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Title: **EXPRESSION AND FORM IN THE ART OF DANCE IN EDUCATION**

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Abstract:

A brief extract from my book *The Art of Dance in Education* published in 1994, serves as the introduction to this paper. A large proportion of the rest of the content is original and builds upon theoretical writings of several eminent aestheticians. The emphasis, however, is on application of theory to practice informed by many years experience in dance education across the sectors and in teacher education. Hence, the paper is not bound by the constraints of theoretical discourse and does not adhere to an academic format in that reference to literature is not dominant and direct quotation is not employed at all. Readers wishing to pursue the concepts academically should refer to writers listed in the bibliography.

This paper aims first to identify characteristics of the consensus art of dance in education model in the UK at the present time, second to discuss what constitutes expression and form in the art of dance and third to outline how the concepts of expression and form can be developed through creating, performing and appreciating dances.

The paper provides a theoretical underpinning of approaches developed in teaching expression and form in the art of dance in education. To further exemplify the theories discussed in this paper, some of the practical approaches will be explained in more detail in the keynote address.

INTRODUCTION

The art of dance in education:

The dominant and most advocated model for dance education today has been labeled the Dance as Art model (in this paper and in my book to be published later this year, it is termed the art of dance model). This is the model that I proposed in 1976 in my book *Dance Composition* and which was strongly advocated in the subsequent Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation report- *Dance Education and Training in Britain* (1980). It is also the model implicit in the statutory programmes of study for Dance in England and Wales within the DES Physical Education in the National Curriculum 1992 order and GCSE, AS and A level syllabi. Hence, the art of dance model seems to have been confirmed as a model of "good practice" to which all school pupils are entitled at least at key stages one and two where dance is a compulsory part of the physical education programme.

The art of dance model did not emerge suddenly - it has taken at least fifteen years to develop. One of the first dance theoreticians to propose it was Redfern (1972), but the content and methods of teaching emerged gradually and have been the main focus of my work since 1965. The theoretical basis of the art of dance model presented below is the result of my reflection on the nature of current practice in dance education and is grounded in much experience and trial of different approaches. However, it is not entirely new since, in common with most models in education, it owes much to the past because, although it has new and unique features of its own, it has retained elements of the two models,

which preceded it. For this reason, although the old elements are reoriented, it can be called a midway model.

Predecessors of the Art of Dance Model:

The somewhat 'free', 'open' and 'child-centred' approach which has been variously labeled Modern Educational Dance, Creative Dance, and the like, was derived from Rudolf Laban's ideas in the late 1940s and lasted as the consensus practice until the early 1970s. The essential characteristic of his 'educational' model was its emphasis on the process of dancing and its affective/experiential contribution to the participant's overall development as a moving/feeling being. The benefits of feeling personal expressive significance in movement outcomes derived from various stimuli were considered important contributions to the all round development of the personality. Here, emphasis was laid equally on the physical, emotional and social dimensions of the personality, the development of which might be fostered in dance movement environments in which spontaneous self expressive responses would be complemented by group work where shared experience of interaction through movement was the aim. In particular, the stress was on a meaningful process rather than on the outcome or product that may have emerged.

The opposing model which influenced much of what was going on in dance education in secondary schools, further and higher education colleges in the 60s and 70s, could be called the professional model in that the main aim was to produce highly skilled dancers and theatrically defined dance products for presentation to audiences. The latter dance outcomes would be considered as vehicles through which the range of dance skills constituting any one style could be exhibited. The content of such courses was the already defined set of dance skills which are practiced in the style of dance studied e.g. Graham, Cunningham, ballet, jazz, in addition to, if time allowed, the prescribed formulae for choreography as laid down by American contemporary dance teachers such as Humphrey and H'Doubler. This then was the ultimate swing of the pendulum apparent until the late 70s in some quarters of dance education (though the majority of school teachers, especially primary teachers, still held to the Laban educational model). Of course, there was much criticism of those who adopted this professional training model especially since the prescribed techniques needed time spent on body training leaving no time for creative work in the short periods of dance allowed in secondary schools. This product-based model is that which is used fully and expertly by our professional dance training schools and colleges where the aim is to produce dancers as performers. It is as elitist and rarified as traditional instrumental music lessons which are provided in our schools for the most talented as extra curricular activities. Such a form of dance education is surely not suited to the majority.

The art of dance in education - a midway model:

Today's midway model amalgamates some of the elements of the educational and professional models, yet includes new ideas too. Its distinctiveness lies in the concept of the ART OF DANCE IN EDUCATION contributing towards ARTISTIC EDUCATION, AESTHETIC EDUCATION and CULTURAL EDUCATION. It identifies the three strands of CREATING, PERFORMING and APPRECIATING dances as the conceptual basis underlying dance experiences for pupils. This three stranded approach in dance education where there is a balance between creating, performing and viewing dances and an overall concern that pupils come to appreciate dances as art works, their own and those produced professionally in theatrical or other performance settings, has become the central organising principle of dance education in the 1990s.

The three strands - Creating - Performing - Appreciating

These three processes constitute the conceptual basis of the art of dance in education model. Most of the current literature reinforces this. The processes of creating, performing and appreciating dances and the skills, knowledge and understanding gained from such experiences, can be defined as artistic education in that the learner is coming to know more about the art form itself. Artistic and aesthetic education is often coupled concepts or one is subsumed by the other. This is not surprising since it is exceptionally difficult to determine the incidence of aesthetic education while pupils are engaged in creating, performing and appreciating dances. For the sake of clarity though, and for the purposes of this paper, which focuses on it, artistic education is concerned with developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the art of dance.

In order to distinguish the nature of artistic education we need to survey the range of concepts involved in creating, performing and appreciating dance/s. The following attempts to formulate a comprehensive listing and grouping of the concepts in relation to developing skills, knowledge and understanding of expression and form in dance:

Artistic learning, at the level appropriate to the learner's experience/age, through:

Creating dances:

a) Expression in dance:

- understanding of and interpretation of themes/ideas
- translation of the themes/ideas in dance terms i.e. into symbolic action
- making decisions about the type of dance e.g.dramatic, pure, comic, abstract and the style e.g. contemporary, balletic, jazzy etc.
- exploration of movement ideas discovering actions,qualities, rhythmic and spatial features to express the theme into the type and style of dance planned.
- exploring and making decisions about numbers of dancers and relationship possibilities to express the idea e.g.positioning, group shapes, orchestration
- understanding of how the music or accompaniment can be used
- considering staging aspects of dances - lighting, design, costume, make-up, use of accompanying visual/audio materials etc.
- presenting dances in conventional/alternative spaces with consideration of the role of the audience - programme notes etc.

b) Form in dance:

- selecting and linking movements to make motifs and phrases
- deciding on the order of movements and refining motifs and phrases
- structuring of motifs and phrases in time, space and relationship between dancers
- developing the phrases, perhaps repeating them in time, space and relationship configurations
- understanding the use of formal devices -repetition, development, contrast, transition, progression, unity or alternative construction processes such as chance
- creating sections, parts of the dance and relating them to make whole dances.

Performing dances:

a) Expression in dance:

- acquiring of physical skills-actions combined with dynamic, rhythmic and spatial patterning or stylistically defined skills from specific techniques.
- performing the above with co-ordination, accuracy, fluency, control, balance, poise and confidence.
- practising of co-ordination in linking movements into phrases, sections and dances.
- presentation of the theme through dancing expressively.
- performing the content concentrating on qualitative expression through variation of dynamic, spatial and relationship features.
- developing performance qualities such as extension, projection, focus to express meaning
- practice of dancing to music or other forms of accompaniment alone or with others in unison and canon.
- concentration on line, body shape, clarity of design, positioning to express meaningfully.

b) Form in dance:

- performing dances and parts of dances with understanding of the formal qualities e.g. pauses, highlights, contrasts.
- clarity and unity of style.

Appreciating dances:

a) Expression and b) Form in dance:

- all the above aspects involved in creating and performing dances should be observed, described, analysed, interpreted and evaluated by students viewing their own and professional choreography throughout their dance education.
- discern with increasing accuracy and sensitivity a range of qualities in choreography and performance. Through analogy with their own experiences in choreography and performance and through learning how to employ description, interpretation and evaluation they will be able to perceive distinctive artistic features - expression, form, style, techniques and production.
- in order to further appreciation, employ a range of resources to discover background information and specific details about dances, choreographers, performers, designers, musicians etc.

Summary - the art of dance in education:

The above text serves to remind readers of the background and characteristics of the consensus model for dance education at the present time in which engagement in the art of dance lays emphasis on the three artistic processes - performing, creating and appreciating. These three strands of experience in the art of dance are fundamental in developing the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of expression and form in dance - the two concepts focused on in this paper.

EXPRESSION IN DANCE

First, it is important to consider what constitutes expression in dance. To this end, the following list identifies commonly held assumptions on the nature of expression in dance in education and arguments that have been used to counter the assumptions. The assumptions are largely inherited from Romantic ideology generally and from the former education and Laban-based expressive dance model in particular. The counter arguments arise out of recent writings of aestheticians attempting to define art and the nature of expression in art. These latter concepts, combined with some reoriented elements of the inherited assumptions, constitute a sound theoretical basis for teaching expression in dance in today's mid-way art of dance model in education.

INHERITED ASSUMPTIONS

Dance is subjective self-expression.
Expressive dance derives from everyday natural movement.
Dance is freely expressive of the individual and not primarily for audiences.

COUNTER ARGUMENTS

Dance is objectively created expression.
Expression in dance requires knowledge of dance vocabulary, conventions and practices.
Dance is disciplined repeatable symbolic communication for audiences.

The above three opposing views on the nature of expression in dance will be discussed in turn in an attempt to delineate a theoretical basis for teaching expression in the art of dance in education.

Dance as subjective self expression VERSUS dance as objectively created expression:

Concepts of coming to know oneself through self-expression in dance point to cathartic justifications for dance in education. When the main emphasis was on child-centred, personal, emotional and social education these were the justifications made for dance in the curriculum. In the context of the Laban-based model, attention was on the subjective experience of creating and expressing during the act rather than on the object created - the dance outcome. Embedded in this view is the notion that what is being expressed comes from within the self and that when we say movement "speaks louder than words" we mean that the inner state has been manifested in expression.

In creative dance contexts in the 1950s and 60s movement responses were seen as symptomatic of innermost feelings and emotions of the dancer and this put emphasis on the personal experience of the learners as a source for expressive content for dance. Later writings by advocates of the Laban-based model acknowledged that the feelings and emotions expressed in dance are not actual and of the moment but recalled from personal life experiences. This is a clearer conception of expression in dance but the weakness of this view lies in the assumption that along with the memory of feelings is a stored up vocabulary of associated movements appropriate for expressing such feelings in a dance. Hence the teacher was seen to be the stimulator and provider of open-ended tasks for self-expression in dance.

From early texts of aestheticians and philosophers such as Langer (1953, 1957) to more recent texts such as Reid (1986), Smith on Beardsley (1989) and Sharpe (1991), counter arguments have influenced and reinforced change in concepts of expression in dance. It is no longer thought of as self-expression and release of feelings. Indeed, personal feelings or emotions get in the way of lucid composition and performance and are not conducive to creative endeavour in

artistic contexts. Rather, a composer has to objectively select movements and shape them in time and space in order to make the feelings visible in the dance and the performer has to re-create the feelings through the given movements in order to project the meanings in the dance. Both these processes require knowledge and understanding of techniques and practices in the art of dance so that they can be employed fittingly to create the expression intended.

Expression in dance then, is not self-expression in the sense of indulging oneself in expressing emotion or feelings through movement. Certainly, it is necessary to have experienced such feelings prior to being able to express them in art contexts, but the emotional/feeling experiences in real life cannot be lifted and put into art works. As stated above, this romantic view has long since been dismissed and replaced with the view that it is not the artist's real feelings in the art work but ideas about those feelings which arise from the artist's imagination and/or recall of such feeling experiences.

In order to translate these feelings into objectively created images it is necessary to make conceptual links between movements and meanings. However, these links are not made naturally. Children do not have a ready-made vocabulary of movements appropriate for expressing dance ideas. However, through experience of many teacher-led explorations, a vocabulary of movement and possible associations of the movements with feelings/ideas for dance will gradually develop.

If, as indicated above, the process is an objective thinking process, is expressing in dance merely an intellectual exercise of recall of, for example, people or oneself in distress and abstraction and artistic manipulation of the movement content to create the motifs depicting this distress? The answer to this question surely must be no! As stated above, a feeling/idea has to be known first before it can be imagined or recalled and the process of coming to know it has to be subjective. However, this does not mean that we have to experience harrowing life events prior to creating a dance based on this topic. But we do have to research it thoroughly and collect together all the evidence, including fictional evidence such as films, poetry, literature, visual art works etc. and reporting of real events from newspapers etc. to be able to depict the feelings involved with any sense of artistic truth. Although we may not have experienced such harrowing events first hand, war for example, our imaginations and knowledge of the feelings involved can be fully developed through secondary sources. However, our interpretation and imagining of the feelings/life meanings embedded in these artifacts will always be coloured by our own experiences and/or feeling responses. We all have different experiences and respond differently even in the same circumstances - fact or fiction - and therefore express ideas and feelings about them in different ways.

It is this aspect of personal difference in creating and performing dances that makes the composition or performance self-expressive. So, although the outcome is objectively created or performed through conscious manipulation and projection of the artistic elements, the personal self-expressive identity is still there. As Jiri Kylian was once reported to have said, you cannot disguise your own handwriting. Indeed, it would be a dull artistic world if individuals had not been able to express themselves in their own particular way through their art form. What would contemporary dance be without Duncan, Graham, Wigman, Humphrey, Cunningham et al?

In summary then, expression in dance is objectification of subjectivity through imaginative combination of knowledge and experience of life with knowledge and experience of the constituent features and techniques of the art of dance.

Expressive dance derives from everyday natural movement VERSUS expression in dance requires knowledge of dance vocabulary, conventions and practices:

Expressing oneself in every day situations almost always involves the use of non-verbal communication and this range of natural movement expression constitutes a large proportion of the bases of dance action. The movements, which accompany words, replace words, and denote feelings; moods and personality traits constitute a self-expressive root vocabulary for dance. Presented in their original form, these movements can be classed as mime and as such they exist in some traditional dance art forms. They can also be contained as explicit or literal content in dance works choreographed today. But even if these mimetic actions were to very closely resemble every day life gestures, in their re-created form they are not self expressive and subjective. Rather, it is likely that they will have been objectively selected, and through application of conventions/practices in dance, refined and patterned in time and space to communicate the theme of the dance. Hence, even in their most primary root state, such expressive gestures can become dance images removed from their life purposes and put into the artwork for art purposes.

Rather than imitating gestures from life, it is more often the case, that non-verbal expressive actions are used as starting points by the choreographer through abstracting from the original movement and artistically manipulating it to create a motif in the dance. A head in hands sobbing action of a deeply sad person is a commonly used example but it serves my purpose well in showing how the choreographer might work from this non-verbal communication basis to create the dance images. As indicated above, rather than feeling this emotion him or herself, the choreographer has selected it from a range of possible actions to depict the feeling and applies choreographic conventions and practices to make the movement into a symbolic dance image. The outcome might become like this, for example:

- Preceded by a circular action of the top half of the body with arms moving from a sideways extended position to hands in front of the face. This might be accompanied by a leg gesture whipping across and inwards in front of the body with the knee high and the foot flexed near the end of the movement.
- the hands in front of face sobbing action might be taken as two staccato movements downwards and inwards towards the body centre and might be completed with an accented fall onto the knees.
- this could lead into a sideways tucked roll to end in the position of head in hands kneeling and gently rocking backwards and forwards.
- All these actions could be variously coloured by using different time and force variations, placing accents in different places, varying the continuity and smoothness and sharpness of the movement etc.
- All of these actions can be variously patterned in space through varying the size, direction and pathways.

Hence, using knowledge of dance vocabulary, a phrase motif has been developed to create a dance image that depicts grief and sadness. The original "life" action has become transformed through an artistic process and although it might well express the same thing it is specifically dance expression irreplaceable by any other form of expression.

The choreographer, then, is not expressing through everyday natural movements but captures ideas of the feelings in stylised and technical dance

movements. Non-verbal communication involved in expressing grief in real life cannot be lifted and put into dance art works without such transformation. Pupils therefore need to learn how to abstract and transform natural every day movement into symbolic dance images.

Non-verbal expressive communication, however, is not the only basis for dance vocabulary. Within each genre and/or style of dance there is an enormous heritage of ready-made expressive movement content and a constantly developing repertoire of new ways of expressing within the genre and/or style. This range of expressive content for dance, of course, is disseminated through technique classes and learning of repertoire through performing and viewing professionally choreographed dance works.

In the case of older students learning a particular dance technique, let us say Graham, they are also learning a highly stylised expressive means that both extends and limits their expressive vocabulary. It is extended to include knowledge of and skill to perform highly stylised movement patterns each having inbuilt expressive potential. But the range of content in any one technique is also limited to deal with a small range of themes. Graham's system serves Grahamesque dramatic themes. Not only does this limit the possible range of expression but it delineates a rather special way of dancing. Unlike natural non-verbal communication movements as source for dance expression, it is pre-formed highly technical expression that cannot tolerate the intrusion of personally conceived and styled movements. In fact if the inherent expressive qualities are missing or altered the technique becomes empty. However, in order to successfully express through the Graham technique, pupils have to become accomplished in performing it. This is a tall order in that it requires immense training to achieve the unnatural and highly specialised technical proficiency and even if a reasonable standard is reached in the short time available in schools, it is bound to have been through concentration on the technique alone at the expense of creative and expressive work.

On the other hand, it is only through learning the various vocabularies of dance passed down from era to era that students come to know what constitutes dance expression within each vocabulary. In the second edition of *Dance Composition* (1992), I have discussed the problems that arise if we deem it necessary to acquaint our pupils with as much experience as possible of the vast range of techniques and styles available for expression in the art of dance. As suggested in this book, it is unrealistic to attempt to teach any more than a generalised dance style (i.e. mainstream contemporary dance) in secondary schools and perhaps one or two more specific styles at university. This gives the students a vocabulary of dance movements beyond their own but it still limits their expressive potential to that which is inherent in the techniques they practise.

Other than learning and perfecting many techniques through performance, alternative ways of developing knowledge of the vast range of inherited dance expression have to be found if we are to claim that pupils in school and students in college have full freedom of choice in exploration of dance as a medium for expression. Means towards this end will be demonstrated in the keynote lecture.

Clearly from the above, expression in dance should derive from BOTH everyday natural movement and knowledge of dance vocabulary, conventions and practices. In the former case pupils need to know how to abstract and develop movements to create expressive dance images and in the latter case they need to identify and employ for expressive purposes inherent meanings in learned dance vocabulary.

To summarise and back up the arguments above concerning dance, Best (1985), when discussing learning in the arts in general, clearly delineates the need for skills, knowledge and understanding of traditional means of expressing within each art form as a basis upon which original and individual creative

expression must build. In other words, expression in dance is rooted in the art of dance itself and it is necessary to learn its particulars if it is to be employed as a means of expression.

Dance is freely expressive of the individual and not primarily concerned with audiences VERSUS dance is disciplined repeatable symbolic communication for audiences.

It has been established above that expression is individual yet choreography and performance transcends self-expression by means of distilling subjective experience into objective artistic symbolism. Hence, although a dance is originated or interpreted by the individual it becomes a symbolic communication system for public consumption and therefore needs to be referenced in publicly meaningful symbols.

The above paragraph is a logical progression out of the former sections, but the discussion concerning personal freedom of the individual to dance and create dance for its own sake in contrast to this has not yet been considered. Because of the uniqueness of every individual body, not as an instrument but as a person, in dancing oneself expression must always be personally referenced. In choreography, expression occurs through the individual who has the freedom to say what s/he wants to say in whatever manner is selected. In working on other dancers, however, there has to be a degree of give and take perhaps, though it is always astonishing how much of the choreographer's own style and expression in moving penetrates the company to give it a look which is personal to the choreographer. Much of this stylistic stamping is due to the content selected and manner in which it is refined and this of course, is entirely the prerogative of the choreographer.

The art form of dance itself, however, is not an individual and subjective medium. As made clear above dance is self-expressive but it also communicative and if communication takes place others are necessarily involved. Moreover, like other arts, the art of dance has aesthetic purpose. This immediately puts it into the public domain in that the aesthetic intention is to affect others through the dance. As discussed by Horton Fraleigh (1987), this implies a tension between individuality and universality - freedom and discipline - and the relationship between the individual and the world of dance.

It has already been established that dance expression requires knowledge of ways in which everyday movements can be fashioned into dance images and requires knowledge of dance vocabularies, conventions and practices. Creating dances for audiences and performing dances to audiences requires some adherence to and use of culturally agreed codes so that what is signified by the dance is understood and appreciated. This does not mean, of course, that new movements and approaches to expression in choreography will not be valid. But even the most experimental and avant-garde builds upon known formulae. It is only possible to break 'rules' or appreciate challenges to them if they are known in the first place.

Paying attention to culturally and historically defined semiotics of dance constitutes part of the discipline. Making movement meaningful requires first an understanding of the range of meanings that could be ascribed to the actions, qualities, spatial and relationship elements in dance. Secondly it requires skill and ability to retain the essence of the publicly recognisable sign within the movement and at the same time apply dance specific techniques to transform it into an elaborated dance symbol. The outcome becomes a metaphor that can be interpreted by individuals in the audience in different ways but at the same time contains such interpretations within reasonable parameters of the idea/feeling communicated by the dance. An example might help to explain this. A duo based on conflict for example, would necessarily employ movements associated

with this in life situations. Retaining the essential features of these movements provides the important communicative "hooks" so that they can be "read" by the audience. In order to develop and transform them into dance images, the choreographer would need to add to or enlarge the original movements, change their rhythm, dynamic and or spatial content and emphasise or strip away certain aspects. The movements would need to be set in time and space, accompanied with sound and lighting effects etc. to endorse their intrinsic meanings. These example treatments create symbolic images that capture and project the meaning of conflict through the dance.

To summarise - clearly such processes require knowledge of the discipline of dance but also require some understanding of culturally ascribed meanings in movement, time, space, sound, costume, lighting and presentation aspects of the art of dance. However, there are freedoms too. The choreographer, of course, has freedom in selection and artistic manipulation of expressive content in the first place. The audience clearly has freedom in interpretation through finding meanings of the contained expression in the dance in relation to personal experiences or what Langer would call "felt life". The dancer too has this kind of freedom in individually interpreting the role. Hence, the inherited assumption, modified by the counter argument holds value in today's views on the nature of expression in dance.

To conclude - it has been demonstrated that inherited concepts concerning expression in dance have changed and been modified through application of influential theories to practice. However, it is interesting to note that the old ideas are not dismissed and that the concepts of expression in dance can also be thought of as midway serving the midway art of dance model.

FORM IN DANCE

Laban-based dance education gave little attention to the concept of form since it was primarily focused on creative participatory experiential processes rather than on producing dances or learning pre-choreographed dances to be remembered and repeated. However, with the emergence of examinations in dance from 16 plus upwards in the 1970s, it became necessary to define learning outcomes of dance experience and objective means of assessing them. The learning outcomes - dance compositions, dance performances, and written responses to indicate knowledge of these practical activities and of theatre dance repertoire and history - demanded the shift outlined in the introduction of this paper towards a midway art of dance model. This model permeates dance education from primary school to university so developing concepts of form has become an intrinsic feature of dance education per se.

The first edition of my book, *Dance Composition* (1976), was influential in promoting such a shift and provided a much-used text for teachers and students in dance composition contexts. Little has been written for this audience since however, and this book was concerned mostly with how to teach composition. It made no attempt to provide theoretical analyses of artistic/aesthetic concepts such as the concept of form, so again it is necessary to underpin practice in dance education with theory expounded by aestheticians. Within the constraints of the length of this paper, the following can only include a brief consideration of the concept of form, but this is justifiable since it is the development of perception of form that is the greatest challenge for teachers of dance. Hence, application of theory to practice is emphasised below in an attempt to indicate how concepts of form should permeate delivery of the art of dance midway model.

Langer (1957) talks of form as dynamic and living, as pattern of changes, as interdependent and logically connected parts rhythmically unified into organic and unique wholes. The range of formalist as opposed to expressionist theories of art claim the essential characteristics of art as order, unification and relationship of elements. Formalist theories differ from expressionist theories in that the focus is inward on the art work itself rather than outward in looking for symbolic reference to life meanings. Yet the expressive content and meanings in a work cannot be thought of as separate from form and vice versa because as Reid (1931) implies the ordering and juxtapositioning of the parts in relation to the whole creates the unified and embodied meaning. If we look again at the example of a sobbing action transformed into aesthetic expression and consider the patterning of the movements through time into a phrase with continuity and punctuation, this constitutes expression through form.

Whilst all dances contain both expression and form (even the most formalist, like music, "give off" expressive qualities suggestive of sensations/moods/feelings), it is possible of course to give emphasis more to one than the other. Hence, works of Wigman, Graham and Bausch might be termed expressionist and Balanchine, Cunningham and some of Kylian as formalist. Where emphasis is given to formal elements there is tendency to put works into the abstract category and the intangible nature of the abstract deems it difficult to discern and even more difficult to teach.

Appreciation of formal properties - motif, repetition, development, variation, contrast, logical development and unity requires ability to be able to perceive them in the first place and appreciate the patterning/rhythmic shaping of their interrelationships in the second place. This is difficult even for the most educated of spectators especially in a transient medium such as dance. To have developed full awareness of these abstract devices in forming one's own dances and/or in performing dances is an outcome of many experiences in dance working from subjective/feeling/intuitive levels in young children to objective and cognitive levels in older students.

Examples of such a development of awareness will help to pinpoint ways in which form might be taught. My book, Dance Composition offers teachers many ways of working with secondary and college students to develop skills, knowledge and understanding of principles of form in dance so it is not intended to reiterate these ideas here. Rather, attention is given to the development of awareness of form through subjective/feeling/intuitive levels of engagement with form in dance lessons. Moreover, because of the inextricable links between expression and form, I intend to apply theories pertaining to both in the following example.

CONCEPTS OF EXPRESSION AND FORM IN DANCE EDUCATION

The example lesson content below is taken from my new book The Art of Dance in Education to be published in September 1994. Between each part of the content for the lessons I have discussed ways in which the concepts of expression and form can be taught. To distinguish the discussion from the content of the lessons, the text for the former is in bold.

Detailed lesson content leading to a dance called:
Dancing in the Rain in New Wellies. 7-8 yrs. - 2 LESSONS

DANCE FRAMEWORK:

INTRODUCTION: (Approximately 16 bars of walking pace music)

Sitting on the floor - pull on to feet imaginary wellington boots. Admire them still sitting and/or standing up. Take weight on different parts of the feet - heels, toes, outside edges and look at them. Also lift up one foot at a time to

look at parts of the boots - inside the boot, outside, bottom - heels and toes etc.

SECTION 1: (Approximately 16 bars of skipping rhythm music)

Perform high knee movements - (skips, marches, gallops, hops etc with knees coming up high to "show off" boots). Do these movements anywhere in the room.

SECTION 2: (Approximately 32 bars of lively skipping rhythm music) Perform running through, jumping into, kicking and splashing in puddles movements.

SECTION 3: (Approximately 32 bars of lively traveling and leaping music). In pairs following the leader and performing in unison side by side perform a sequence of moves traveling and leaping over the puddles.

SECTION 4: (Approximately 16 bars of walking rhythm music)

Walking, spinning, playing at taking weight on different parts of imaginary wellies to arrive back on the spot where the boots were 'put on'.

CONCLUSION: (End of last phrase of music above)

Take off wellies and finish in a position looking at them.

Resources used during the lesson/s include appropriate music and the video snippet of Gene Kelly performing Singing in the Rain from the film.

Discussion:

A dance framework is a loose structure for a dance designed by the teacher to determine the type of movement to be used and the order of phrases which link to create a whole. Each section in the dance comprises one or more framework or structured tasks i.e. open-ended tasks requiring the children to fill in the detail. In this way expressive content can be explored and, more importantly it can be structured into a dance having formal features - a beginning, middle and end, some contrast, variety of content, and logical progression. (Later, more complex frameworks would include repetition, development and climax and gradually, pupils should be able to construct frameworks of their own). The form features are built in and experienced by the pupils in creating and performing their dances. This feeds the intuitive feeling for form without the pupils being cognitively aware of it.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

1) Exploration task leading to identification of content for INTRODUCTION of the dance:

a) Introduction of the idea through discussion with children about the idea of having a new pair of wellington boots and playing in the rain should lead to free improvisation of appropriate movements. This would also make a good warm-up:

- expected range - running, jumping into puddles, splashing, stamping.

b) Discussion of the kinds of movements the children might use to explore examination and admiration of their boots sitting on the floor then standing:

-possible range of responses: - sitting: turning toes up and down - both - one at a time; lifting up one leg and looking at all angles of it -sides, back, bottom of foot inside imaginary wellie; bending legs into frog like position to see inside leg sides and reversing in side sitting position etc. - standing: lifting one foot after the other forwards, backwards or sideways high; taking weight on different parts of the feet - lifting toes from ground and leaning forward to see and reverse with heels; looking at inside edges of feet etc.

2) Improvise the INTRODUCTION to the music.

Discussion:

The discussion and subsequent improvisation allows them to employ their own experiences, imaginations and feelings and to freely express through everyday natural movement as a starting point. Gradually through praise and demonstration a range of movement ideas will be identified clearly making links between the movements explored and the dance idea. The two activities therefore lead to the completion of the improvised introduction by pupils objectively selecting expressive and richer movement responses to the task as a result of the teacher-led explorations.

3) Performance task for SECTION 1 of the dance: Practise skipping, marching, hopping, galloping high knee lifting movements (previously learned material) anywhere in the space expressively "showing off" wellies. Look for variety and energy, lift of legs and lightness. Practise SECTION 1 two or three times to music.

Discussion:

This section is requiring the pupils to learn and become skilful in performance of known dance steps. It demands that they are refined and performed to create expression symbolic of the idea. Rhythmical phrasing of the steps and mixing of them into movement 'sentences' complementing the music is also developing the pupils' awareness of form.

4) Exploration task leading to identification of content for SECTION 2 of the dance:

Task - perform running through, jumping into, kicking and splashing in puddles movement.

Breakdown of task:

- a) Set imaginary situation - "as in the warm-up, the floor is covered with puddles and you have your new wellington boots on - show me what you would do".
- b) Either through pupils demonstrating or through the teacher commenting with praise, take some ideas from observation of the children improvising in (a) and ask all the children to practise them - for example, running keeping the feet very close and almost skating over the ground; jumping onto two feet with an emphasis on making a big flat-footed splash; kicking with the inside edges of the feet; make stamping movements walking in a circle within the confines of a large puddle.
- c) View the video of Gene Kelly's performance of Singing in the Rain solo dance and song. Discuss the kinds of movements seen and ask the pupils to keep one idea in mind for their own dance.
- d) Improvise to the music for SECTION 2 of the dance.

5) Creating and performing improved for SECTION 2 of the dance through viewing:
a) view the whole of the dance from the moment Kelly says goodbye to the lady.

Questions to encourage discussion:

- "Why do you think he dances and sings in the rain"?
- "How do you know he is happy"?
- "Which movements do you remember best"?

b) "View the part of the dance between the sung sections (nearly the whole of it!) and remember some of the movements which you really like - perhaps those which make you laugh".

Questions to encourage discussion:

- "Which was your favourite movement and why have you chosen it"?
- With one of the childrens' choices in mind - "Can we

put some words on the board to describe it"? (For example - the flat footed two to two feet jumps in the large puddle - words or phrases such as splat, splash, hit, smash, making frog-like jumps, large bounces like on a trampoline).

- "Is this the biggest splashing movement he performs"?
- "Are there some other big movements you remember"?
- "Are there any small or quiet movements"?

c) Improvise your dance in the puddles and try to use just one movement from the video.

6) Perform the dance from the beginning up to the end of SECTION 2. Practise altogether, then view a few at a time. Question children about their peers' work and observe selected examples. Another performance altogether might make a good ending for lesson 1. The next lesson could then begin with the dance so far as a warm-up and recall and practise activity.

Discussion:

All of the above activities develop the pupils' skills, knowledge and appreciation of what counts as dance expression and how to create it and perform expressively. The children explore the range of everyday natural movement as starting points and learn how to combine them into phrases. The teacher encourages them to enlarge their movements or to emphasise specific qualities in the movements so that they take the movement beyond mime and express the idea through symbolic dance images as exemplified by Gene Kelly. Discussing the expressive qualities and selecting and copying one of his movements should extend each pupil's dance vocabulary - to include tap steps maybe - and make an impression in respect of expressive meaning in the movement. Moreover, the whole dance *Singing in the Rain* is a classic example of variety within unity in its overall form. Again the formal aspects of this ready-made hopefully will 'rub-off' on the pupils and feed their intuitive understanding of form.

7) Create a partner sequence of traveling and leaping for SECTION 3 of the dance:

Task - with your partner create a sequence of running and leaping over imaginary puddles.

a) Practise and perform running and leaping movements individually. The teacher should remind pupils of the different kinds of leaps they already have in their vocabulary - possibly by asking appropriate questions. The children should select and practise a range of leaps.

b) Practise two ways of performing with a partner. The teacher should set the task of children working in pairs following the leader - the follower copying the leader's run and leaping action in canon. The children should then select one kind of run and leap and practise performing it side by side in unison.

c) Create by combining the leading and following sequence taking turns and the unison sequence. The following structure might help:

-A run and leap B follows copying - repeat with new leap

-B " " " A " " " " " "

-A and B run and leap together side by side with 2 different leaps.

8) Practise to improve skill and perform these sequences possibly extracting a few of the leaps and focusing the pupils' attentions on to the use of knees and feet in taking off and landing i.e. taking off from the whole foot and 'pushing the floor away' and landing through the foot toes first into a soft bent knee position into travel. Also work on extension of legs and feet in the air (show

Gene Kelly again perhaps), and uplifted back and head with arms used to gain height.

9) View, discuss and appreciate each others' created sequences and performance of them.

Discussion:

These experiences exemplify how a teacher might employ the creative dance framework as a means of developing and improving the pupils' technical proficiency in performing leaping actions. Such work, of course, extends their repertoire of expressive dance movements and their knowledge of conventions (e.g. stretch in the air and resilience in landing) that make ordinary movements into dance movements. Reference to the video resource reinforces the disciplined nature of creating and polishing dance movement for expressive and aesthetic purposes.

10) View the video dance again and note the movements used at the beginning and end of the dance i.e. quieter and more pedestrian movements. Appreciate the bounce in Kelly's walks and try to get this feel in the children's performance of walking movements.

11) Improvise walking, stepping taking weight on different parts of the feet - heels, toes, one flat one heel, one flat foot knee bent one high on toes knee straight, outside and inside edges etc., and spinning movements to create SECTION 4 of the dance.

12) Create own ending taking off imaginary wellies.

13) Practise and perform whole dance. The teacher could identify parts that need attention and provide the necessary teaching points using language, including the use of imagery, to improve the children's work.

14) View each other performing the whole dance. Look for expression (commenting on sensory and expressive qualities e.g. bouncy happy walks, stretch flying leaps), continuity and phrasing (showing understanding of the overall form - beginning, middle and end of the dance). If possible video the children's performances to enable them to view themselves, improve and perform again.

15) Appreciate the dance experiences in the above two lessons through writing about the dances created by themselves and/or Kelly's dance. This work could also include painting a picture and writing a poem perhaps. Alternatively, if they have seen a video of themselves, the children could write an interpretation and evaluation of their work, even though the latter is not a required skill in this key stage.

Discussion:

Clearly, through these two example lessons, readers will discern how pupils might have gained experience in and some understanding of a range of concepts under the headings of expression and form which are listed towards the beginning of this paper as aspects of artistic learning through the processes of creating, performing and appreciating dances.

This paper has endeavoured to provide a theoretical underpinning for teaching expression and form in the art of dance in education. The lesson content is presented in an attempt to show how the midway art of dance model encapsulating the three strands of creating, performing and appreciating dance/s can be justified on current theoretical bases.

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