achievement for all students (Robinson, 2013). Clearly in this view of education, schools are held responsible for adapting to their individual students’ needs in order to provide the best learning outcomes and achievement levels. However, in ‘special education,’ the problem lies with the child, they get removed, and the educational approaches remain the same; this does not solve our problem of achievement gaps. It is confusing to simultaneously discuss ‘inclusive education’ and use terminology from a ‘special education’ paradigm (Higgins, MacArthur & Rietveld, 2006). Terms such as: ‘inclusive’ and ‘special’ are used across the documents, and research signals a need to expose this hazy terminology. The ambiguous language may misguide practicing teachers, and this presents a significant barrier to inclusion (Higgins, MacArthur, and Rietveld, 2006).

Excerpt Three claims that a person’s ‘special education needs’ may impinge on their ability to learn. It states that “although special education needs may affect students’ ability to learn in particular areas of the school curriculum, they may still achieve highly in one or more of the arts disciplines” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 105). This places the problem with the child; it emphasises impairment as a pathological deficit difference and disadvantage. However, all students have high abilities to learn, and this fact remains the same regardless of impairments. This is a point that is supported by Hart, Drummond and McIntyre (2007), who argue that all students have the ability to reach high educational standards; it is the educator’s role to provide the right conditions for them to do so. A person is not born with a set, and unchangeable, capacity to learn; a change for the better can be a result of what happens in the present (Hart, Drummond & McIntyre, 2007). These scholars warn that,

Fixed ability is not just a deeply flawed and unjust way of explaining differences in learning and achievement; it also exerts an active, powerful
force within school and classroom processes, helping to create the very limits and disparities of achievement that it purports to explain. (Hart, Drummond & McIntyre, 2007, p. 500)

Clearly, it is important for teachers to consider all students as capable of improving academically. Students’ learning styles and preferences may differ; schools should take responsibility for providing appropriate accommodations for each individual student to learn successfully.

Issues arise when The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) states that students with ‘special education needs’ should ‘have’ opportunities for success in education. The sentence, “Whatever their capabilities, students with special education needs should have opportunities to progress and achieve in the arts disciplines”, (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 105) (from Excerpt Three) suggests that the Ministry of Education is aware that all students must receive equal opportunities. However it does not clearly place this responsibility on schools. The provision of reasonable accommodations is, however, a schools’ responsibility by law (Human Rights Commission, 2009).

The same The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) quote demonstrates an additional language-based barrier to inclusion; the use of the word ‘should.’ ‘Should’ is used in Excerpt Three to suggest that the document finds a particular action important. Unfortunately, the use of this word implies that the action is favourable, but not essential. The dictionary offers the following explanation of the word ‘should’: “Core Meaning: modal verb indicating that something is the right thing for somebody to do. Expressing desirability or rightness” (Online English Encarta Dictionary, 2007). Replacing the word ‘should’ with ‘must,’ or ‘will,’ for example, implies that it is an essential requirement and removes possible excuses for teachers. Currently, using the word ‘should’ provides teachers with a choice of whether or not to follow through with actions that are imperative for inclusion. It might negatively affect the levels of inclusive practice in NZ dance education. This discussion shows that potentially exclusive language needs to be removed from the documents; however it is equally important for the documents to incorporate inclusive language and information, as discussed below.
Currently, the term ‘all students’ is implemented in some parts of the documents. Even so, the policies could further promote inclusivity if the words ‘all students’ replace the word ‘students’ in all circumstances. This could help to ensure that every student is included in each task. Here it is important to acknowledge the existence of Excerpt Five, which is situated early in *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)* and explains that when ‘students’ is mentioned, it encompasses all forms of diversity. However, one can take issue with this, because ‘all students’ is still used in some parts of the curriculum; and this places more importance on some educational areas than others. Therefore using the word, ‘students,’ alone allows a loophole for some students to be excluded; it does not reinforce the fact that every student must participate in the task concerned. Teachers may thus exclude a student from an activity due to injury, for example, without negating the guidelines of the official dance education documents. However, if the words ‘all students’ were used, teachers would be expected by the documents (and therefore the Ministry of Education) to find appropriate accommodations that enable the student to participate in the task at hand. Using inclusive language is an idea that is supported by scholars (El Haj, Renda & Rubin, 2009; The University of Washington, 2008) and is crucial for the curriculum documents.

Excerpt Three shows that the documents promote communication with family members about student’s needs, and that this can enhance educational circumstances. However, discussing individual needs and preferences with students themselves is also vital (Whatley, 2007), and this necessity is missed from the documents. A student’s family will be equipped with extensive knowledge and understanding about their children’s needs. Yet, it is most important that students themselves are involved in all actions and decision-making processes that concern their own education (Carrington & Robinson, 2006). Failure to do so has been identified as a significant barrier to inclusion (Mortier, Desimpel, De Schauwer & Van Hove, 2011). This crucial point needs to be written into the curriculum documents; otherwise, the likelihood of teachers communicating meaningfully with students is reduced. With document attitudes, values, and discourses being deeper structures of education, these have the potential to influence educational practice. Millar and Morton (2007) contend that “one of the real
dangers of the current period of development is that while the surface structures are changed, the existing deep structures remain in place” (p. 168).

To summarise the above discussion, the curriculum documents are equipped with many positive enablers for inclusion. These range from the actual presence of this conversation itself, to the use of inclusive language. Knowledge of dance as an alternative form of communication is expressed. High educational standards, personal excellence, cognitive, and emotional development regardless of individual circumstance, are supported. Familial communication is recommended to achieve optimum lesson planning. Age, gender, culture, and special needs of students are recognised as aspects of diversity to be considered when planning lessons. Simultaneously, however, ambiguities exist that may create barriers for inclusion. The tokenistic nature of the sections about students with impairments, and inequitable language, is noted here in order to move towards a more critical understanding of diversity. Furthermore, this section makes clear that the notion of diversity in NZ needs to be expanded from the mainstream conversation about cultural distinctions to a broad spectrum of differences that includes different bodies, abilities, and students with impairments.

The next section discusses both subtle and more apparent nuances of student-centred teaching in the curriculum documents. It is of significance, as student-centred teaching is fundamental for achieving meaningful education for all students. Ken Robinson (2013) argues this point in saying that education must be relevant, engaging, and suitable for the specific students in a class, and thus centred on the students themselves. Firstly, strengths for student-centred learning and inclusion are highlighted, and secondly, barriers are identified. Excerpts have been chosen to highlight the points in focus.
Paying Closer Attention to the Nuances of Student-Centred Learning

A key theme in the documents is student-centred learning, with related teaching and learning approaches consistently embedded in the writing. This speaks positively considering the amount of integrated dance scholars who value student-centred teaching as important for inclusivity in the dance class (Cone & Cone, 2011; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Hayes, 2010; Kuppers & Marcus, 2009; Vellucci, 2005; Whatley, 2007). For the purpose of this discussion, student-centred teaching and learning consists of (but is not limited to) providing and allowing student choice (Benjamin, 2002; Vellucci, 2005; Whatley, 2007; Zitomer & Reid, 2011), variation (Cone & Cone, 2011; Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002; Whatley, 2007), relevance (Whatley, 2007), own ways of doing things (Benjamin, 2002; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002; Whatley, 2007), and imagination (Robinson, 2013; Kuppers, 2000; Root-Bernstein & Root-Bernstein, 2003). Five excerpts have been chosen from the curriculum documents in order to critique the levels and effectiveness of student-centred concepts that are employed.

*The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)* lists eight ‘principles’ that are intended to act as “foundations of curriculum decision making” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 9). In an overview, it is clear that these principles are designed to support student-centred teaching and learning:

1. These principles put the students at the centre of teaching and learning, asserting that they should experience a curriculum that engages and challenges them, is forward-looking and inclusive, and affirms New Zealand’s unique identity. (Ministry of Education, 2007a, P. 9)

This quotation clearly and intentionally states the importance of using student-centred approaches; the principles claim to put students at the centre of teaching and learning. It encourages teachers to engage and challenge students, which is identified as vital for inclusive education by Sir Ken Robinson (2013). Teachers are exposed to the Ministry of Education’s value on student-centred education, and this can positively persuade their practice. The Ministry of Education is a highly influential force for
teachers, and so they may be inspired to adopt student-centred approaches themselves. Unfortunately, the document does not elaborate by providing specific student-centred strategies or learning examples to guide teachers. Consequently teachers are left responsible for the actual execution of student-centred teaching; this raises issues of inadequate teacher preparation, skills, and knowledge for the task, discussed in the next section of this thesis. The dance curriculum documents do intertwine subtle nuances of student-centred learning, which may work to subconsciously influence teachers. These subtle nuances of student-centred teaching and learning are now discussed. These are not enough, however, to really ensure that teachers are providing student-centred practices in NZ classrooms.

The subtle nuances of inclusion that are embedded in the documents include (but are not limited to) the following: promoting student-relevant lessons, casting a future focus on students’ education, encouraging students to use their own personal movement vocabularies and preferences, offering variation to lesson content and styles, providing safe dance practices, endorsing student imagination, and encouraging active community involvement.

Embracing NZ’s unique identity in dance education is prioritised in the excerpts. For example, Excerpt One recommends that curriculum “affirms New Zealand’s unique identity” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, P. 9). Actioning this value can contribute to a student-centred teaching and learning approach, as it creates relevancy of lessons to all students in the nation. Using content that is relevant to the students means that they will be more interested in the work, and therefore become more engaged and meaningfully involved (Robinson, 2013). Inclusion is promoted when all students’ interests are taken into consideration and utilised. As well as considering all students’ interests, an interest in the students is important. Focusing on their futures is an effective way to do this, as discussed next.

Excerpt One demonstrates the value of maintaining a future focus for students’ education. It explains that the document principles assert that students “should experience a curriculum that is forward-looking and inclusive” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, P. 9). Educating with a student’s future in mind, and helping students’ plan and
prepare for their futures, is a way to show a presumption of competence (Wallace, 2010), and is a strategy for inclusion discussed by various scholars (e.g. Biklen & Burke, 2006; Snow, 2007-12). This can help to increase the long-term achievement of all students in the dance class. Allowing students to explore their own unique movements without the fear of being wrong is a key to presuming student competence, and this idea is covered next.

This next citation is from *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* document. It comes under the heading *Dance: Strands, Achievement Objectives, and Learning Examples*, and within the strand *Developing Practical Knowledge in Dance*.

2. Students extend their personal movement vocabularies and movement preferences and they learn about and apply safe dance practices in individual, pair, and group activities. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 20)

This Excerpt Two encourages teachers to allow students to use their own personal movement vocabularies and movement preferences in dance education. Scholars argue that this is an effective strategy for student-centred learning and is central to inclusion (Kaufmann, 2006; Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002). My own movement research affirmed this argument for me; given the flexibility to use my own movement preferences, I was able to explore new and limitless horizons for my creativity. By using their own movement vocabularies and preferences, students can execute activities in unique ways that are relevant and achievable for them. Furthermore, students are then included in the decision making process for choosing learning-content and styles. Smyth (2000) explains that “When students are invited to be ‘co-constructors and co-creators’ rather than passive consumers, students’ perspectives, cultures, and experiences come into the centre of the curriculum” (cited in Carrington & Robinson, 2006, p. 330). This method has been shown to create a sense of belonging, and in turn positively affects the academic motivation and performance of students (Carrington & Robinson, 2006). As discussed next, offering variation within classes is another way to include students in decision making processes; it also helps to shape lessons to be as relevant to all students as possible.
Excerpt Two exemplifies ways in which *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* offers variation in the classroom; it presents three possible methods for performing an activity. In this case, the document covers all three methods of individual, group, and pair work in one learning exercise, and this provides a form of variation to the lesson. Giving an array of options enables each student to identify with one that suits them, and thus experience success at some point. If variation is absent, then students may never identify positively with learning styles or content. Inclusivity understands that every person learns differently. Offering a variation of delivery methods and resources, for example, allows teachers to accommodate for all of these differences (*Inclusive Teaching*, 2003). Different ways of processing information does not suggest different levels of intelligence (*Inclusive Teaching*, 2003). Teachers must acknowledge the different ways of learning as competence, not weakness, and encourage students to really use these strengths for their learning (*Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Inclusive Teaching*, 2003). This means that if a student thrives in a group learning situation, let them learn in groups. If a student learns individually, let them work alone. The style of the instruction in Excerpt Two allows this to happen. Another reason that students may not realise their optimal learning conditions is if classroom practices are not safe, both physically and emotionally.

The documents explicitly encourage the use of safe dance practices, as shown in Excerpt Two. It recommends that “Students extend their personal movement vocabularies and movement preferences and they learn about and apply safe dance practices in individual, pair, and group activities” (*Ministry of Education, 2000*, p. 20). Considering the safety of students locates them at the centre of class action. Applying safe classroom practices helps make dance education more accessible. More students can feel confident entering the dance classroom if safety is not an issue. A sense of physical, mental, and emotional safety can give dance students the freedom and confidence to become more deeply involved in lessons. Once students feel safe, they are more likely to become engaged with learning content. Students can then increase their contributions in the classroom, and they can profit more from the education. Both physical and emotional safety in the integrated dance class is deemed important by *Hayward (2010)* to ensure accessibility. *Stollar, Poth, Curtis and Cohen (2006)* draw a
relationship between safe, caring, responsive and participatory schools, and academic achievement and healthy development. Soriano and Batson (2011) found that a sense of safety allowed their students to master the content, to take risks, and to push themselves. The emotional safety allows students to really explore, create, and come up with new ideas, without the added pressure of having to get it right (Soriano & Batson, 2011). A personal example is from my preliminary partnering movement research, where ideas did not begin to prosper until trust (and thus emotional safety) was formed in the environment. Rich experiences of imagination can stem from this, the value of which is articulated below.

Here is a teaching suggestion and lesson description from The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) document.

3. Explore the element of energy by investigating the way the body moves through imagined environments (e.g. hot sand, sticky mud, slippery ice). Brainstorm other environments, both real and imagined, for moving through. In small groups, select three different environments and create a movement sequence that shows a journey across or through these environments. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 23)

Using imagination is highlighted in this lesson plan. The fact that students are required to come up with their own stimuli – in this case, imagined environments, promotes imagination. Imagination-influenced lessons means content is taken directly from students’ interests and preferences; this helps create a strongly student-centred classroom environment. Imagination-based lesson approaches foster more student choice and hence, content relevance is ensured. Inclusion is more secure in a pedagogy valuing imagination because it is a form of creativity. Creativity is essential for all students’ education, and particularly those who struggle with the core subject areas. Fostering creative imagination in the classroom helps to access a form of intelligence that is otherwise unavailable. Thus, more students are reached and engaged, leading to meaningful and fruitful education for more students. Importance of creativity is strongly advocated for by Ken Robinson (2013) because it can help achieve higher participation and success rates in schools. He argues that schools currently ‘kill’ students’ creativity
because they place more value on subjects like English, mathematics, and science than the arts. Creativity will be shown differently in each individual, and it is valuable for students to experience this diversity in the classroom. This leads to the benefits of students becoming involved in the community, an idea that is supported by the curriculum documents and discussed below.

The following is one of five ‘key competencies’ that are identified by *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)*, named ‘participating and contributing’.

4. This competency is about being actively involved in communities. Communities include family, whanau, and school and those based, for example, on a common interest or culture. They may be drawn together for purposes such as learning, work celebration, or recreation. They may be local, national, or global. This competency includes a capacity to contribute appropriately as a group member, to make connections with others, and to create opportunities for others in the group. (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 13)

As shown in the above Excerpt Four, the document recommends active community involvement. Community involvement is an effective strategy for personal development. Students can find a sense of belonging through this involvement, which is useful for inclusion. Interacting with a broad range of people in communities is useful for developing open minds, and thus increasing interpersonal skills. Accepting and embracing diversity amongst different people, and interacting with people who are different to you, is crucial for reducing prejudice and thus achieving an inclusive environment (Zitomer & Reid, 2011). It is another skill that can be developed through community involvement. The following segment discusses different approaches to assessment in terms of suggestions in the curriculum documents.

Excerpt Five from *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* document demonstrates the importance of using assessment appropriately.
5. Assessment is integral to learning and achieving in the arts. Effective assessment promotes students’ learning, raises standards, and reduces disparity of achievement. Classroom practice and school-wide arts programmes should use assessment for these purposes rather than a means of comparing or ranking students’ achievement. (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 91)

Excerpt Five displays ways in which student-centred approaches to assessment are encouraged in the documents. Assessment items that are used in ways that benefit students’ learning progress and achievement are recommended, and harmful ways (such as to compare and rank student achievement) are discouraged. Student-centred methods of assessment are more inclusive, as they avoid comparing students’ test results; they therefore avoid labelling differences. Rather, they assess the effectiveness of current teaching and what students are actually learning. We can then understand what needs to be maintained or changed in order to provide the best educational opportunities for each individual student (Stinson, 2005). Warburton (2002, 2003) agrees that assessment methods need to be varied and intelligence-fair. Distinguishing between valuable and harmful assessment methods and purposes in the documents might help to increase teachers’ awareness of their own assessment practices; hopefully this can positively influence them to adopt inclusive approaches.

The above curriculum documents all prescribe strong philosophies of student-centeredness. However, there are some uncertainties that might work to counteract inclusion. Just as the use of inclusive practices in the curriculum documents can help to influence teachers to utilise these in their own practice, exclusive nuances and ambiguities in the curriculum may lead teachers to introduce exclusive practices into their teaching. Here, it is important to note that the curriculum documents do not state requirements for teachers, but rather expectations (Ashley, personal communication, August 2013). Thus, teachers have the choice to ignore suggestions of inclusive practice; nevertheless it is likely that documents will influence teacher practice to some extent. The documents present further ambiguities for student-centred learning, and these are now discussed.
The investigations of student-centred nuances in the documents exposed more potentially exclusive language; such as the use of the term “the body” instead of “bodies”. In a learning example it suggests for teachers and learners to “explore the element of energy by investigating the way the body moves through imagined environments” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 28). The term “The body” suggests that there is only one type of body in the world. For instance, Cheesman (2011) discusses today’s narrow vision of a dancer, which she believes needs to be challenged. She says that this often entails a white female who is thin, has long limbs, is flexible, and able-bodied. Green (1999) agrees that dancers unnecessarily measure themselves against this perfect dancers’ body. This language-use negates overall philosophies of integrated dance, which echoes the celebration of difference and the discovery of personal uniqueness through dance (Chappell, 2000; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002; Powles, 2007). Integrated dance classes value individual qualities and differences, and reject negative stereotypes (Cone & Cone, 2011; Petersen & Kaufmann, 2002). It would perhaps be more inclusive to rephrase the sentence with ‘investigate the way bodies move…’ which would welcome all types of bodies and leave no student feeling excluded. By using more open terminology, teachers and students might become more receptive to being comfortable with how bodies may differ (deemed important by Benjamin, 2002). It can help to safeguard more inclusivity the classrooms. Teachers need to be prepared to teach the different types of bodies that are presented in reality (Freire, 2001), which is less likely given the current language being used. Teachers also need to monitor the language that they use to deliver classroom instructions, and this is shown next.

As previously discussed, giving students choices and involving them in decision-making is promoted in the documents. However, in places, instructions for classroom activities command a single way of executing learning; this leaves no room for student interpretation or choice. An example is in Excerpt Two, which orders that an activity about energy is to be completed in the form of group work. It instructs, “in small groups, select three different environments and create a movement sequence that shows a journey across or through these environments” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 28). Requesting a particular style of learning (group work) like this when there are more
options available is more exclusive than necessary. This is because some students may feel uncomfortable, or unable, to carry out an activity in the specific way that the teacher has requested. Students possess a wide range of preferred learning styles that need to be utilised and nurtured in order to reach their highest potentials (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Inclusive teaching, 2003). Explicitly encouraging student choice in every possible way is important for the curriculum in terms of inclusion. With current loopholes, teachers are more likely to command particular ways of executing learning, which can create a barrier to inclusion for some students.

As discussed above, there are many student-centred nuances throughout the curriculum documents that help to promote inclusion. These range from the philosophy of student-centeredness in the curriculum’s principles, to student-centred teaching tools. Active community involvement is encouraged. Encouraging students to use personal movement vocabularies and preferences is recommended. Learning examples provide ideas for using variation, relevance, safe dance practices, and imagination in lessons. Maintaining a focus on students’ futures is valued. Student-centred assessment approaches are suggested, and distinguished from restrictive approaches to assessment. Inclusive nuances support teachers to achieve inclusive practices; and this is critical considering the documents do not explicitly explain to teachers how to achieve inclusion. It is positive that student-centred nuances are embedded in the curriculum documents, because these are exposed to teachers. This can help to influence and improve practices of inclusion for students with impairments in NZ. Some uncertainties in the nuances exist, however, including the sometimes-ambiguous nature of language used, and a lack of student-centred focus in some places.

This analysis aims to encompass a broad range of diversity. However, it is important to remember that my observations might not be applicable to all forms of impairment. Therefore, barriers to inclusion that are identified in my analysis may not be barriers at all for some; and this also applies to enablers for inclusion. The next section discusses the importance of adequate teacher preparation, skills and knowledge for dance education. It explores current NZ tertiary dance course circumstances, and whether they educate students to practice inclusion.
The Importance of Teacher Skills and Knowledge

Teacher skills and knowledge for including students with impairments is paramount for achieving inclusion in dance education. Many dance educators feel under-skilled to teach classes that include students with impairments (Hayes, 2010); and this highlights a deficit in the preparation of teachers for this specific task. The severity of this issue was highlighted for me during my preliminary movement research. It demonstrated for me how big the challenge of completing a regular dance sequence ‘as a student with an impairment’ can really be. Without the help and support of a teacher to adapt or modify lessons accordingly, this lonely challenge could be enough to deter any student with an impairment from participating at all. Simple skills need to be taught in tertiary dance education, and maintained throughout teachers’ professional careers. Only then can inclusion become successfully implemented in NZ dance education. This is a requirement that is supported by the New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010), shown below.

With a goal to have more people with impairments participating in dance in NZ, the New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010) places a strong emphasis on the need for knowledgeable, skilled teachers. In order to achieve this, the necessity of adequate training to teach students with impairments is recognized. The demand for high-quality inclusive school teacher preparation is highlighted in the following excerpt from The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010).

1. Ensure tertiary dance courses include integrated dance skills; that there is wider knowledge of integrated dance within and across their organisations. (Hayward, 2010, p. 14)

Excerpt One identifies the importance of integrated dance skills being taught in tertiary dance courses. Unfortunately, this appears to be a current deficit in NZ tertiary dance education. Pedagogical competency for teaching students with impairments is supported by Cotton and Kopytko (2011). Education scholars say that knowledge and skills for teaching inclusively should be transmitted through teacher education (Shippen et. al., 2005; Rouse, 2006). The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010) also
recommends that well-informed training should be ongoing (Hayward, 2010). Ongoing training is necessary, as becoming the best teacher possible is a continuous work in progress (Stinson, 2005). Advocacy by the strategy for quality initial qualifications, post-graduate study, ongoing training, and professional development, demonstrates the range and extent of training in need. It is extremely positive that this necessity is voiced in the strategy, and it increases exposure of the issue to the dance community. This can hopefully instil progress and change in the area. With an increase in highly educated dance teachers, the demand for schools to hire skilled and knowledgeable teachers can be more easily met.

Here are two excerpts from *The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010)* document that highlight the importance of employing teachers who are already skilled and knowledgeable about inclusion.

2. Employ dance teachers and support tutors who have appropriate training and skills to teach dancers with a diverse range of ages and abilities. (Hayward, 2010, p. 21)

3. Sustainable funding for recruitment and retention of a high quality group of teaching and training support staff. (Hayward, 2010, p. 30)

Here the emphasis is on the value of teachers who are already equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills to teach inclusive dance classes. It suggests that there is a demand for these high-quality teachers; this in turn points to a demand for appropriate and high-quality teacher preparation in terms of dance education and inclusion. This demand for expert dance teachers is also recognized by Callahan-Russell (2004) and Connell (2009). The demand for educators who are prepared to teach inclusive education is recognized by Shippen et. al. (2005). By providing the dance education curriculum documents, the Ministry of Education shows an understanding that NZ teachers are in need of support, discussed below.

Currently, the Ministry of Education supports NZ teachers by providing the dance curriculum documents in focus. *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)* provides
structure for lesson planning through the interrelated strands. *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* provides a basis for school programme development; this includes principles and beliefs to underpin decision-making, achievement objectives to monitor student progress, and learning examples for easier interpretation of achievement objectives. *Arts Online (2007)* also includes the above information, with the addition of units and sequences templates to aid teacher planning. *Arts Online (2007)* does offer links to outside resources; these are mostly in the form of websites, and some do focus on inclusion in dance. The documents each devote a small paragraph to teaching students with impairments that encourage teachers to embrace this form of diversity in the classroom. The providing of these documents to support teachers is positive, but the amount of inclusive dance education information given is insufficient to make a genuine difference.

For example, while the dance curriculum documents are provided as resources to support teacher practice, little is included on detailed strategies and approaches to inclusion. Diversity is the focus of only one of the unit templates provided by *Arts Online (2007)*. Furthermore, integrated dance or inclusion in terms of students with impairments does not feature at all in these units. Most of the external resources suggested by *Arts Online (2007)* come from countries outside of NZ; this could mean that they are less relevant for our students. Sections devoted to students with impairments encourage teachers to be inclusive, but do not explain how teachers can put inclusion into practice. Thus the curriculum documents are insufficient for supporting teachers who feel under-skilled to achieve inclusion, and the issue of inadequate teacher preparation and support remains.

*The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010)* steps beyond this and suggests actions that teachers can take in order to fill knowledge gaps themselves. Notably, the strategy encourages collaboration amongst dance education colleagues. This is shown through the goal of ensuring “networks, organisations, and partnerships are developed and utilised” (Hayward, 2010, p. 5). Additionally, it aims to “establish a national mentoring/intern/exchange programme where students and teachers involved in integrated dance can learn from each other” (Hayward, 2010, p. 16). Collaboration for
better education and inclusion is recommended by both inclusive education and integrated dance scholars (e.g. Ainscow, 2007; Hayes, 2010).

*The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (2000) also promotes collaboration, as discussed in the first theme of this work. To reiterate, being connected to community is promoted in the document through a range of activities; these include welcoming visiting artists into the school, participating in community events outside of the school, liaising with other networks and organisations, and viewing live performances in the community. It also suggests that teachers should discuss problem areas with other teachers, artists, dancers, and colleagues. In contrast to *The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy* (2010), it is notable that the collaboration suggested in *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (2000) document focuses on dance education in general, and not specifically on inclusion. However, the encouragement of working together is still a positive step in the right direction. Collaboration with knowledgeable others is part of the solution for supporting dance educators who feel unconfident or under-skilled to teach students with impairments. Dance community members, school colleagues, occupational therapists, and family who are experienced and knowledgeable in one area can support those who are not. By sharing ideas, colleagues can discuss the difficulties that they are experiencing; related discussion areas are possible solutions, tried solutions, and their outcomes (Hayes, 2010). This is an effective strategy to fill teacher knowledge gaps and potentially improve practices of inclusion in terms of students with impairments in NZ dance education.

To recap, the documents provided by the Ministry of Education demonstrate a positive attempt at supporting teacher practice. However, they are limited in terms of detailed guidance toward inclusion. The documents point teachers in the direction of collaboration, which is a positive step towards filling vital knowledge gaps. Still, in a collaborative situation, there are no processes in place to ensure information is accurate and effective. It is thus clear that there is a need for more adequate teacher preparation, training, and support in terms of inclusion in dance education.

Unfortunately, NZ appears to lack dance education courses that offer this knowledge and support. Of seven NZ tertiary dance institutions contacted, only the
University of Auckland replied to confirm that their bachelor of dance studies programme educates their students specifically how to teach and dance with students with impairments. They said that several of their courses educate about issues of dance and disability. Students are also taught specifics about how to teach dancers with impairments. Further still, students with impairments are welcomed to take these courses (which contribute towards a tertiary qualification), and some dancers with impairments have participated in the past. From experience, I know that the University of Otago provides their dance students with some knowledge that is required to dance with and teach students with impairments. Students with impairments themselves are also welcomed into these courses. It is positive to see these tertiary dance institutions succeeding at meeting inclusive needs, and it might be worthwhile investigating these courses further to inform future national development; however that task is beyond the perimeters of this research. Other tertiary institutions referred me on to integrated dance companies that (in their opinion) may be more useful for students with impairments. However, these companies do not offer tertiary qualifications. One explained that issues of disability and how to teach dance to students with impairments is not covered in their course, as they have limited time to cover all areas of dance. Hip-hop, jazz, and contemporary were their main focuses. Another explained that their course is auditioned for students with ability, and it focuses on the individuals’ own training rather than how to include and teach others. Jazz, tap, ballet, singing and acting are taught at this school. Technical excellence is clearly the aim of the latter tertiary provisions and they cannot be expected to educate about inclusive dance pedagogies. It does illustrate, however, that the main focus of NZ tertiary dance education is on prescribed technique and not inclusive pedagogies and practices.

Further investigation into NZ tertiary dance education is necessary in order to draw more accurate conclusions. However, my informal email enquiries do act as an indicator that many tertiary dance courses in NZ overlook preparation for potential dance educators to teach inclusively in terms of students with impairments. *The New Zealand Disability and Dance Strategy (2010)* points to the need for schools to employ skilled, knowledgeable, and thus well educated dance educators to teach their students. The strategy asserts that adequate and appropriate tertiary level dance training, as well
as ongoing professional development, is necessary in order to achieve this. Resources in
the form of dance curriculum documents are implemented by the Ministry of Education
to support teachers with their practice. Furthermore, these documents encourage
teachers to seek collaborative support to fill current knowledge gaps. Despite the fact
that these support services are in place, it is evident that more adequate tertiary
circumstances are necessary in the current situation of NZ dance education, in order to
make a real difference.

Importance of Curriculum Document Reviews: Summary and Implications

Critical curriculum reviews are important for illuminating current document
content. This aids clarification of what we must do next, what needs to be changed or
highlighted, and identifies necessary improvements (Blumenfeld-Jones & Liang, 2007).
Development of the attitudes, values, and discourses (as deep educational structures) in
curriculum documents is crucial. If deep educational structures are uncertain, then
exclusion and marginalisation can continue, regardless of strong surface structures such
as teachers and programmes (Millar & Morton, 2007).

Emergent themes in this study call for a) Developing More Critical
Understandings of Diversity, b) Paying Closer Attention to the Nuances of Student-
Centred Teaching, and c) Importance of Teacher Skills and Knowledge. Theme one
regarding diversity signals questions about to what extent curriculum documents
acknowledge and respond to student difference; and realizing that impairment and
different abilities are significant forms of diversity in the classroom (Hayes, 2010).
Thus teachers are challenged to consider all forms of diversity when planning lessons.
The data suggests that the documents’ focus of diversity is heavily weighted on cultural
diversity; this points to a need for a re-definition of diversity in NZ that includes
different bodies and abilities. Many dance scholars claim that integrated dance itself is a
medium for challenging current notions of diversity, dance, dance-ability (or who can
dance), and disability, and can help to reduce prejudice (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011;
Kuppers, 2001; Whatley, 2007; Zitomer & Reid, 2011).
This study found various positive notions of diversity in the curriculum documents. These ranged from sections that are committed to disability-specific diversity, to inclusive language. The documents place an unbiased value on high student artistic and educational standards. Personal excellence and cognitive and emotional development for all students, regardless of personal circumstance or ability, is expected. Importance is placed on the documents being non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory. Consideration of students’ age group, gender, cultural background, and special needs in lesson planning is encouraged. Teachers are prompted to communicate with family members and relevant colleagues. Dance is identified as an alternative to conventional forms of communication.

These tributes to student difference throughout the documents help to define a positive notion of diversity; however this is weakened by simultaneous ambiguity. The involvement of diversity in the documents shows teachers that it is important to consider student difference in education; unfortunately no guidelines for teachers to instigate this are provided. This has implications for teacher education, professional development, resources, and support, in that related skills must be taught elsewhere if the Ministry of Education is not prepared to provide the detail within curriculum documents. As discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis, time constraints within tertiary teacher education programmes present challenges for including all desired skills and knowledge for pre-service teachers. This raises questions regarding whether this education and support should be provided in curriculum documents, teacher preparation courses, professional development, or do we re-implement dance education advisory roles (previously filled by the likes of Suzanne Renner and Patrice O’Brien) that have been discontinued by recent government. But clearly, they need to be included somewhere. Similar issues arose in the next theme surrounding student-centeredness.

Theme two about student-centred teaching points to the need to embrace this approach in the curriculum documents. Findings suggest that student-centred teaching and learning approaches are indeed embedded in the documents; however inclusion ambiguities (like exclusive language and ignoring student preferences and
interpretation) are also evident. Current aspects of student-centeredness have the potential to positively influence practical teaching applications of curriculum, but hazy details might cause contradictions in practice. This is significant as student-centred approaches are integral to inclusion (Robinson, 2013), and play an important role for inclusivity in the dance class (Cone & Cone, 2011; Cotton & Kopytko, 2011; Hayes, 2010; Kuppers & Marcus, 2009; Vellucci, 2005; Whatley, 2007). Student-centred nuances that are identified in this study include: the main principles of The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) explicitly highlighting student-centred learning, the encouragement of students to utilise personal movement vocabularies and movement preferences, offers of variation, relevance, safe dance practices, and use of imagination in lessons. The documents also promote active community involvement, and student-centred approaches to assessment are encouraged. A focus on the future of students by teachers is valued and supported. Inclusive nuances in the documents more clearly expose curriculum aspects that can help to achieve inclusion in dance education. We can see that these must remain, and be highlighted, in the documents. The inclusive nuances lead by example for teaching; this is particularly important, as the documents do not provide specific direction for teachers to adopt inclusive practice. Once again, this has implications for teacher preparation.

The above themes suggest that the documents contain many positive influences for inclusion. However, simultaneous ambiguities may cause barriers to inclusion for students with impairments in NZ dance education. Sections that focus on students with impairments appear tokenistic; inclusive practice as desirable and moral is implied but not reinforced. The documents provide no information about how inclusion can be achieved. Inclusive language is not utilised often enough. For example, ‘students,’ is often used when ‘all students’ is more effective. Offering choices for the ways that students carry out activities is often neglected. The necessity of communicating with students’ families is identified, but importance of communication with students with impairments themselves is overlooked. Inequitable language-use in learning examples counteracts the non-sexist, non-racist, and non-discriminatory document policy. The counterpart to inclusion, ‘special education’ thinking is used throughout the documents. Language and phrasing sometimes places the problem with the child, which removes
the responsibility of accommodating students with impairments from the school. The word ‘should’ is used in situations where the point is more essential than that. The term ‘the body’ is used, that could suggest only one type of dancer body in the world.

The curriculum documents in focus provide basic direction for NZ teacher lesson planning. This means that elements of the documents are likely to be transferred into and influence teacher practice. The data in this study thus suggests that teachers are more likely to adopt inclusive practices if they are exposed to the curriculum’s positive nuances of inclusion. However, if the documents continue to contain uncertainties for inclusion then they might subconsciously promote exclusive practices. Thus, to avoid teachers being mislead, curriculum documents need to be unquestionable in terms of inclusion. The inclusive values in the documents need to be solid. Here it is important to acknowledge that most teachers are not simply drones to the curriculum. Document ambiguities are less likely to have such a negative effect on these teachers’ practices. Indeed well-educated teachers are likely to detect exclusive nuances, and consciously negate these. Nevertheless, if curriculum documents continue to exhibit exclusive practices and ambiguities, the chance that they will negatively affect some teachers’ practice remains. This chance is not worth the risk, as it can affect a large number of students, and even one student is too many. Thus, adequate teacher preparation and ongoing training is of utmost importance, particularly for less knowledgeable and less independent teachers. However, regardless of the strength of teacher education, attitudes and values in curriculum documents as base structures must be correct in order to provide the best chances possible of achieving overall inclusion in NZ dance education.

The third theme about teacher skills and knowledge highlights a need for more adequate teacher preparation, ongoing training, and support for dance educators in NZ. The current situation of NZ tertiary dance education is briefly explored in this theme. The data suggests that support and training for inclusive dance education is present in NZ, yet developments and improvements are necessary. It appears that only a small selection of NZ tertiary dance institutions currently educate about inclusive practices in terms of students with impairments, or about integrated dance skills and knowledge. Additionally, only some of these tertiary institutions include students with impairments
in the courses themselves. Students are likely to perpetuate these educational structures; and this means non-inclusive environments may be replicated. This situation needs to change.

Clearly, tertiary training courses for dance educators must be monitored; this is because the time allocations (and thus quality) for these programmes can decrease due to financial strains, and the value of the arts is thus brought into question. A focus on teacher support is particularly important for NZ dance, because we lack arts-education advisors. Therefore, professional development opportunities for dance education are also scarce (Cheesman, 2009). However, with an ever-increasing integrated dance industry (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011), NZ is home to ample dance professionals with the ability to succeed in dance education inclusion. These professionals could be better utilised for dance education, by, for example, contributing to professional development for school dance educators, and acting as visiting artists in schools. More connections and networking like this is a recommendation that is supported by Kopytko (2010). Essentially, the strengthening of training and support for school dance educators of NZ can help to improve inclusive practices in dance education.

The analysis of NZ dance education curriculum documents enables us to see where we could miss implementing inclusion strategies. The investigation identifies where dance education can be developed in order to improve practices of diversity and inclusion. It highlights the ways that inclusion and student-centred learning are promoted in the documents, and, in addition, the need for a broader understanding of diversity. This and other dance curriculum research (Cheesman, 2009) shows that the NZ dance curriculum documents lack detail about inclusive education. Perhaps the shaving of detail from the official *New Zealand Curriculum (2000)* to the *New Zealand Curriculum (2007)*, has contributed to the lack of advice for teachers to achieve inclusive dance education practices. For example, subtle but important nuances of inclusion (discussed earlier) have suffered collateral damage from reduced detail surrounding dance education in the newer document. Further, entire sections devoted to students with impairments in the older document no longer exist in the newer one, having a more direct impact for inclusion. Dance researchers and educators must
monitor these reductions in the NZ curriculum documents if we want the discipline to flourish in schools. As Cheesman (2009) states, “If you extrapolate the reductionist tendency it leads to nothing so it is important to keep an eye on the dance provision in the New Zealand curriculum” (p. 4). The values and attitudes in dance education curriculum documents act as educational base structures; these must be precise in order to help prevent exclusive practices from reaching the classroom. The importance of getting base structures right in education is supported by McDonnell (2003). If curriculum documents are developed to better promote inclusion, it may lead to more students freely participating in dance as a school subject. All students should have the opportunity to participate meaningfully in dance education in schools if they wish to do so. Dance has bountiful benefits for all-round wellbeing, and it becomes a human rights issue if students are denied this opportunity. So it makes sense to start from the bottom, and strengthen these curriculum documents.
Conclusion

The New Zealand Curriculum is a clear statement of what we deem important in education. It takes as its starting point a vision of our young people as lifelong learners who are confident and creative, connected, and actively involved. It includes a clear set of principles on which to base curriculum decision making. It sets out values that are to be encouraged, modelled, and explored. It defines five key competencies that are critical to sustained learning and effective participation in society and that underline the emphasis on lifelong learning. (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 4)

Karen Sewell’s (Secretary for Education) above quote pronounces that *The New Zealand Curriculum (2007)* encapsulates the most essential knowledge for NZ school students. Consequently, frequent examination of curriculum content, to ensure it sustains current research on diversity in our society, seems vital. In response, this research scrutinized inclusionary values, discourses, and attitudes of dance curriculum documents with emphasis on students with impairments. It sought to understand possible teacher interpretations and how these might materialise in practice. Research was guided by the following questions: how might official dance curriculum documents influence and improve practices of inclusion for students with impairments in NZ? What barriers might these documents create? Do they enable and ensure the participation of all students? How might these documents be improved in terms of inclusion?

Chapter one outlined the study and clarified relevant terminology. The NZ dance education history and political backdrop was introduced; and their implications with curriculum reform and inclusion in dance education were discussed. Challenges for implementing inclusive dance education were considered. This discussion advanced to incorporate a wider global context, implications of teacher training for successful inclusion, and the influential force produced by discourses, attitudes, assumptions, and values. It suggested that dance education and inclusive approaches make a strong educational team.
Chapter two examined integrated dance literature; it first explored movement philosophies of NZ companies and scholars. Then it merged to discuss the international conversation about integrated dance and the cultural politics surrounding dance and disability. Suggestions for utilising integrated dance ideas in future NZ dance curriculum reform, and for improving practices of dance education inclusion were proposed. An underlying theme was the importance of professional integrated dancers and choreographers for helping to close school teacher knowledge gaps.

Chapter three explained how this research employed qualitative methodological approaches; a combination of curriculum research, document review, and critical discourse analysis, for examining the level of inclusivity in NZ dance curriculum documents. Ways in which preliminary movement research informed this investigation were also addressed. Ethical risks as well as research limitations and position were identified, and this dovetailed into a discussion about some difficulties of document review as a dance research method.

Chapter four used selected excerpts from NZ dance curriculum documents to explore their inherent and overt educational ideologies, and highlight levels of inclusivity. It studied nuances of diversity and student-centred teaching and learning, and how these could better secure inclusionary classroom practices. Implications of NZ tertiary dance education for the demand of quality trained dance educators were discussed. This raised questions about where teachers should obtain their information and support from; curriculum documents, tertiary teacher preparation, ongoing professional development, dance education advisors, or other resources. Answering these questions is difficult during a time in which each of these support services seem to require some improvement.

Integrated dance values the diversity of its people (Touch Compass Dance Trust, 2009) and celebrates difference through dance (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011). It welcomes anyone to dance (Chappell, 2000), and appreciates the creative talents of all participants; this includes people who move differently (Touch Compass Dance Trust, 2009). Philosophies of integrated dance encompass collaboration, mutual respect, openness, and awareness (Cotton & Kopytko, 2011), and an environment of
community, co-operation and support is nurtured (Powles, 2007). Society’s broad population is more accurately represented in comparison to other approaches to dance. The integration of people with and without disabilities helps to achieve a more inclusive society (Miyahara, Briggs & Kolb 2012). Integrated dance has encouraged the disruption of conventional disability and contemporary dance perspectives (Cotton & Kopytko), and the de-stigmatisation of disabled people (Miyahara, Briggs & Kolb 2012).

Concerning an education system that values the linguistic and logical mathematical intelligences over others (Deluca, 1993; Renner, 2012; Robinson, 2006; Whyte, Melchior & Cheesman, 2013), dance can offer access to kinaesthetic and other related intelligences that are otherwise out of reach. This is because dance joins a minority of subjects that learn through the use of the body (Barylick, 2004), and usually values inclusion and individualism (unlike physical education counterparts) (Connell, 2009). Students who are more competent in these alternative intelligences need access to these subjects; otherwise they become regarded as school failures which results in segregated remediation, ‘special education,’ slower tracks, and labels like ‘different’ and ‘unsuccessful’ (Deluca, 1993). Much dance education research illustrates the ways that dance can welcome inclusion and boost the quality of education (Barylick, 2004; Connell, 2009; Deluca, 1993; Kuppers, 2000).

This research found that the official NZ dance curriculum documents do acknowledge diversity and demonstrate inclusive philosophies in places. However, many ambiguities for inclusion are still present in the texts, and these can have a negative effect on teacher practice. A related conclusion was that NZ tertiary dance courses need to better encompass inclusionary practices and issues of disability and dance. Clearly, curriculum and teacher education reform are closely implicated for achieving inclusion in NZ dance education. Recommendations for curriculum reform in order to eliminate the negative influences are given next.

This work has guided recommendations for an inclusive-focused curriculum reform. For instance, exclusive language needs to be removed from the documents, and amended to consciously encompass all abilities. Essentially, the entire documents must
embody an ‘inclusive’ as opposed to ‘special’ educational paradigm; and any ambiguities surrounding this issue is unacceptable. Further, dedicating a section to educating students about integrated dance (just as there are for cultural dances for example) should be established. A clear, open-minded definition of both dance and diversity are fundamental to applying an inclusive philosophy to the documents. Also, a statement that outlines that the meaningful accommodation of students with impairments as a teacher’s responsibility, could serve as beneficial. On a more functional level, initiating at least one supporting resource based on integrated dance and inclusive education is crucial. This must cover some specific lesson plan exemplars, as well as strategies for teachers to adapt current lesson plans to include students with impairments; *Arts Online (2007)* would be a suitable place for this development. It needs to be comprehensive enough to guide and equip teachers with some versatile skills and tools (and thus confidence) that enables them to continue implementing inclusive practices in many classroom situations to come. Advisory services would enhance the effectiveness of this opportunity, but is beyond the scope of this research. Finally, it is vital that a reasonable representation of students with impairments themselves is involved in both future curriculum development and cross-checking. The following passage from Karen Sewell shows that the Ministry of Education is already on this path:

A widely representative reference group oversaw a development process that included trials in schools, collaborative working parties, online discussions, and an enquiry into relevant national and international research. This process led to the publication of *The New Zealand Curriculum: Draft for Consultation 2006*. The Ministry of Education received more than 10,000 submissions in response. These were collated and analysed and were taken into consideration when the document that you now have in your hands was being written. (The Ministry of Education, 2007a, p. 4)
It is impossible to tell from this excerpt whether students themselves were included in this seemingly rigorous consultation process; however this is an extremely important consideration for future curriculum reform.

I feel that this investigation has also opened doors to new research opportunities in this area. In particular, the research recommends studies on unique teacher approaches to inclusion at all levels of education, more detailed investigations into tertiary dance course content, and more research on student interpretations and reflections of ‘inclusive’ class work. In order to realise a holistic assessment of inclusion in NZ dance education, future research should take the form of interviews with a variety of teachers and students. More critique of integrated dance also needs to be picked up on.

This research has inspired reflection and development for me as a dancer and future dance educator. It has broadened my perspectives of dance, who can dance, and the ambitions that dancers with all abilities can achieve. My choreographic choices as well as future lesson content will be informed by this work. I have learnt the value of shaping dance class content around the relevant students and environment. Insights into the social and political benefits of inclusive dance education on both a personal and societal level have been provided. Hopefully it will motivate more confidence in teachers to explore alternative approaches to dance education and to implement these in their classrooms. Fundamentally, the study strives to encourage curriculum developers to more seriously consider and accurately represent inclusive practices and philosophies in NZ dance curriculum documents; and this should help students with different abilities to participate in dance at school if they so desire.
References


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