

physical  
movement - controlled  
controlled movement  
back to fitness  
by objectified  
knowledge distorted  
essential binary  
of the body  
in order to measure  
and compare

Gender  
Women F. dance  
Same sex couples  
Women follow - men  
lead - stereotypes  
Dance does not  
masculine performance  
Dance for sissies  
Qualitative  
male over body  
male over female  
by the educated  
AHARD

- 1) Expressive vs functional movement
- 2) Dance Gender
- 3) Objectifying body

## Chapter Five

### "Dancing Is for Sissies!"

Marnie Rutledge

Dance is not taught as an art in any university. There it is still in the gymnasium.

Agnes de Mille, 1984

#### Dance and Physical Education: An [Un]likely Partnership?

This chapter outlines the ways that we experience dance. Issues around dance and gender, objectifying the body, and expressive versus functional movement will be discussed. Examining these issues may provide insight, as well as provoke conversation, about the positioning of dance in physical education.

Dancing is the body's text—dance movement is expression. There is much variety and scope applied to the terms *dance* and *dancing*. Common elements of dance include both movement of the body—involving a heightened kinesthetic sensory awareness of the timing and response of the body to music—and expressive movement—a communication through movement of ideas, experiences, and feelings. Dance has been defined as those steps, gestures, forms, patterns, and styles done or made when one *intends* to dance—socially, recreationally, expressively, theatrically, or artistically in one's own cultural forms. At one level, we experience dance as spectators, at another, as participants.

When we participate in dancing, we either replicate preset movements, or we create our own movements. When replicating, we are often

learning folk or social dances, while concentrating on the correct performance of the steps to the music. When we are creating, we are using our movement in an expressive and personal style to communicate. Both of these ways of experiencing dance are evident in education programs. When we watch dance, we are learning to appreciate the dancing of others—as part of an education about dance as an art form. Examples of these processes in dance education are evident in the statements of purpose for organizations such as the National Dance Association of AAHPERD (the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), daC (dance and the Child International), and the dance special interest group of CAHPER (the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation) (see Wall and Murray 1990, 162–164). These documents emphasize that dance should be a part of one's general education. In addition, having learning experiences in expressive forms of movement is important. Common elements espoused in dance education include artistic, aesthetic, expressive, and cultural forms.

How dance is positioned in physical education programs often relates to particular ways of experiencing dance and dancing. Typically we see replication as a dominant process in physical education, whereas creative expression tends to dominate in separate dance programs, or dance programs affiliated with the fine arts. Aerobic dancing, line dancing, swing and jive dancing, and simple folk and novelty dancing are examples of the predominant dance forms taught in physical education programs. In these forms, the body is controlled and disciplined to conform to particular ways of knowing and moving. Dance is often justified solely as an activity that contributes to fitness. The experience of the expressive body is almost non-existent.

### Dance Education

In education, spoken and written languages are the dominant forms of expression, and we lose touch with our expressive bodies. In the study of physical education, the body becomes objectified—measured, for example, in terms of flexibility, endurance, and strength—and functional outcomes of movement become more important than the movement itself. The movement is a means to an end. This practice is reinforced by an emphasis on games and fitness. Movement is often separated from intrinsic bodily sensations. Knowledge becomes abstracted from somatic being. Creating or composing using bodily movement, rather than replicating or

conforming movement patterns, has the potential for empowering and humanizing experiences in dance and physical education. Bergmann Drewe (1996) suggests that the concept of physical education needs to be expanded to include an aesthetic dimension, and that creative dance helps students give form to their ideas and feelings through movement.

Slattery (1995) acknowledges the importance of the fine arts in curriculum development and states that "knowledge is not logically ordered and waiting to be discovered, rather it is constructed on experiences of the whole body and being" (214). Aesthetic education can be transformational rather than technological, and learning is stimulated by a sense of future possibilities and a sense of what might be. Encouraging a more integrated aesthetic process in dance education requires that the movement is intentionally experienced as expressive and creative, and that there is a focus on the processes of improvisation and creation, as opposed to replication and assessment. As well, individuality and difference are supported and respected, and attention is given to the feeling of our bodies in action. I encourage a connection of the movement to the imaginative, unique, and unusual. It is also important that dance experiences are performed in a physically and emotionally safe environment.

What does it mean to learn and understand through our moving bodies? Shapiro (1998) offers an example of an embodied pedagogy: "one that taps into the emotional mapping of the lives we live within a social context...[providing] ways of understanding how this deeper reality of feeling can be used to develop a critical understanding of the relationships between self and culture...[and a] philosophy of education concerned with not simply understanding the world but changing it" (2). For example, dance can bring students back to a conscious sense of their own bodies, feelings, and thoughts. Shapiro advocates "development of a curriculum and pedagogy for dance education that incorporates concerns for issues of power, identity, gender, and cultural differences" (7). Central to this discussion are imagination, creativity, and attention to "body memories," which can lead to a more critical understanding of one's life. Shapiro envisions a form of dance education that reflects on "lived experiences," validates difference, denies universal claims to truth, and seeks to empower students with a renewed attention to the body. "The intent of the learning experience [in dance] moves from one of learning movement vocabulary for the sake of creating dance to gaining an understanding of the self, others, and the larger world for the possibility of change" (15).

Aesthetically significant dance education includes creating, performing, and appreciating dance. Simply learning steps and replicating ac-

tions do not provide a meaningful dance education. Aesthetic appreciation is not an automatic outcome of educational dance. A conscious intention to expression in movement is required. If physical educators are often uncomfortable with their own expressive bodies—how can they bring students to an appreciation of their expressive, aesthetic bodies? The situation in which dance finds itself “may in part be explained by a political and cultural reluctance to accept the value or even the existence of the knowledge embodied in the dance experience” (Bannon and Sanderson 2000, 11). The arts have the capacity to encourage creative, empowering, and imaginative visions. Sport and functional movement is goal-directed and emphasizes a disembodied knowing of the body. This knowledge is privileged in institutions that study and train people in the fields of physical education and, to some degree, dance education. Education in white North America can culture discounts intuitive, tacit knowledge in favour of measurable outcomes. Recent renovations to school physical education curricula (for example in Alberta) are primarily about outcome-based objectives.

### Dance in (Physical) Education: Dancing in the Dark

Rose Hill published an article in the *Canadian Journal for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation* in 1982 proposing that consideration be given to teaching sport and dance, rather than physical education. In this way, both functional bodily movement in sports and expressive bodily movement in dance could be included. Hill argued in favour of equal time for sport and dance. Dominant practices in physical education privilege sport and functional movement. Rudolf Laban’s model (Wall and Murray 1990), which distinguishes between functional movement and expressive movement, forms the basis for many elementary physical education curricula in Canada. His analysis of movement includes space, effort, relationship, and the body, and provides a model for moving and understanding movement. My own experience in teaching movement education for children and youth in a teacher education program at a university supports the belief that Laban’s model and dance education as expressive movement have been espoused in required courses for elementary education and secondary education students for the last thirty to forty years. This is likely true for most of the teacher education and physical education programs across Canada. However, students still come to university with limited or no dance experience from school programs in physical education—not

much is changing in school programs. Is there something underneath the surface of curriculum and program that gets in the way of change? Is the dominant, often unspoken judgment that “dancing is for sissies” undermining dance in physical education? I realize that I am inclined to generalize here, and I am certainly aware of examples of extensive and exciting dance programs that are happening in isolated situations. However, I continue to see the majority of incoming education students express non-existent or minimal dance education.

### Dance and Gender

#### Dance-Phobia in Physical Education

The film *Billy Elliot* (2000) offers a vivid example of the common perceptions about men in dance. In 1984 in a small mining town in England, a single father comes to grips with the fact that his youngest son, Billy, is choosing to take ballet lessons instead of boxing. The pivotal scene, when the father shows up at the ballet class and discovers Billy dancing rather than boxing, expresses the horror, anger, frustration, and humiliation his dad feels. The discussion that follows between Billy and his dad emphasizes the contrast between Billy’s perceptions of dance and those of his father. I would venture to guess that this scene also represents the feelings and beliefs of some professionals in physical education—dancing is for sissies, boys don’t dance unless they are gay, and so on. Billy assures his dad that he is not a “poofer” (homosexual) just because he likes to dance.

Dance experiences in physical education reinforce traditional male and female roles in society. Ballroom and social dance provides a good example. In reviewing the most common dance forms taught in teacher education programs and in schools, we see an emphasis on social forms such as ballroom dancing and line dancing. Dance in schools attempts to fit dominant heterosexual male norms. Male and female students, usually separated for most of their physical education classes, are suddenly brought together for a short unit on social dance. Little wonder there are management challenges in these situations—much more is going on than learning how to dance! Here the traditional social practices of dance are reaffirmed. The boys choose partners and students learn waltz, foxtrot, swing or jive dances, along with mixers and round dances. The men practise leading and the women practise following. Girls are to be silent and to do as they are told, and the boys are in charge. If a female physical educator is the primary teacher of the dance unit, the belief that women teach dance, and men teach games, may get reinforced.

How can we examine the normative performance of gender and disrupt common practices? Girls and boys may have different movement expectations placed on them. Sport becomes problematic for conventionally feminine girls, and dance becomes problematic for conventionally masculine boys. The traditional performance that has men leading and women following is one example of a dominant practice in social dance classes. Having both men and women lead, or having same-gender couples in social dance, as well as teaching expressive forms of dance, encourages other possibilities in the dancing class. In addition, experiencing the dances of other cultures, wherein gender roles are expressed differently through social and folk dances, offers different perspectives. For example, the Greek dance, *Hasapiko*, was traditionally danced by men: "Until recently men and women seldom danced together, although chains of men and women danced at the same time" (Lawson 1980, 69). Also, for many young Ukrainian children—boys, as well as girls—dance training is a common experience outside of school.

According to Burt (1995), "[i]n dance there is no possibility of opting out entirely from dominant gender ideologies" (48). Dance emphasizes a feminine discourse, athletics a masculine discourse—this dualism both defines what can be expressed through dance and provides a position for resisting dominant cultural discourses. "An individual's femininity or masculinity is measured or examined against conventional standards, represented in popular media and reinforced by schools, families, religions, medicine, the law and other institutions" (Shogan 1999, 53). Physical education's connection to games, sport, and athletics emphasizes masculine performance. Dance is incompatible with physical education to the extent that physical education is primarily concerned with sport, which in turn engages conventionally masculine movement. The hidden curriculum—or what is said by what is not taught—is that "dancing is for sissies."

Our experience of the body is a social and psychological construction. "Because the body is marginal to verbal discourse, its expressiveness is one such potential site of opposition... the presentation of the male body in dance [has] the potential for undermining and threatening the maintenance of male power" (Burt 1995, 72). Ted Shawn, an important modern dance figure from the 1930s, argued that dance was not "pansy" or "sissy," seemingly attempting to fit dominant heterosexual male norms, rather than challenging them (Burt 1995). As Shogan (1999) argues in her book, *The Making of High Performance Athletes*, "a girl in sport must not only practise sport skills, she must practise 'masculine' skills" (55). I might argue, the

boys in dance must not only practise dance skills, they must practise feminine skills. If, as Billy Elliot's father assumed, this implies that boys who dance are gay, then it is not surprising that discounting dance props up traditional beliefs about sport and masculine power—physical education is no place for dancing bodies!

### Dancing Bodies

Something happens when we objectify the body: the subjective body is silenced. Measuring, monitoring, and assessing bodies in physical education objectify the body. Our bodies are something outside of ourselves—we control and manipulate them and measure their performance against motor-skill, fitness or competitive standards. Our experiences of our bodies in motion diminish in relation to the results. We are uncomfortable with our sensuous, expressive, subjective bodies—we are out of touch with our bodies. We are much more comfortable with objective measures such as weight, height, strength, body fat, flexibility and attitude scales. The touchy-feely feminized movement is not acknowledged in physical education. Knowing in dance concerns body awareness and movement awareness—kinesthetic, synesthetic, and aesthetic. This integrated approach to movement allows students to respond individually to the stimuli, while being mindful of their bodies at all times. Dancing is more than just knowing how to do a movement, it involves an expressive intent. This expressive intent is also meant to be included in dance forms that emphasize replication. For example, when performing a tango or a waltz, the expression of the style of the dance is integral to the dancing. The sensual sneaking and darting of the tango is much different from the swing and lit of the waltz. The vigorous prancing action in the *troika* folk dance is meant to express the beautiful, synchronized action of horses pulling a sleigh—a representation by peasants of the elite class who travelled around in three-horse sleighs, or *troikas*.

Learning dancing contributes to becoming bodily sensitive as Parvainen (2002) argues. Bodily knowledge is not about correctly performing a movement skill, but about being able to negotiate, modify, and adapt the skill for the purpose of expression. Articulated knowledge about dance cannot replace its felt counterpart of dancing.

We experience the lived substance of dance through our own kinetic flow of being... dance cannot exist outside the body... my individuality (which is unique) and any human condition

(which is universal) are inescapably present in my dance.  
(Fraleigh 1987, xv-xxiv)

How is dancing contingent upon our beliefs about the body? By examining dancing in various cultures, we can see how dance styles and customs reveal cultural notions about the body—for example, the held torso and intricate leg and footwork in Irish dance compared to the gyrating and moving torso in Hawaiian dance. Dancing is non-verbal representation of personal expression. Dance *dis-rupts* and *dis-regards* privileged notions of the body in physical education. In this way, dance is *dis-regarded*, *dis-approved* of, and *dis-associated* from the study of physical education *unless* it is *dis-embodied*. Dance is *dis-ed!* To conform to the privileged discourse of physical education, the body becomes objectified and is studied in its anatomy, physiology, psychology, or sociology. The expressive, personal, and sensual experience of the lived body, as it responds to the world, is neither acknowledged nor valued.

How then can we say that we are physically educated if we do not know our expressive subjective body? Felt body knowledge is often undervalued; instead, we have a dominant view that knowledge is minded. Dualisms privilege one over the other—mind over body, male over female. Motion may have its own meaning. Creative dance focuses on the lived experience of dancing, a dancing for self. “Dance can be taken as meaningful action which can be treated as text” (Blumentfeld-Jones 1995). Polanyi (1966) proposed two kinds of knowing, an intellectual kind (knowing what or knowing that) and a bodily kind (knowing how). Knowledge can be seen as both embodied (or procedural) and theoretical (or propositional). How does one’s body know what it does through movement?

“Meaning is rooted in the sensory life of the body” (Abram 1997, 80). Merleau-Ponty’s work suggests that “the world is not what I think but what I live through” (1962, xvi). The self cannot be separated from either the body or the world. The self is constituted as a lived body. This lived body is the way that one interacts in the world. Merleau-Ponty’s work is committed to exploring aspects of our embodied existence that usually remain outside of theoretical language. This view contrasts with the mind-body binary and situates consciousness in the body. This requires an investigation of the body’s non-verbal expression and its relationship to verbal expression. For Merleau-Ponty, we are not self-housed in predominantly passive bodies. Rather, who we are—including our bodies—is continually being created by the world (Albright 1997, 47). Exploring our subjective bodies through expressive movement recognizes the lived body experience.

What kind of human and social vision underpins the research and writing in physical education? One that often emphasizes competition in athletics, objectified bodies in fitness, and healthy living models. What kind of human and social vision is reinforced in physical education programs of study and the pedagogy practised in them? One that emphasizes core experiences in anatomy, physiology, and sport psychology—a scientized body. This is the basis for many professional and university undergraduate programs. A joint degree program in physical education and education that stresses *sport history*, *sport psychology*, and *sociology of sport* is one such example. Imagine, as Shapiro (1998) states, “an education that is focused on human praxis—the thoughtful and conscious struggle to reshape our world into one that is more just and compassionate, and [to] understand through our *embodied knowledge* what it might mean to live freer and more empowered lives” (9). This vision seeks to empower people for social transformation through a “renewed attention to the body” (8).

Is there a process that leads to an awareness of and attention to particulars in the moving body—body knowledge that enhances the learning and performing of physical skills and leads to an ability to project the body into the world in performance? To have body wisdom—to be physically educated—we need to be able to attend to this multiplicity of sensory experiences and be able to translate them into purposeful movements. Susan Stinson (1995) is influenced by this lived experience of dancing in her thinking and writing. She knows that artistic form is not only external but also internal. Dancers “know that *shape* is not only about what something looks like on the outside, but what it feels like on the inside” (43). We can develop ways in which body and mind breathe together and are fully coordinated—such as dance. Dance, sport, and other forms of physical activity have the potential to confront us with our embodied knowing. Dance education can provide activities that support and encourage the expressive aspects of individual bodies.

Education, according to H'Doubler (1968), involves impression and expression. When we examine the notion of impressive bodies, expressive bodies, thinking bodies, and dancing bodies, we see the impact that high-quality dance experiences can have on students. Impressive bodies, or knowing bodies, experience an understanding of the subjective process whereby movers understand, create and use knowledge. Important to the experience of creative dance and dance composition are a focus on and commitment to the improvisational experience. When we are exploring ideas with our bodies, we are moving with a heightened personal sensitivity

to the feelings in our bodies. We are working to be completely free of distracting thoughts and movement habits. This requires being present in the moment, trusting the body's response and action. It also requires an attitude of non-judgment—dismissing such thoughts as “how do I look?” This heightened attention to the body, to the present ongoing movement, is particularly important in activities such as dance, yoga, and many martial arts and artistic sports. The internal focus on the body is not often emphasized in other physical activities and sport. People who are skilled in sport and games may not have experience attending to the body in the moment, rather they are often focused on the result of the movement—to score the goal, make a defensive play, etc. As well, it is unusual for athletes to articulate subjective, aesthetic feelings that arise from their participation in sport. But, being with one's body, being comfortable with one's creative and expressive body, is an important element of being physically educated.

To be able to express, to inform, and to articulate is an important outcome of education. Students may be able to utilize movement as a form of expression. Dance and body explorations have the capacity to inform us about many things; not the least of which is how disciplined, normalized gestures are inscribed on our bodies through other means. Dance can provide active play with tactility. Motion is not unthinkable: “The body is capable of understanding more things at once than can be articulated in language” (Browning 1995, 46). Some of the most moving scenes from *Billy Elliot* are the intense, spontaneous dancing moments when Billy expresses his joy of movement, or his frustrations about how his family feels about his dancing. The way he uses movement to express his feelings illustrates the power of the body's expression. When he articulates what dancing means to him at the audition for the ballet school, he talks about his subjective feelings of the experience of dancing—a sense of disappearing, of being transformed, and of flying.

### The D-Word

#### *Marginalizing Dance in Physical Education*

Looking at the history of the D-word in Canadian physical education, we can trace the change in the national organization, from CAHPER to CAHPERD in 1994. “Following the lead of the American Association which added ‘D’ for ‘Dance’ to its title (thus becoming AAHPERD) in February 1980, the Dance Committee of CAHPER named an ‘ad hoc’ committee to assess the benefits of adding the ‘D’ to CAHPER” (Gurney 1983,

138). However, action to add the “D” was postponed because of other pressing issues in CAHPER. At the national convention in Moncton in 1993, members of the Dance Committee “unanimously passed a motion to pursue the addition of the word ‘Dance’ to the title of CAHPER” (Murray 1994, 27). In 1994, at the Annual General Meeting of CAHPER in Victoria, two motions were passed and carried unanimously to approve the addition of “Dance” to the name of the association and to include the “D” for “Dance” in the name.

The work of the Dance Committee of CAHPER (1965–80) was significant. This committee included representatives from each province who met twice a year and were committed to raising the profile of dance in schools across the country. Financial support for these meetings and projects gradually disappeared and the work of the Dance Committee diminished. However, various projects, workshops, dance position statements, as well as input into the National Convention, were just some of the contributions that the Dance Committee made. After fifteen years of negotiating, dance was finally recognized as a distinct part of the National Association—CAHPER became CAHPERD. In “Quotes to support the addition of ‘D’ to CAHPER,” Robbins (1994) said,

As a professional association it is our responsibility to ensure that people are exposed to functional and expressive movement. Our name should reflect our commitment to dance as an important part of the movement continuum. (40)

Murray (1994) argues that “[d]ance plays a significant role within each of physical education, recreation and health and offers unique potential to all people for its expressive and artistic nature (27).” Jean Cunningham (1994), a former chair of the Dance Committee of CAHPER, supports this vision of dance in physical education:

Dance can be an alternative to or an integral part of physical education. The latter instance offers a potentially powerful union, as the athleticism of sport infuses the intentionally symbolic and aesthetic world of dance. The “D” for dance in CAHPERD refers to, and celebrates this larger vision of physical education. Furthermore, it suggests new possibilities, an open mind and the energy of change. (40)

A debate within the dance community about the place of dance in education has been ongoing, however, as is evidenced by various position

papers and articles in professional journals (Bannon and Sanderson 2000; Bergmann Drewe 1996; Hong 2001; and Shapiro 1998). Some models see dance as just another activity (like volleyball or gymnastics). Other models see dance as more appropriately connected to fine arts—the expressive, creative, performing, and appreciating aspects of an aesthetic education. Is dance more compatible with physical education than with fine arts education? Fine arts programs potentially allow us to connect with the aesthetic experience and the expressive subjective body. In New Zealand schools, dance has traditionally been included in the physical education program. Recent revisions to the national curriculum, however, placed dance in the fine arts program alongside drama, music, and the visual arts. Now all four disciplines in the fine arts are required from grades 1 to 8 (Hong 2001). In this model, physical education emphasizes the development of physical skills, whereas the fine arts program is broader in scope and includes aesthetic education. Students develop an appreciation for movement as an art form, the expressive and artistic or qualitative dimensions of the movement. In some curricula, dance stands alone as its own subject area on a par with physical education or music. Whatever its position, dance in CAPPERD has been acknowledged as an equal partner with physical education, recreation, and health within the Canadian Association—at least in name. The dominant discourse in this association that privileges objective bodies and functional movement, as well as culturally dominant masculine and feminine ideologies, may however limit the dance discourse, and reinforce the position that “dancing is for sissies.”

The relevance of aesthetic awareness in education also informs this discussion. Proponents of art education believe that experiences in the arts help to keep our senses alive. Despite the evolving number of artistic sports, an understanding of the aesthetic experience is not espoused in physical education programs in schools or in teacher preparation programs. Dance can inform the artistic sports significantly, in both the elements of artistic impression and the training of an expressive body. It may also be possible to reach more students with curriculum models in physical education that include expressive activities.

The debate about the positioning of dance in school programs—in physical education (practical approach), in fine arts (artistic, expressive approach), or in dance as a separate subject area altogether (artistic, aesthetic, and cultural approach) is interesting. Educational systems privilege minded (cognitive) function over body (feeling) knowledge.

This position is reinforced in physical education. The pedagogy of physical education emphasizes a curriculum that defines physical, cogni-

tive, social, and affective objectives. The feeling, expressive body is not developed through this model. In fact, the somatic, moving, sensing experience is not emphasized in physical education. In a system that already marginalizes non-academic subjects—fine arts and physical education, for example—support for a separate dance subject area may indeed limit dance experiences even more or, on the other hand, promote an elitist dance curriculum. The debate continues. When Billy Elliot attended his first ballet class, he said, “I feel like a right sissie.” But he overcame the obstacles to follow his dream and become a world-class dancer—at the same time disrupting the notion that “dancing is for sissies.”

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## Chapter Six

# *The Role of Family Studies in Comprehensive School Health*

Laura Tryssenaar

Health Canada's recommendation for comprehensive school health begs the inclusion of family studies as part of an integrated approach to promoting healthy students in healthy schools. This chapter invites the reader to consider family studies and health and physical education as complementary rather than competing programs. A history of these school subjects clarifies their shared journeys. Family studies and health and physical education share similar challenges in improving student health and well-being. A better understanding of family studies and its relevance for health education is needed to appreciate its fundamental importance in comprehensive school health.

In their Consensus Statement on School Health, the Canadian Association for School Health (CASH) identifies two components of comprehensive school health—instruction and social programs. They make the following recommendations for health instruction in schools:

- ◆ a comprehensive K-12 health curriculum;
- ◆ a K-12 physical education curriculum;
- ◆ a K-12 family studies/home economics curriculum;
- ◆ the integration of health into subject areas; formal and informal learning, the development of awareness, knowledge, attitudinal change, decision making, skill building, behavioural change and social action;