

Ballet Pedagogy as Kinesthetic Collaboration:  
Exploring Kinesthetic Dialogue in an Embodied Student-Teacher Relationship

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Dance Studies  
York University  
Toronto, Ontario

July 2016

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## **Abstract**

The twenty-first century ballet class often retains traditional organization, beginning with the *barre* work, continuing with the centre practice, *adage*, *pirouettes*, and *allegro*. However, the pedagogical demands on teachers have evolved within that framework due to critical questioning of how factors such as patriarchal underpinnings of class structure, the students' lived experience, and the efficacy of newly added pedagogical strategies influence dance education. Employing ethnographic methods, in the form of two separate studies, this research addresses how embodied student-teacher relationships based on multisensory perception can create kinesthetic dialogue, which facilitates the transmission of embodied knowledge. Kinesthetic dialogue consists of kinesthetic communication from the teacher and a kinesthetic response from the student, which subsequently results in kinesthetic collaboration that lives in the body memory of the student.

The purpose of the dissertation is to explore how an embodied student-teacher relationship manifests itself in the ballet studio, highlighting whether kinesthetic dialogue facilitates the transfer of bodily knowledge. Specifically, the questions driving the research were: 1) What combination of verbal and non-verbal communication is observed between the teacher and the students in each environment? 2) Do instances within this communication illustrate the pedagogical tool of kinesthetic dialogue? 3) Do moments within this pedagogical dialogue appear to trigger previously developed body memory in the students, based on their reactions to instructions, as well as in their performance of the material? These driving questions provided a guide to ensure a thorough exploration of the embodied student-teacher relationship. To investigate these questions,

ethnographic data collection techniques included: participant observation, teacher interviews, student email interviews, student focus groups as well as student surveys.

The student-teacher communication is reported using both *a priori* themes as well as themes that emerged from the data. These themes include: tactile corrections, teaching strategies, kinesthetic dialogue and language. The data interpretation across both studies is reported using two overarching pedagogical themes: the application of traditional pedagogical strategies with their accompanying ideologies, and the incorporation of somatic techniques that facilitated a progressive approach to learning ballet technique. Literature demonstrates that the student-teacher relationship is saturated with a patriarchal history, hierarchical constraints, external aesthetic expectations, as well as pressure to meet and exceed the codified technique. However, the critical analysis by scholars and educators regarding institutionalization, the body, and pedagogy are shifting the foundations of traditional ballet for future generations.

This research indicates that bringing ballet's well-established pedagogical tools to consciousness has the potential to create more effective learning situations. The growth of dance pedagogy will be facilitated by a heightened awareness of formerly embedded pedagogical tools. Evidence found in these studies supports the existence of kinesthetic dialogue. Kinesthetic dialogue has the potential to lead to kinesthetic collaboration resulting in new movement/information that is subsequently transferred to other learning situations. Ultimately, an understanding of kinesthetic dialogue can facilitate the conscious application of a reciprocal mode of kinesthetic communication that ballet teachers have intuitively employed for centuries.

For Patrick,  
who unwaveringly holds my feet on the ground,  
while my heart and my mind soar.

## **Acknowledgements**

This dissertation would not have been possible without the contributions of many dedicated individuals. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my dissertation committee, Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt, Claire Wootten and Lynda Mainwaring. These remarkable women facilitated my academic growth through their guidance and support. They challenged me to acknowledge that innovation occurs at intersections of ways of knowing. They facilitated the realization that my own subjectivity can fuel novelty in my perspective and research. I appreciate the support of the faculty members in the Graduate Program in Dance at York University. Professors Danielle Robinson and Patrick Alcedo provided me with academic guidance and helped shape my research in its early stages. Thank you to my colleagues at York, with whom I shared spirited discussions, and whose various perspectives fed my imagination and influenced my work. This research would not exist without the generous support of the schools, teachers and students involved in the project. To the participating teachers, my inclusion in your nuanced, informed classes as well as my exposure to your substantial pedagogical knowledge was an invaluable contribution both to this research and to my life's work as a ballet teacher. To the student participants, your openness and willingness to share your very limited free time in order to voice your experiences augmented and substantiated my research. Your voices were so important and I am so grateful for your participation. I would like to express my deepest appreciation for my remarkable family and friends. Your unwavering support, encouragement and understanding allowed me to complete my fieldwork while my children, Reanna and Lucas, thrived happily at home with our beloved dog Charlie. Finally, Reanna and Lucas, thank you for pushing me.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### Conceptualization of the Research

*As I danced at the barre, the teacher approached me. I did not turn my head toward her; however, I could sense that she was raising her hands toward my torso. Before she could reach me, I abruptly adjusted my position as though I had been suddenly moved into place. I continued dancing. The teacher was slightly startled and I clearly remember her chuckling. I blushed deeply and hotly. At fifteen years of age, this moment embarrassed me. She had not touched me, nor spoken a word. Why had I moved so abruptly? Why had she laughed at me?*

In the process of this dissertation research, I have reflected on many of my own studio experiences. I realize that unbeknownst to me at the time of this incident, there was a kinesthetic connection produced by hours of physical, verbal and visual contact with the teacher. Upon consideration, I can only assume that the teacher had chuckled in appreciation, surprise or perhaps delight at my instant reaction to her physical indication of a correction. My emotional investment in ballet began at nine years of age, when with very little previous training, I attended Canada's National Ballet School month-long summer audition. My personal and professional investment increased exponentially as continually I dedicated my life to the study of dance. I have always felt that having dance in my life was inevitable, unstoppable, and a certainty that provided me with consistent direction. This dissertation is the culmination of thirty years of dance training and practical teaching experience supported by my scholarly investigations exploring communication within ballet pedagogy. The specific focus, exploring kinesthetic dialogue and kinesthetic collaboration between ballet teachers and students, is an expansion of my previous research surrounding relationships and communication in commercial dance studios (Berg, 2015), as well as my Master's Major Research Project, in which I explored the hierarchical business structure of a commercial dance studio.

My practical teaching experience includes pre-professional ballet students of all ages, as well as university level Kinesiology students, most of whom have never studied dance formally, which unfailingly affords me enlightening experiences regarding communication in the dance studio environment. In this current research, I extend the scholarship surrounding kinesthesia in Dance Studies by exploring and documenting the kinesthetic dialogue that exists in ballet pedagogy, despite consistent representations of ballet as being primarily concerned with the visual modality for perception, learning and performance. Increased awareness of various pedagogical tools, including kinesthetic dialogue, when disseminated through teacher edification, has the potential to make a lasting contribution to dance education.

The initial conceptualization of this research emerged from a personal increasing awareness that my students responded to bodily communication while they were dancing, which resulted in them altering their movement in response to my facial expressions and/or bodily reactions and gestures. A seminal moment in my realization of this communication with my students occurred during a ballet class I was teaching when the teenage dancers were about to finish a *barre* exercise in *arabesque*. The instant before they were to arrive in *arabesque*, I indicated the spiraling quality I was expecting in the position by placing my hand along my rib cage, slightly turning my head, and executing a small movement in my upper body. All the dancers along the one *barre* who could see and/or sense my movement responded by incorporating the spiral as they finished the exercise. In “Body of Knowledge” feminist dance scholar Susan Stinson states, “we often feel as though an idea has chosen us, and we elect to return the embrace” (1995, 47). The beginnings of this research reflect that sentiment. I became curious about the embodiment

of the student-teacher relationship while actively observing and experiencing the particular corporeal connection that occurs to facilitate, or impede, learning in the studio.

This research is body-centered, with its focus on kinesthesia calling into question the hierarchy of Western beliefs pertaining to the five senses. In reference to sight being at the top of the sensory hierarchy, Ann Cooper Albright states, “seeing is believing and feeling is suspect” (239). In this dissertation, the term kinesthesia is first identified within dance scholarship; I then stretch and adapt the term to define a specific relationship between ballet teacher and student. This dissertation extends the existing discourse surrounding kinesthesia in the field of Dance Studies to include the embodied communication experienced within the student-teacher relationship. Employing ethnographic methods, in the form of two separate studies, this research addresses how embodied student-teacher relationships based on multisensory perception can create kinesthetic dialogue, which facilitates the transmission of embodied knowledge. Kinesthetic dialogue consists of kinesthetic communication from the teacher and a kinesthetic response from the student, which subsequently results in kinesthetic collaboration that lives in the body memory of the student.

Dancer and anthropologist Cynthia Novack inspired my concept of kinesthetic dialogue. In *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture* (1990) Novack describes a physical relationship between the dancers as, “touching, leaning, supporting, counterbalancing, and falling with other people, thus carrying on a physical dialogue” (1990, 8). The words physical dialogue resonated with me in reference to ballet pedagogy. I closely examined the chapter in which she contrasts participation in contact improvisation with ballet’s traditional gender roles, and I wondered if there were

similarities between the tactile communication found in contact improvisation and the tactile corrections associated with ballet pedagogy. In April 2014, I began preliminary research in the form of a coursework paper with the goal of presenting three differently informed perspectives on corporeal communication within the student-teacher relationship. I interviewed two professional dancers, one being a conservatory student and the other a dancer working in a professional company, augmented by field notes from my own teaching practice. This groundwork yielded observations that became starting points for the dissertation. This preliminary research established a connection with one of the two schools later used in the research. The studies conducted for this dissertation took place at one national and one international location.

The foundational idea that motivated this research was that communication could be embodied. Thomas Csordas defines embodiment as “an indeterminate methodological field defined by perpetual experience and mode of presence and engagement in the world” (1994, 12). The purpose of this dissertation is to explore how an embodied student-teacher relationship manifests itself in the ballet studio, highlighting whether kinesthetic dialogue facilitates the transfer of bodily knowledge. Specifically, the questions driving the research were: 1) What combination of verbal and non-verbal communication is observed between the teacher and the students in each environment? 2) Do instances within this communication illustrate the pedagogical tool of kinesthetic dialogue? 3) Do moments within this pedagogical dialogue appear to trigger previously developed body memory in the students, based on their reactions to instructions, as well as in their performance of the material? When initially considering the optimal research method for exploration of these questions, I determined that the lived experience of the

students and teachers would best be investigated using ethnographic fieldwork strategies. Therefore, the research questions were explored through direct observation using pre-prepared class observation charts and field notes, multiple interviews/focus groups with teachers and students, as well as student surveys.

My positionality within the research was grounded in my personal pedagogy, which involves a student-centered philosophy nurturing personal relationships with my students. When teaching, I employ methods that encourage students to develop critical thinking skills and that promote the creation of a dialogical educational environment. Communications and Culture professor Joshua Guilar explains, “Dialogic instruction promises many benefits –engagement of learners and teachers, relevance, the influence of democratic values in the education process, the building of character, and the establishment of a community for the educative enterprise” (1). The integration of dialogue with egalitarian pedagogical strategies into the ballet class attempts to shift some of the power historically held by the teacher to the students, resulting in emancipation from their traditional silent role.

Based on the work of various sociocultural theorists and psychologist Lev Vygotsky, former ballet dancer and dance education scholar Dale Johnston describes how authoritarian teaching practices limit verbal discussion in traditional pedagogy. In developing a sociocultural approach to ballet training, Johnston focuses on the importance of speech to the largely non-verbal art form (4). Additionally, he asserts that limiting inner or egocentric speech in ballet training “has a detrimental impact upon student cognition” (3). Similarly, dance scholar Eeva Anttila explains how she uses the dialogical considerations found in the pedagogical theories of Martin Burber (1937/1970)

and Paulo Freire (1972) as a lens through which to examine pedagogical moments (46). She states that during her teaching and autoethnographic research projects, she has experienced dialogue as an embodied act (46). The idea that dialogue can be embodied is a foundational concept in my research. Specifically, I began to contemplate whether the existence of kinesthetic dialogue in ballet had traditionally replaced the verbal dialogue that I am currently encouraging with my students. Ethnologist Tomie Hahn encapsulates the student-teacher relationship in *nihon buyo* (traditional Japanese dance) when she states:

Visual and kinesthetic transmission inherently produces a bonding relationship evoked through gaze, between student and teacher... bonding is reinforced in every sensory mode of transmission. I believe that the relationship stems partly from the desire to dance as our teachers dance. The physical intensity and focus of repeatedly aligning one's movements to a teacher's way of dance creates an unspoken connection between student and teacher. (98)

Within the framework of the ballet class, my focus was on the dimension of the student-teacher connection that requires bodily communication. This type of student-teacher communication has been part of my quotidian existence to some degree for my entire career and although kinesthesia was a central term in this research, it was observing kinesthesia, or more specifically, a kinesthetic connection between people that was the foundation of this work. Fieldwork ultimately encompassed direct observation of communication across all sensory modalities and was not limited to the non-verbal communication. Kinesthetic dialogue was illustrated through moments such as the student and teacher dancing together with transference of artistry, which was not reliant on gaze so much as on the kinesthetic connection between moving bodies.

The use of ballet classes for the research stemmed from my lived experience as well as on the need to delimit the research in a significant way. The framework of the advanced level ballet class allowed for established boundaries of the movement vocabulary, as well as for the subsequent communication used to achieve the codified steps. I selected dancers at elite international schools who were highly trained in ballet technique, facilitating the presence of kinesthetic dialogue based on body memory and years of amassed ballet vocabulary. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's (2012) concept of kinesthetic memory and Thomas Fuchs' (2012) six categories of body memory are explored in Chapter 2. Fuchs offers one definition of body memory succinctly stating, "Through repetition and exercise, a habit develops. Well-practiced patterns of movement and perception become embodied as skills..." (10). It is the embodiment of ballet vocabulary that facilitates the dancers' responses to the teachers' kinesthetic cues which trigger previously learned kinesthetic advice allowing the dancers to access long-practiced motor repertoire.<sup>1</sup>

I chose to delimit the study by observing ballet in order to utilize the specific framework found in a structured ballet class, as well as the established motor repertoire of advanced dancers and the codified vocabulary. I have participated in thousands of traditional ballet classes with similar sequencing of exercises and timing of class content. Therefore, the familiar traditional structure of the ballet classes at both schools framed and supported my observations and interpretations and provided the research with an established foundation from which to develop. These advanced dancers had an extensive and refined vocabulary. In order to be in these classes, the dancers were highly skilled at

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<sup>1</sup> Neuroscientist Beatriz Calvo-Merino explains that motor repertoire is the "storage of all the motor knowledge" that a person acquires in their life (154).

interpreting kinesthetic advice and kinesthetic cues, and possessed the physical capacity to work toward ballet's ideal aesthetic. Furthermore, as aspiring dancers, they were eager to communicate and engage with their teachers. I was interested in students' personal journeys through dance education and I hoped to gather their insights to inform and support teaching strategies in the future.

### Discussion of Terms

This discussion explores both well-established concepts such as kinesthesia, proprioception and kinesthetic empathy, as well as terms created for this research including kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue and kinesthetic collaboration. The list of definitions that follows this discussion includes terms specific to the research such as kinesthetic advice and kinesthetic imagery. Firstly, **Kinesthesia** was coined by Charles Bastian in 1880 and is associated with proprioception, which was named by C.S. Sherrington in 1906. Kinesthesia is movement that is proprioceived by the mover. Simply stated, dance scholar Deidre Sklar asserts that kinesthesia is “felt experience” of the mover (2000, 72). Proprioception is the process by which afferent neural pathways send information to the central nervous system about limb movement direction in space and velocity (Magill 459). Dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster traces the genealogy of the term kinesthesia in her book, *Choreographing Empathy: Kinesthesia in Performance* (2011). Foster discusses the work conducted by neuroscientist Alain Berthoz and his colleagues on the brain's sense of movement, including Berthoz's notion that kinesthesia “plays a central role in orienting and organizing the senses,” as well as his argument that “perception simulates action” (2011, 123). New theories supported by neurophysiological



research after the discovery of mirror neurons,<sup>2</sup> assert kinesthesia as a process of simulation (2011, 124).

As part of this exploratory research, I propose definitions for three additional kinesthesia related terms: **kinesthetic communication**, **kinesthetic dialogue** and **kinesthetic collaboration**. In this study, kinesthetic dialogue is initiated by the teacher's **kinesthetic communication**. Kinesthetic communication refers to bodily communication including gesture or movement. This communication is a result of the teacher responding to student performance. It includes the teacher actively communicating to the students. For the purpose of this research, kinesthetic communication is defined as one-way because there were multiple examples during the studies in which the teachers communicated information but received no external response from the students.

**Kinesthetic dialogue** results when the student is actively engaged in the learning situation by independently responding to the kinesthetic communication. Without student engagement there is no kinesthetic dialogue. Kinesthetic dialogue facilitates the transfer of knowledge. **Kinesthetic collaboration** occurs when the student adapts the advice to their individual body. I use the term kinesthetic dialogue in reference to both parties responding empathetically to both internal and external stimuli to work toward producing a change in the student's movement. Kinesthetic collaboration refers to an experience/movement resulting from this partnership based on empathy affecting both teacher and student. Furthermore, the student and teacher enter into kinesthetic collaboration when the student adapts the movement to their own body and the resultant

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<sup>2</sup> Neuroscientists first found evidence of the MNS, a neural system that matches action and perception in macaque monkeys (Calvo-Merino, 2005, 2010; Cross 2010; Jola, 2010). Scientists noticed that the neurons in the brain of the macaque monkey fired in the same way when the researcher grasped an object as when the monkey had grasped the object himself. "Thus the neurons were triggered by motor actions independent of the agent" (Jola, 2010, 208).

movement/information can be taken into the student's motor repertoire for future development. I created the term kinesthetic dialogue based on my observations of the corporeal communication that occurs between teacher and student in order for them to engage in the learning process of a kinesthetic practice. Professor Dee Reynolds explains that because kinesthesia is intermodal: "a movement or action can be experienced, for instance, both as a visual image and as a movement sensation; when perception of another's action is also experienced as one's own movement sensation, this process becomes empathetic" (124). It is the intermodal aspect of the embodied student-teacher relationship that supports the terms kinesthetic dialogue and kinesthetic collaboration.

To situate the term kinesthesia as it applies to **kinesthetic empathy** within the student-teacher relationship, I refer to the work of Corrine Jola, Matthew Reason and Dee Reynolds who are principal investigators on the cross-disciplinary research project, *Watching Dance: Kinesthetic Empathy (Watching Dance Project)*. In their cross-disciplinary project, the researchers aim to link the first person experiences of the audience members (qualitative research) to the third person neurophysiological data (neuroscientific approaches), and subsequently exploring kinesthetic responses to watching dance. Reason and Reynolds explain that the term kinesthesia, as related to research adjacent to kinesthetic empathy in dance observation, includes both internal (proprioception) and external stimuli (exteroception) (2010, 53). Kinesthetic empathy as a concept involves people inferring others' intentions by using both motor and emotional sensations (Jola 219). Kinesthetic empathy is a factor in successful kinesthetic collaboration as the student adapts the teacher's movement quality and it also facilitates the application of the teacher's kinesthetic advice.

Jola (2010) explains, “one of the earliest theories on emotion put forward by William James (1890) proposed that ...spectators experience a kinesthetic sensation (motor simulation) as well as the emotional response...to form a single experience”(219). The early theory of dance critic John Martin discusses the viewer mimicking the dance or “literally dancing along” and Martin connects emotion to the physical feeling of musculature as a way of interpreting movement (Foster, 2011, 113, 123). Martin’s theory has been critiqued widely for its universalist approach to the interpretation of emotion. However, Jola explains that present day audience members experience both an emotional response and a kinesthetic sensation. She argues that there is “not much known about the connection between the phenomenological experience (kinesthetic sensation) and mirror neuron activity (motor simulation)” but that it is worth considering how these processes are used to infer others’ intentions and possibly come together in the concept of kinesthetic empathy (219).

Reynolds (2012) explains that the mirror neuron system itself does not produce empathy; rather, mirror neurons do support shared representations of action and perception. In the ballet class, it is the shared representation of perception and action based on years of lived experience that allows the teacher and student to strive toward the desired aesthetic result. The role of **proprioception** as an aesthetic sense, discussed by Barbara Montero (2006), adds the dimension of the dancer’s lived experience of aesthetics, or as Sklar calls them, “kinetic sensations” (2000). Montero suggests that “proprioception is an aesthetic sense and that one can make aesthetic judgments based on proprioceptive experience...one can deem a certain movement beautiful based on one’s

proprioceptive experience of the movement” (231). She also argues that an observer can “proprioceive” the beauty of another’s movement (231).

The student-teacher relationship in my study is termed **embodied** because it is a physical relationship that occurs in a kinesthetic culture. Anthropologist Jaida Kim Samudra explains that researchers studying **kinesthetic cultures** such as dance, martial arts, soldiers and athletes emphasize the physical self, consequently the research “is not only of the body but also from the body” (666). The student-teacher relationship in ballet occurs face to face and is not mediated. Cognitive scientist Bettina Bläsing explains that embodiment is the “view that a mind, or a cognitive system, can only evolve through interaction with the physical world” (2010, 76). Therefore, the physical learning that results from kinesthetic dialogue and kinesthetic collaboration is an embodied act for the teacher and the student as they navigate their physical relationship in the ballet school environment. The students, through their interactions with the teacher, classmates, the music and the space, embody the movements that are altered and which evolve through kinesthetic collaboration with the teacher.

The complex issue of **body memory** (kinesthetic memory) is addressed by the research question exploring whether **kinesthetic cues** given by the teacher trigger the kinesthetic memory of the dancers and/or change their movement quality. Kinesthetic cues are kinesthetic communication based on physical movements, gestures and demonstration that affect the quality and or technical execution of the dancer’s movement. Kinesthetic cues draw on the body memory of the student, often generated through small gestures by the teacher that facilitate an understanding of complex technique learned over many hours of training. For example, in the previously mentioned

anecdote regarding my kinesthetic dialogue with students, the gesture toward my ribs to indicate the spiral in *arabesque* prompted the students to engage their entire body in a complex position, which held the quality of movement/spiral, despite being an ending/static position for the exercise.

Literature pertaining to body memory is explored in Chapter 2 (Fuchs, 2012; Sheets Johnstone, 2012). However, when Foster states that “memories are not stored in the body; rather a process of remembering is cultivated in the body,” she alludes to the body as an archive (2011, 186), which is central to the efficacy of kinesthetic collaboration, as the embodied knowledge of both student and teacher is engaged during their kinesthetic dialogue and the resultant learned movement remains in their kinesthetic memory for future performance.

#### Definition of Terms

The terms of reference were carefully considered in order to facilitate understanding of the context for the student-teacher relationship. The following terms are used within the dissertation and are listed in alphabetical order.

**Aesthetics:** The aesthetics of ballet are a consideration in this study because the evaluation of the dancer’s movement is affected by both the physical execution, which in ballet can arguably be an objective property based on codified technique, as well as the subjective response of the teacher to the aesthetics of the dancer and his/her movement. As part of a 2008 study, neuroscientists Beatriz Calvo-Merino and Corrine Jola reported that mechanisms for seeing dance are sensitive to implicit positive aesthetic feeling

(2010, 168). This is a factor in the initial formulation of the teacher's expectations for the technical and artistic execution of a movement, as well as the communication of the teacher's expectations to the dancer, and the teacher's perception of the dancer's success in performing the movement.

**Anatomical Imagery:** Anatomical imagery was used in both studies as a teaching tool. Dance scientists Donna Krasnow and Virginia Wilmerding state, "anatomical imagery uses specific anatomical terminology, but it is presented in a metaphorical sense" (271). For example, in S2 the teacher asked students to feel their leg (femur) "in its home," referring to the placement of the leg in the hip socket and meaning that the leg does not change the neutral alignment of the pelvis when it is lifted to the front or side.

**Atmosphere:** One aspect that is addressed as a result of direct observation in this research is the atmosphere of the classes. The atmosphere of the class refers to the tone that is set by the school and the teacher. The physical environment, including the students' uniforms, personal belongings, and pre-class rituals, all influence the atmosphere. These elements appear to affect the comfort level of the students and produce an ambiance for visitors to the class.

**Conservatory:** The schools are further described as conservatories because they are places for the students to grow in their specific artistic field. The students are nurtured and receive specialized instruction, physical care and psychological support in the pursuit of a professional career.

**Contemporary Dance:** The term contemporary dance is central in the discussion of the S2 school as the dancers being observed there in ballet class are training as professional contemporary dancers. Dance scholar Heather Young states, “Contemporary dance can be seen as a fusion of sorts, as it marries the aesthetic principles and choreographic strategies of a wide range of dance forms, whilst often referencing the minimalist and pedestrian qualities seen in postmodern choreography... it is appropriate to add that contemporary dance offers a generous allowance for experimentation with movement vernaculars, conceptual ideas, production elements, and technological innovation” (23-24).

**Kinesthetic Advice:** The term kinesthetic advice is used to refer to directions, instructions or suggestions made by the teacher that refer to how a movement should feel. Kinesthetic advice produces the desired aesthetic result through somatic sensation, as well as facilitating an internal focus for the dancers, which increases their proprioception of the movement. For example, if I ask a student to repeat a movement while attempting to feel like they are sinking into the ground, I have affected not only how they proprioceive their movement, that is to say experience their kinesthesia, but I have also likely changed the aesthetic quality of their movement. Kinesthetic advice is born of the teachers’ personal lived experiences as ballet dancers. Kinesthetic advice attempts to affect the movement from a dancer’s internal perspective to achieve the desired aesthetic and may employ various types of images.

**Kinesthetic Collaboration:** Kinesthetic collaboration is the result of kinesthetic dialogue, which facilitates the transfer of knowledge and the adaptation of the advice to the individual body of the student. Furthermore, the student and teacher enter into kinesthetic collaboration when the student adapts the movement to their own body.

**Kinesthetic Dialogue:** Kinesthetic dialogue results when the student independently responds to the kinesthetic communication, which means the student is actively engaged in the learning situation. Without student engagement there is no dialogue.

**Kinesthetic Cue:** Kinesthetic cues are physical gestures that prompt the dancer to respond by altering their movement. This shortened kinesthetic communication based on physical movements, gestures and demonstration, affects the quality and or technical execution of the dancer's movement. Kinesthetic cues draw on the body memory of the student, often generated through small gestures by the teacher that facilitate an understanding of complex technique learned over many hours of training.

**Kinesthetic Empathetic Approach:** In "Five Premises For a Culturally Sensitive Approach to Dance" (2001), dance scholar Deirdre Sklar explains empathetic kinesthetic perception is the merging of "mimesis and empathy" and the term reflects the participant's need to take a somatic approach in addition to receiving the visual cues in order to "be in the other's body, moving" (32). This is a central concept in kinesthetic collaboration as the teacher affects the quality of the dancer's movement execution.



**Kinesthetic Imagery:** Kinesthetic Imagery is “a representation of concrete objects, events, or movements as perceived by sensation” (Krasnow and Wilmerding 271). For example, the S2 teacher asked the students to feel marching ants moving up their spine. The students’ response was to lift through their torso and elongate their spines without losing the natural curves.

**Professional Dancer:** The term professional dancer applies to the graduates of these schools because upon leaving the schools they intend to make a living by dancing. They may join established companies, take on independent dance jobs or create their own work and hire dancers themselves.

**School:** The term school is used because both institutions in the studies self-identity as schools. Additionally, the term school can imply a long-term and formative relationship with the student.

**Somatics/Somatic Approach:** Dance Education scholar Jill Green notes, “Somatics as a field of study generally views the body from a first person perspective” (2007, 1120). The term and field of Somatics was founded by Thomas Hanna, who asserts that the perceptions from a first person perspective are very different than those from a third person perspective (Green 2007, 1120). Additionally, dance researcher Sylvie Fortin explains “Somatics, body therapies, and body-mind practices are interchangeable terms referring to idiosyncratic practices developed by individuals such as, Alexander...” (Fortin 50). The S2 teacher applied somatic practices and approaches in the observed

ballet classes. I define somatic practice as an approach to movement that centers on the first person perspective and establishes internal authority.

**Studies:** The studies are numbered Study 1 (S1) and Study 2 (S2) for clarity and to avoid using the schools' names or locations. The teachers and students are identified by S1 or S2 to avoid the attachment of gender to the observations and describing the teachers and students as male and female.

**Verbal Cue:** A verbal cue is a quicker prompt to call to mind the kinesthetic or technical advice that the dancer has been given either over time or within the same class. For example, a verbal cue for the kinesthetic advice described above (pertaining to the dancer sinking into the ground) could be the prompt: "melt."

#### Overview of Two International Studies

Prior to embarking on this study, preliminary steps were taken to secure the participation of two professional schools that were located in different countries but shared multiple similarities, with the goal that comparisons might emerge from the data. Having had previous professional contact with both schools, I was able to approach contacts in administration regarding my project. Similarities considered to be essential included the schools' mandates, student expectations, processes of admission, as well as comparable projections for graduating students, which include employment as professional dancers. In Study 1 (S1), the school states that the full-time professional program is "designed to take the student from the earliest stages of intense training to the

brink of a full time career in dance... students receive individual support and guidance as a part of their career orientation and employment search” (Press Kit 2014).<sup>3</sup> Similarly, in a promotional brochure the artistic director of the Study 2 (S2) school states, “The overall curriculum is designed to introduce our dancers to the reality of the field while supporting and guiding them as they discover their place in it.”<sup>4</sup> The comparable level of training that the schools offered, as well as the strong resemblance in program design, supported the selection of these schools for this research.

Once the directors of the schools agreed to participate in the study, the teachers were selected. The S1 director assigned the teacher based on the description of my research. This autocratic assignment made the first few meetings with the selected teacher less comfortable than in S2, as the S2 teacher volunteered to participate after I observed her class and explained my research. Both studies involved students in conservatory settings. The S1 participants were grade 11 and 12 adolescent males studying in a ballet conservatory accommodating students from grades 6 to 12. The S2 participants were 18 to 21 year-old females in a post-secondary school that specializes in training contemporary dancers.

York University granted ethics approval for the research July 30, 2014 and all students and teachers signed letters of informed consent (Appendix H). The letters of informed consent described the purpose of the research as well as the expectations of participants in the study. Teachers were observed teaching classes in six to ten hour segments at three times during the course of the academic school year, for a total of

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<sup>3</sup> To preserve the anonymity of the school, the url for the press kit retrieved 3 May 2015 is not included in the works cited list.

<sup>4</sup> To preserve the anonymity of the school, the title and publication information of the promotional brochure for the 2014/2015 year is not included in the works cited list.

approximately twenty hours of observation per study. The teachers were interviewed after each of these observation periods (for interview questions see Appendices A and B). The observations were scheduled at various times during the school year in order to observe the progression through the curriculum. During the observation of the classes, notes were taken regarding the student-teacher relationship and pre-prepared charts, described and discussed in Chapter 3, were used to record specific elements of communication.

The ethnographic approach to gathering data from the student participants in each study differed due to the schools' requirements. For example, the S1 students chose pseudonyms to facilitate the use of data from audio-recorded focus group conversations. They completed anonymous surveys as a means of facilitating openness and honesty in their responses. The focus group conversations replaced the initially planned email interview to facilitate parental consent. The administrator was concerned that parents would disallow their child's involvement if an outside party contacted the students via email (surveys and sample focus group questions are provided in Appendices C and D). Although all of the S1 students were over 16 years of age, therefore did not legally require parental consent, this stipulation was predetermined in order to expedite the permission process. A total of eight dancers signed letters of informed consent and all eight participated to varying degrees in the different aspects of the research.

The S2 students submitted their email addresses at the end of a voluntary anonymous survey. They were identified by pseudonyms chosen by the student or by the researcher. Interview questions were based on participants' experiences both within the classes and through personal exploration/practice of the concepts of the teacher (survey and email interview questions are provided in Appendices E and F). There were a total of

42 dancers who signed letters of informed consent. All of the dancers were observed at various times. However, there were 18 dancers in the *pointe* class that were given the option to participate in the written portion of the data collection (surveys and email interviews). Four of those dancers chose to participate in lengthy email interviews.

In both studies, with the exception of the sex and age range of the participants, demographic information was not collected. Factors such as their previous training, exact ages, or nationalities were not seen as relevant to the study because the students had achieved a level of proficiency in ballet technique that facilitated their participation in these classes. The schools determined their placement in these classes and they appeared homogenous in their level of technique and dance experience. This research focused on the current learning environment within the context of the professional school regardless of previous training and/or experience.

These disparate environments afforded me opportunities for self-reflection and professional development. Through observation of various modes of communication I discovered, and reflected on, my own habitual teaching practices. I was made aware of modes of communication that I might use to engage my own students in different ways to facilitate individual learning. For example, as discussed in S2 results, the use of somatic practices can be integrated into ballet pedagogy effectively and I began to apply some of the concepts in my own classes. Additionally, the use of positive silence as a means to facilitate inner authority and individual exploration of technique was a strategy that I implemented in my pedagogy. These personal adaptations of the research are further discussed and explored in Chapter 7.

The theoretical framework for the execution and discussion of these studies was informed by literature regarding the senses including kinesthesia and energy (heat), representations of gender in ballet performance and training, as well as educational strategies employed in ballet pedagogy. In Chapter 2, I contextualize the various aspects of this project in four distinct yet overlapping discussions of the relevant literature, including: the body as a site of phenomenological research, the situating of kinesthesia in dance research, the contextualization of gender roles in ballet, and an exploration of past and present pedagogical strategies in the dance studio environment.

The ethnographic influences on my research, as well as its body-centered focus, are reflected in the initial discussion of the literature centered on participant observation research in kinesthetic cultures. These authors including dance scholars Deidre Sklar, Ann Cooper Albright and anthropologist Jada Kim Samudra, ground their projects using theorists including Pierre Bourdieu (1977), Clifford Geertz (1973) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962). The concept of embodiment is defined by Thomas Csordas (1993, 1994) and augmented by Drew Leder's (1990) prominent body theory. Aspects related to kinesthesia in dance, including the application of Leder's "absent body," and the complex notion of body memory are explored through the works of Anna Aalten (2007), Caroline Potter (2008), as well as Thomas Fuchs (2012) and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (2012a, 2012b).

In Chapter 2, an historical overview of ballet's hierarchical structure follows the discussion of aspects of kinesthesia. Gender roles are still perpetuated in ballet training, as they are considered to be a necessity for the dancers to perform the traditional repertoire. The development of these representations of the body in ballet are illuminated

through dance history and dance studies writings including the seminal works of Ann Daly (1987) and Susan Leigh Foster (1996), as well as recent scholarship by Carrie Gaiser Casey (2012, 2013) and Jennifer Fisher (2003, 2007). Finally, current dance education literature considers various pedagogical strategies through the critical lenses of theorists Paulo Freire (1970) and Michel Foucault (1979). This discussion highlights the dichotomy between democratic teaching methods and traditional dance pedagogy as the focus of dance education shifts, moving further into the twenty-first century.

Chapter 3 outlines the method undertaken to conduct two studies in similar pre-professional schools. Chapters 4 and 5 report results of the individual studies including information and discussion of the narrative of my personal field notes. The results of each study are reported separately: Chapter 4 reports S1, and Chapter 5 reports S2. There is a brief discussion to begin and end each chapter, which includes results interpreted using personal experience. Tables include descriptive data pertaining to various sets of results, including the class exercises, general themes, modes of communication, and examples of kinesthetic dialogue. In Chapter 6, reporting of further results across both studies includes critical insights into ballet pedagogy, my professional experience, as well as my personal kinesthetic reactions to the student-teacher communication. Current dance education scholarship substantiates and frames the reporting. The comparison of the studies is reserved for Chapter 7 where the studies are discussed in relation to one another addressing the research questions and offering possible questions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

### Contextualizing Kinesthetic Collaboration

This chapter presents four independent yet interrelated discussions that contextualize the embodied student-teacher relationship. The chapter begins by exploring ethnographic research regarding kinesthetic practices, in which scholars discuss various communicative modalities employed for the transmission of embodied knowledge. In this literature, ethnographic research in kinesthetic cultures<sup>5</sup> and subsequent analysis of results is facilitated by participant observation research as well as the scholars' lived experiences. This section also substantiates the researchers' use of, and need for, embodied knowledge and lived experiences during fieldwork done in kinesthetic cultures. This discussion is followed by a second section, which contains an overview of kinesthesia in relation to dancers' experiences. This section further contextualizes the ethnographic methods, such as direct observation of an embodied experience, which were implemented in the studies for this dissertation. The role of kinesthetic memory in dance is explored to contextualize kinesthetic collaboration.

In the third section, the literature discussing ballet's historically rooted gender roles and patriarchal structure elucidates the still present segregation of sexes for training gender specific roles, as well as some of the teaching strategies I observed during the research. Finally, a discussion of traditional and innovative ballet pedagogy substantiates my analysis of the teaching methods observed within the two studies. The body of literature included in this chapter intrinsically links the history of the body's representation in ballet and the patriarchal structure of ballet training and performance, to

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<sup>5</sup> See discussion of terms.



the negotiation of challenges I faced in capturing the sensational, phenomenological experience of the participants in both performance and learning situations.

### Negotiating the Moving Body: Research in Dance Ethnography

The groundwork for situating the dancing body in cultural studies, sociology, and within the intersection of phenomenology and dance is found in dance scholarship spanning the past two decades (Albright, 2013; Desmond, 1997; Thomas, 2003). Although sociologist Helen Thomas (2003) considers the dancing body to be neglected in social and cultural theory, in *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (2003) she offers a comprehensive interdisciplinary text in which she analyzes numerous critical perspectives of dance from the Performance Studies and Dance Studies fields. A decade after Thomas (2003) illustrated how the boundaries of dance scholarship were being eroded by feminist, poststructuralist and postmodernist thought (2), Ann Cooper Albright (2013) exemplifies this interdisciplinary approach as she critically considers Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) through her own embodied dance practice. In *Engaging Bodies: The Politics and Poetics of Corporeality* (2013), Albright compiles her own dance writings that span the last twenty-five years. Albright's use of a phenomenological lens to frame and contextualize her past writing is of particular relevance to current body-centered scholarship and the academic study of kinesthetic cultures.

Albright credits Sklar's concept of empathetic kinesthetic perception for the idea underlying multiple dance studies writings "that mix ethnography and cultural studies with a decidedly phenomenological twist" (2013, 11). Body-centered scholarship attends

to observation of corporeal cultural knowledge through ethnographic methods, including participant observation facilitating somatic understanding of the culture being studied (Sklar 2001, 2006). Some researchers have found that challenges associated with recording the phenomenological experience of the moving body can be minimized through embodiment facilitated by participant observation research (see Hahn, 2007; Samudra, 2008; Sklar, 2006; Nelson, 2008; Novack, 1990; Wacquant, 2004). The phenomenological aspect of ethnographic works often is categorized under the umbrella of embodied research, a term that has gained considerable cultural currency in the last decade, and refers to research that blends phenomenology, anthropology, ethnography and cultural studies (Albright 12). Albright defines embodiment as “the process by which cultural values are internalized and represented by social bodies” (264).

In the introduction to *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self* (1994), anthropologist Thomas Csordas states that the distinction between “representation and being-in-the-world is methodologically critical” (10). He explains that representation is fundamentally nominal and being-in-the-world is fundamentally conditional, which subsequently results in the difference between understanding culture as objectified abstraction versus speaking of lived experience (1994, 10). Csordas states, “With biology no longer a monolithic objectivity, the body is transformed from object to agent... The body as an experiencing agent is evident in recent social science work... and in ethnographic practice itself” (1994, 3). In his article “Somatic Modes of Attention” (1993) Csordas explains “the body is a biological, material entity, while embodiment can be understood as an indeterminate methodological field defined by perpetual experience and mode of presence and engagement in the

world” (135). Thus Csordas recognizes the necessity of social interaction to facilitate the concept of lived experience. Lived experience is neither solely individualistic nor entirely subjective; rather, socially established communicative strategies within various kinesthetic cultures facilitate the lived experience and the dissemination of embodied knowledge.

In research surrounding physical practice, scholars present the material from an embodied perspective that allows the awareness of their own kinesthesia to support their analysis of the movement and interpretation of the culture. In her research surrounding social identity formation through shared bodily practice, Jaida Kim Samudra explains how she experiences the limits of “language for expressing embodied knowledge” (665). Therefore, in her study of White Crane Silat,<sup>6</sup> Samudra builds on Geertz’s concept of thick description<sup>7</sup> explaining that through “thick participation” one may use their body to “acquire shared cultural knowledge” and a researcher might translate somatic experience into words (665). Thick participation is present in the research of ethnologist Tomie Hahn (2007), sociologist Loïc Wacquant (2004), anthropologists Cynthia Novack<sup>8</sup> (1990) and Christopher Nelson (2008) and dance scholar Deirdre Sklar (2006), as each researcher studies the embodiment of culture. Common theoretical threads run through this ethnographic literature, as the embodiment of a kinesthetic culture allows for the transference of cultural knowledge.

Hahn’s reflexive ethnographic work, *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance* (2007) is based on her exploration of the transmission of *nihon*

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<sup>6</sup> White Crane Silat is an Indonesian self-defense and health movement system (Samudra 665).

<sup>7</sup> Clifford Geertz states that he borrows from Gilbert Ryle’s concept of thick description. Geertz explains that “ethnography is thick description” and the ethnographer is faced with “a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures... which he must contrive at first to grasp and then to render” (9-10).

<sup>8</sup> In publications after 1996, Cynthia Novack is published as Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull.

*buyo* through embodied practice. Hahn focuses on the transmission of *nihon buyo* as the internalizing of an aesthetic and her work includes movement analysis discussed through the lens of sensory perception. Hahn explores the teacher's use of touch, verbal cues, and the metalanguage of dance to transmit *nihon buyo*, as well as the kinesthetic empathy experienced as the teacher and student move together to transfer knowledge from body to body. Hahn discusses the social structures inherent in the embodiment of the tradition and states that the repetitive nature of the class structure is conducive to an ethnographic study. She explains that her role as a "participant-observer-researcher" (10) allows her embodied knowledge to be a resource within the research as "the transmission of dance relies on learning through doing and an active engagement of embodiment through experience with a teacher" (55). Hahn explains that a connection between the student and teacher forms the essence of the experience, which in turn facilitates the learning process. The stated aspirational purpose of the video of a lesson that accompanies the book is "to capture the essence of kinesthetic transference" (97).

Similarly, the primary concept underpinning Loïc Wacquant's *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (2004), is a kinesthetic transfer of skills and cultural knowledge that Wacquant experiences as he rises through the ranks of a Chicago boxing gym. Wacquant states that the sociologist "must submit himself to the fire of action *in situ*"(viii). Wacquant cites Bourdieu as he describes the depth of understanding that he seeks for the subculture of the gym and the "relation of the presence to the world, and being in the world, in the sense of belonging to the world...in which neither the agent nor the object is posited as such" (viii). In immersing himself in the kinesthetic culture of boxing, Wacquant explains that the movement can only be "fully apprehended" through

participation and that the physicality is “at the very edge of that which can be intellectually grasped and communicated” (59). Similarly, Cynthia Novack participated in contact improvisation classes and jams when writing her ethnographic history of the form in *Sharing The Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture* (1990). Novack refers to her work as “ethnohistorical,” which she defines as analyzing and describing a way of life and “a way of dancing as a part of culture” (16). Novack explains that as she learned contact improvisation, she began to experience an “internalized sensation of moving,” she lost track of time, and became immersed in the experiences (152). As Albright attests, one of the key strategies to contact improvisation is to allow one’s kinesthetic intelligence to take over (2013, 5).

Novack addresses her initial struggles to adjust to participatory fieldwork and to fit into various cultures, saying that as she adapted to situations she began to realize “what was present or absent in each circumstance” (21). Novack explains that initially she “could not forget the absence of the ‘body’ in academia, the stubborn denial of the physical self,” which made the transition to participant observation a challenge (21). Contact improvisation brings the body into consciousness through physical connection with other participants. Novack’s fieldwork experience is reflected in Drew Leder’s highly referenced work *The Absent Body* (1990). Leder explains that the concept of the lived body subverts the basis of the Cartesian ontology and “provides a potential mode of escape from cognitive habits of dualism deeply entrenched in our culture” (5). Leder is concerned with a concept of embodiment that avoids “dualistic presumptions” and he employs a notion of the lived body that “lives and breathes, perceives and acts, speaks and reasons” (6). Leder draws attention to the conscious awareness or disappearance of

the body using an example of climbing a mountain during which the consciousness of the actions and necessities of the legs disappear into the movement of climbing (27). He contrasts this experience to reading with the legs left still (27). However, in both cases the body is in some way absent from awareness.

Sklar employs the concept of embodiment in her theoretically grounded work, “Qualities of Memory: Two Dances of the Tortugas Fiesta, New Mexico”(2006). She considers the somatic dimension of embodied cultural knowledge in discussion of her case study of the annual festival of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Sklar explains how kinesthesia, being left out of the sensorium, gives no reference point from which to address the body and/or movement as a way of knowing (98). Sklar claims that through an unconscious “braiding of movement practices and ideologies” people are constrained to a “perpetual social structure at the level of the body” (2006, 99). She explains how kinesthetic sensations, their meanings, as well as the bodily patterns we enact daily, are rarely the focus of conscious awareness and are passed from generation to generation (2006, 99). This is reflected as Christopher Nelson looks at the embodied performances of Okinawan artists and researchers as illustrations of the contemporary manifestation of social memory. In his book, *Dancing With The Dead: Memory, Performance and Everyday Life in Postwar Okinawa* (2008), Nelson weaves the stories of the artists with the methodology of their processes to illustrate how traumatic memory is trans-generational and shapes the present lives of the Okinawan people. Nelson explores the binary of the archaic traditions and contemporary life. Similar to Hahn and Wacquant, Nelson discusses the transfer of cultural capital and embodied memory through human relationships.

In summary, research beginning with the body and grounded in the researchers' lived experiences facilitates a dimension of realization for the scholarship that would otherwise be impossible. These types of works in dance studies are related to sensory anthropology and have a kinesthetic emphasis (Sklar, 2006, 118). The overarching theme of research facilitated by the authors' bodily practice, and/or lived experience coupled with observation, has produced recent scholarship grounded in the phenomenological experience of the participants. Central to that grounding in the body is an exploration and subsequent understanding of the role of kinesthesia in human communication.

#### Kinesthesia in Dance: Exploring the Sixth Sense

The concept of kinesthesia as a sixth sense with communicative capacity is widely discussed in scholarship, both in relation to daily human interaction, as well as its role in meaning-making in dance (Foster, 1998; Montero, 2006; Ness, 2008; Sklar, 2000, 2006). Additionally, Caroline Potter argues kinesthesia is a means of becoming socialized into a professional dance community. In "Sense of Motion, Senses of Self: Becoming a Dancer" (2008), Potter uses her own "participant experience" in a professional British contemporary dance school as a basis for her argument that "the senses should be understood as an intermeshed web of perceptory apparatuses that direct the body's total attention to its situation in the world..." (446). She explains that kinesthesia requires "parallel perception through multiple sensory modes including heat and touch" and she argues that kinesthesia is a factor in understanding the senses as a "phenomenological complex that engenders an interconnected, bodily-grounded sense of cultural identity" (444). Potter explains that the senses are experienced collectively. By including the sense

of heat and emphasizing the sense of touch in her analysis, Potter shifts the sensorium from its traditional Western hierarchy. To situate kinesthesia in the body, Potter asserts the following differentiation between kinesthesia and proprioception:

Although at times used interchangeably with ‘proprioception’, kinesthesia carries less emphasis on a specific biomechanical understanding of movement and instead conveys a more general ability to feel the motion of one’s own body and to adjust it in culturally preferred ways. (449)

When applied to ballet, this distinction is central to the understanding that dance movement contains both intention in the movement and cultural specificities of the body, which ultimately are transmitted from teacher to student. Potter asserts that the dancers are socialized into the dance community through a bodily apprenticeship in which kinesthesia plays a central role.

Similarly, Anna Aalten (2007) explores socialization in dance by investigating the occupational culture of ballet. She states that ballet offers the participants “not only a moral belief system and behavioural codes, but also a specific language that enables individual dancers to understand and communicate with each other” (112). As she explores the culture of ballet, Aalten applies Leder’s theory of the absent body and Foster’s notion of the dancer having to deal with both the perceived/tangible body, as well as the aesthetically ideal body. The perceived/tangible body is recognized through a dancer’s physical sensation. A dancer’s potentially absent body becomes present when the dancer becomes injured, as pain brings the body to a conscious level. It is the socialization of the dancers in the occupational culture of ballet that, according to Aalten, shapes the reactions of the dancers to training, pain and injury. Aalten explains how dancers achieve a particular absence of the body through conscious training. She states:



The constant repetition of well-known movement patterns in the daily class brings dancers to the state where they can do them unconsciously... the dancer does not have to think about her body anymore when she is asked to execute this particular movement... The 'absence of the body' in the ballet world is not passive and taken-for-granted, but an absence that is actively achieved. (122)

To achieve the proficiency in dance in order to unconsciously perform steps is a complex and multi-dimensional bodily process. The concept of body memory or kinesthetic memory moves this conversation toward cognitive science, neuroscience, physiology and motor learning. Additionally, the topic of body memory has been situated in the fields of Philosophy and Phenomenology. In "From Movement to Dance" (2012), Maxine Sheets-Johnstone applies her extensive research surrounding the phenomenological analysis of topics including emotion, movement, consciousness and cognition, to the memorization of choreography. Sheets-Johnstone explains that kinesthesia is experientially resonant because it is a sensory modality in its own right; therefore, it can be investigated phenomenologically (2012a 42). However, she states that the "living dynamics of kinesthesia" including tensional, linear, areal and projectional qualitative aspects, are insuppressible and complicated to map (2012a 43,44).

Sheet-Johnstone suggests that kinesthetic memory in dancers must be based on what the dancer has kinesthetically learned and cannot be grounded in any other sense (47). In both this article and "Kinesthetic Memory: Further Critical Reflections and Constructive Analysis" (2012), Sheets-Johnstone uses the "kinesthetically-informed neuropsychology" of Alexander Luria. Explaining his concept of kinetic/kinesthetic melodies, she states, "Kinesthetic melodies that are inscribed in our bodies are dynamic patterns of movement. They constitute that basic, vast and potentially ever-expandable repertoire of 'I cans' permeating human life: walking, speaking, reaching, hugging,

throwing...(2012b 49). Sheets-Johnstone uses the specific example of writing one's name, stating that once the act is initiated the action flows and it is not necessary to think about forming each letter individually.

These skills are remembered in the body and psychiatrist Thomas Fuchs adds "the life-long plasticity of body memory enables us to adapt to the natural and social environment, in particular to become entrenched and to feel at home in social and cultural space" (9). In "The Phenomenology of the Body" (2012), Fuchs discusses different forms of body memory including the classifications of procedural, situational, intercorporeal, incorporative, pain, and traumatic memory (9). Each category attends to a process of bodily memory and although Fuchs offers specific examples, these forms of memory are not isolated from one another. These processes have the capacity to revive past lived experiences. Although Fuchs does not apply his work specifically to dance, he discusses implicit memory (in opposition to explicit recollection) using Descartes' example of the lute player having "part of their memory in their hands" in order to remember passages. He continues by offering Merleau-Ponty's example of body memory being the hands of the typist or organist, although "not in the anatomical hands, of course, but in the lived body; it comes forth by means of a bodily effort, and cannot be objectively designed" (10). Likewise, this example can be adapted to the performance of choreography because although the dancer has intention and initiates each movement, once the sequence has begun the dancer, like the lute player, typist and organist, moves based on body memory and habitual skills. Specifically, ballet dancers have a long history of institutionalized training, which has proven effective in producing body memory explicitly created to serve the performance of ballet's codified technique.

## Contextualizing Gendered Bodies Within The Hierarchy of Ballet

Although the history of ballet has been documented and explored by dance scholars for decades, more recently in the field of Dance Studies, representations of gender roles in ballet have been subject to critical analysis. The messages embodied in ballet are based on enduring gender conventions originating in the court society of Renaissance Europe. However, the analysis of twenty-first century bodies working within this patriarchal structure is complex and cannot be reduced to positive and negative images. Although ballet's patriarchal and hierarchical legacy dates back (at least) to the court ballets of King Louis XIV, when bodily deportment reflected class status, recent ballet history texts critically consider ballet's development into the highly recognized form of the twenty-first century. In the anthology, *Rethinking the Sylph: New Perspectives of the Romantic Ballet* (1997), editor Lynn Garafola credits the Romantic decades of the 1840s and 1850s with defining the image of ballet as it is known today. The collection of essays uniquely combines archival material with critical analysis of the Romantic era. Aspects considered include gender representations, the feminization of ballet as an art form, ballet pedagogy, as well as discussions of the *ballet blanc*, the image of the ballerina in virginal white with a post-revolution, newly liberated body.

Garafola makes the reader aware of the international influence of the Romantic ballet. She offers the reader a vision beyond the limits of Paris by including chapters that discuss ballet's characteristics of nationalism and exoticism, as well as exploring the environments of the Italian and French schools. For example in the chapter, "Blasis, the Italian Ballo, and the Male Sylph," dance historian Giannandrea Poesio notes that although the Romantic style of ballet was welcomed in Italy, the tradition of Classicism

endured in the Italian School. Poesio discusses Italian dancing master Carlo Blasis's teaching strategies, as well as comparing and contrasting his manuals published in 1820 and 1828. Blasis was the director of the Imperial Ballet Academy attached to La Scala in Milan from 1838 to 1851 and Poesio observed that in his written work Blasis had a "favorable attitude toward male dancers" (138). In his manual, *An Elementary Treatise Upon The Theory and Practice of The Art of Dancing* (1820), Blasis uses male illustrations, discusses "un danseur," and refers to male icons such as Jean Boulogne's statue of Mercury as well as other examples of Greek, Roman and Italian Renaissance art (136). Poesio states that it would be "erroneous" to consider Blasis a male chauvinist. However, his work bears "the imprint of a son of *Classicismo*, a man who positioned himself at the center of the universe and considered the opposite sex weak and inferior" (138). Poesio asserts that most of Blasis's work perpetuated today is fundamental to male technique. The patriarchal institutionalization of training is perpetuated today through long established modes of communication, pedagogical traditions passed from generation to generation, as well as time-honoured systems of training. Although a shift in pedagogy is happening, the institution of ballet is considered to be slow to change (Alterowitz 2014; Burnidge 2012; Fisher 2007).

In the introduction to *Rethinking the Sylph*, Garafola credits the advances in technique during Romantic era with the initiation of differentiation between the sexes, which made ballet "an art about women, performed by women, for men" (4). She notes that the most visible advancement in women's technique, and subsequently a "metaphor for femininity," was the use of the *pointe* shoe, which is explored in Judith Chazin-Bennahum's chapter, "Women of Faint Heart and Steel Toes" (4). In *The Lure of*

*Perfection: Fashion and Ballet, 1790-1830* (2005), Chazin-Bennahum continues this research as she explores the intersections of fashion, politics, economics and the evolution of ballet costumes in Paris. She investigates the notion that women's bodies at the ballet were seen as commodities and explains how the ballerinas of the time starved themselves to appear emaciated and pale. She references Susan Bordo's seminal work *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and The Body* (1993) as she credits their eating disorders with "somehow satisfying some bizarre ideals purveyed by the professional white male world" (233). Bordo's feminist social analysis has provided a theoretical grounding to many dance scholars' analysis of representations of the female dancing body (see Thomas, 2003). Bordo's analytical essays illustrate a cultural approach to the body as she uses the feminist paradigm to situate eating disorders in relation to society's normalizing practices. She explores cultural representations of the female body that create "the tyranny of slenderness" (33), which teaches women how to see their bodies and seek constant improvement based on cultural expectations.

In the anthology, *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance* (1997), editor Jane Desmond compiles a selection of writings with the express purpose of situating critical Dance Studies in the wider context of Cultural Studies (1). These early dance studies writings draw on theoretical approaches that often include feminist theory, as well as Marxist theory, Foucauldian analysis, and the work of Pierre Bourdieu. Many of these seminal essays considering representations of the female body in ballet are grounded in both critical theory and the authors' lived experience (see Cohen Bull, 1997; Daly, 1987/1997; Foster, 1997; Manning, 1997; Wolff, 1997). It was the intention of this earlier scholarship to go against the dominant discourses of aesthetic appreciation by

critically questioning choreography and performance, as well as realizing the communicative potential of performance. Examples of this early application of critical theory to dance are discussed in Susan Manning's chapter, "The Female Dancer and The Male Gaze: Feminist Critiques of Early Modern Dance," in which she surveys and describes how dance scholars first utilized gaze theory<sup>9</sup> as a starting point for feminist analysis in the field of dance studies. Manning focuses on the scholarship surrounding modern dance, whereas Foster, in the opening chapter to her text *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture and Power* (1996), states that Ann Daly (1987a, 1987b reprinted in *Meaning in Motion*) and Cynthia Novack (1990) are among the first scholars to use feminist theory as a framework for gender analysis in ballet (17). The following discussion will compare the perspectives offered in Daly, Novack and Foster's early dance studies writings on representation of gender in the ballet *pas de deux* to contextualize the still present gender segregation in the training observed during my research.

In 1987, historian and dance critic Ann Daly's feminist critical inquiry into the construction of gender roles in ballet was unprecedented in dance studies. In "The Balanchine Women: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers," Daly focuses on George Balanchine's third theme in *The Four Temperaments* as the " emblematic starting point for a feminist discourse in ballet" (9). She highlights issues including the physical manipulation of the woman by the man, the constant focus on the ballerina's leg through the use of arabesque, and the feminine passivity of the ballerina (10). Daly compares

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<sup>9</sup> Helen Thomas states that in early scholarship: "The male gaze theory was useful to feminist analysis because it offered a model for understanding the association and objectification of women through their bodies and their lack of cultural power within the discourse of patriarchy"(158). This framework of analysis has shifted in the twenty-first century, becoming more nuanced.

Balanchine's comment that ballet belongs to women, to the general statement that the Romantic period belonged to the ballerina. She states that both comments are superficial and contain patriarchal undertones. Daly argues that Balanchine's "glorification" of women "smacks of regressive politics" and the Romantic period in ballet was the "expression of masculine society's desires" (8,11). Almost thirty years after this publication, Daly's perspective regarding the patriarchal beginnings of ballet being perpetuated in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is no longer unique or shocking, and the analysis of ballet with the application of feminist theory in a postmodern framework can be complex, nuanced and subtle.

However, in her early work Daly continues her analysis of the patriarchal underpinnings of ballet in her article, "Classical Ballet: A Discourse of Difference" (1987b). Daly begins by historically contextualizing the female body in ballet through examples of dance critics' responses to Marie Camargo's sudden replacement of a male dancer in the 1720s. Daly's argument is grounded in the belief that the performance of gender roles is inextricably rooted in the notion of "inborn" and "natural" gender difference (112). Daly explains, "Whether it is Théophile Gautier's fetishization of the ballerina, or Lincoln Kirstein's separate-but-equal argument, or Clive Barnes' dancing-is-macho stance, the underlying assumption is of female difference/ male dominance" (113). In these early articles Daly does not include consideration of the dancer's phenomenological experience or the situated-ness of dance in the body itself. Additionally, both articles offer the singular perspective of gendered performances from the viewpoint of the audience. Therefore, in Daly's article, "Trends in Dance Scholarship: Feminist Theory Across the Millennial Divide" (2000), she notes that both

feminist theory and Dance Studies have “come a long way” since she first began to utilize feminist theory as a framework for dance analysis.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, in *Sharing The Dance: Contact Improvisation in American Culture* (1990), Cynthia Novack historically contextualizes gender roles using a feminist lens by discussing the evolution of ballet from the French courts. She highlights the importance of the royal body and the physical presence of the king. Sight is emphasized as the primary element in the kinesthetic awareness of the dancer. Novack emphasizes bodily knowledge as she discusses the role of kinesthetic energy and force in producing the opposition of male and female movement in ballet. Therefore, she explicitly positions her work as situated in the sensational experience of dance. Novack adds the dimension of the dancer’s experience, which gives her work the feeling of emanating from embodiment. This somatic approach to scholarship allows the complex negotiation of performing gendered roles to remain present in the conversation.

In the article published in Desmond’s anthology, “Sense, Meaning and Perception in Three Dancing Cultures” (1997), Novack (published as Cynthia Jean Cohen Bull) truly encapsulates the essence of femininity in the *pas de deux*. She argues for the primacy of sight as facilitating and constructing the perceptions of gender associated with ballet. She states:

Paradoxically (magically), in many classical *pas de deux* in particular, the nearly disembodied female provides the primary image of the dance, while the fully embodied male nearly disappears from sight...as spectators, our eyes confirm the reality of the unreal, the fantastic disembodiment of the body. (275)

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<sup>10</sup> In her later work on Isadora Duncan, Daly seeks to re-inscribe Duncan into American dance history in her book *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (2002). Although still a feminist analysis, Daly uses a more complex and substantiated theorization of the influence of Duncan’s dancing on American culture.



This gendered, ethereal representation of the female body in ballet as seen through the male gaze, is in direct opposition to the embodied, feminist roles of modern dancers within scholarship. As Susan Manning states, unlike ballet, it was the kinesthesia of early modern dancers that allowed for its “choreographic dismantling of the voyeuristic gaze” (163).

In Foster’s article “Choreographies of Gender” (1998), the discussion of gender roles is linked explicitly to the heterosexual contrast between male and female movement. She notes the change in the style of duet choreography that first began to take shape in the nineteenth century, which moved dancers from dancing side by side to a more gendered representation in which the ballerina is downstage, becoming the object of both her partner’s gaze as well as the gaze of the audience (1998, 12). Foster discusses the construction of femininity in opposition to the ballerina’s male partner and highlights the role of choreography as a framework for studying gender. Foster asserts that the dancers in classical ballet do not participate equally in the choreography and that it is the choreographer who has the power to “make manifest her theorizing of corporeality” (1998, 7). Foster argues that it is in theorizing, or meaning making, that the choreographer has the power to confirm or disregard conventional gendered expectations.

In summary, Daly focuses on the socially and politically constructed dichotomization of gender to illustrate the subordination of women in performance of classical ballet choreography. Novack argues that the heightened sexual dimorphism of classical ballet reflects culturally significant beliefs and highlights the predominance of vision for both the viewer and the dancer to facilitate communication of classical ideals. Foster argues that choreography has the potential to challenge the dichotomization of

verbal and nonverbal cultural practices through meaning-making in movement (1998, 28), supporting her assertion that choreography is a strong framework for analysis of gendered movement in ballet. However, early scholarship of gender roles in ballet is primarily based on a visual representation and the writing does not necessarily consider issues such as the phenomenological experience of the dancers, their personal autonomy, or the agency they hold when dancing their prescribed roles.

The analysis of representations of the body within the traditional patriarchal framework of ballet facilitates a position from which scholars can add lived experience, subsequently allowing newly informed representations to manifest themselves in current scholarship. For example, some of the more recent work of Performance Studies scholar Carrie Gaiser Casey (2012, 2013) and dance historian Jennifer Fisher (2007, 2012) offer the additional dimension of embodied knowledge of the subject matter while reframing ballet history through a feminist lens, which creates a revised representation of the female body in ballet grounded in experience. Gaiser Casey and Fisher have recently published revisionist projects reframing ballerina Anna Pavlova as a feminist and innovator in both her public and private lives (Fisher, 2012; Gaiser Casey, 2009, 2012). As Fisher explains, the ballerina's contradiction is her "ethereal exterior and her iron-willed interior" (2007, 3). The ballerina needs continued investigation to contextualize her among the complex scheme comprised of her embodied experience, representation of the female body, and various cultural influences. The trajectory of dance scholarship supports the image of the ballerina as empowered, as well as facilitating a more complex contextualization of past, present and future dancers as scholars utilize various theoretical frameworks (see Fisher, 2007, 2012; Gaiser Casey, 2009, 2012; McRobbie, 1997).

## Tradition Versus Innovation: Shifting Pedagogical Strategies

The twenty-first century ballet class often retains traditional organization, beginning with the *barre* work, continuing with the centre practice, *adage*, *pirouettes*, and *allegro*. However, the pedagogical demands on teachers have evolved within that framework due to critical questioning of how factors such as patriarchal underpinnings of class structure, the students' lived experience, and the efficacy of newly added pedagogical strategies influence dance education. Dance education scholar Sherry Shapiro's anthology *Dance, Power and Difference: Critical and Feminist Perspectives on Dance Education* (1998), brings together essays that critically address issues in dance education. Upon critical consideration of the essays in this collection, and further reading in the field, two distinct groups of pedagogical approaches emerge specifically in relation to ballet pedagogy.

The first group of teaching strategies involve conventional ballet pedagogy that has been perpetuated through transmission of traditional approaches over generations of ballet teachers. Examples of traditional approaches include imposed silence while training, the employment of mirrors to facilitate the use of visual cues as the primary sensory mode of learning, as well as authoritarian teaching practices. In order to advance training systems within dance education, scholars address ideological themes present in traditional ballet training including the Foucauldian notion of the discipline of docile bodies and the panopticism of the ballet studio. Educators and scholars have used the theory of Michel Foucault (1979) to analyze these types of training, and subsequently make a case for improvement of the student-teacher dynamic.

The second category of topics related to ballet pedagogy involves the group of practices being implemented to alter trajectories in training that have proven ineffective or detrimental to dancers' mental and physical well-being. Examples of innovations in pedagogy include the integration of somatic practice, touch, dialogue and students' self-reflection. The theories of Paulo Freire (1970) support educators as they implement innovative practices within traditional structures of the formal ballet class. To facilitate pedagogical developments, scholars have explored teaching strategies that have the potential to propel dance teaching toward somatic practice, mentoring relationships, democratic and feminist pedagogy, as well as encouraging students to make their voices heard. Recent scholarship illustrates the binary of current pedagogy, which includes working within a traditional framework, while incorporating innovative strategies to train/educate dancers, both physically and emotionally. Most scholars address both tradition and innovation in dance education within their writing as a means of contextualizing their arguments, projects, or innovative teaching strategies. This juxtaposition of convention and innovation is a thread that runs through scholarship surrounding the intersection of traditional pedagogy and progressive teaching techniques.

Psychologist Howard Gardner and his former student Mia Keinanen illustrate the dichotomy of mentoring relationships within the arts in their essay, "Vertical and Horizontal Mentoring for Creativity" (2004). The authors use opposing examples of ballet choreographer George Balanchine and modern dance choreographer Anna Halprin to explore the mentoring process and investigate how an "individual's goals, practices

and values are transmitted across generations” (172).<sup>11</sup> Vertical mentoring is a relationship in which the mentor is the all-knowing guru. In direct opposition to having one God-like teacher, horizontal mentoring is comprised of the mentor allowing some degree of autonomy for the student, as well as a network of mentors. Gardner and Keinanen explain vertical mentoring in a way that substantiates its use in traditional ballet training. The authors state:

It may be therefore beneficial for the mentor to hold such authority in the eyes of his mentees. Idolization and unreachability of the mentor may fuel the mentees’ dedication and willingness to absorb every little detail in their mentor’s teachings, which in turn ensures that knowledge is passed on in its purest, unchanged form. (175)

Research shows that Balanchine’s vertical mentoring style is well documented. His authoritarian approach, and the fear he instilled, worked for some dancers. Balanchine, by limiting dancers’ input into choreography, as well as his unfailing demonstration of a perfectionist work ethic, promoted the transference of “pure” bodily knowledge.

Balanchine’s power was enhanced in the years that he directed, and chose dancers for, the New York City Ballet Company, assuring him that the dancers would work to “learn his style and please him in any possible way” (Gardner and Keinanen 175). In her article, “The Messages Behind The Methods: The Authoritarian Pedagogical Legacy in Western Concert Dance Technique Training and Rehearsals (2001),” Robin Lakes also explores teaching strategies that fall under the category of vertical mentoring in relation to both ballet and modern choreographers. Although Lakes does not employ the term

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<sup>11</sup> In “Beyond Steps: A Need for Pedagogical Knowledge in Dance” (2008), Edward Warburton explains how Gardner argues that skill and knowledge development are highly influenced by the constraints of the domain being studied. He discusses the differences in learning between the vertical and horizontal domains explaining that horizontal domains allow each component to be “susceptible to individual transformation,” whereas vertical domains have “highly-structured, rule-based components that are resistant to novelty and where adherence to style is most important” (9).

vertical mentoring, she gives the example of Balanchine's autocratic and authoritarian styles when focusing on the ballet genre. Both of the above articles reference Gelsey Kirkland's book, *Dancing On My Grave: The Fairy Tale Success Story that Became a Living Nightmare* (1986), in which Kirkland is critical of Balanchine's methods and describes his God-like<sup>12</sup> persona. She also reveals personal issues, including her struggles with extreme drug addiction.

Lakes cites dance critic John Percival's response to the backlash against Kirkland's book. Percival's comments are relevant to this discussion as they speak to a legacy of ballet pedagogy in the patriarchal, hierarchical institution of professional ballet schools and companies. Lakes quotes Percival as stating:

She [Kirkland] upset her teachers by wanting to know why ballet pupils are supposed to shut up and do as they are told (but then we expect them to dance intelligently!)... The reaction of the American ballet establishment has been to gang up against her... Her real crime, I feel, is that she dared suggest Balanchine was human, when everyone knows he was a god. One day the serious questions Kirkland raises about the teaching of ballet and the running of ballet companies will have to be faced... Why not now? (8)

Similarly, in *Prodigal Son: Dancing for Balanchine in a World of Pain and Magic* (1992), Edward Villella, another of Balanchine's principal dancers, explores Balanchine's hierarchical and patriarchal world. Villella also references Balanchine's God-like<sup>13</sup> persona, explaining that the dancers did not question his authority in training or in casting. Villella sought a teacher who could help him better understand his technique and he stopped taking Balanchine's classes altogether, despite continuing to

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<sup>12</sup> Kirkland states that one of Balanchine's "dictums" was: "Don't ask why it must be done like this. Don't analyze it. Just do it" (86). Villella also echoes this sentiment throughout his text (1992).

<sup>13</sup> In one example of Balanchine's leadership style Villella states: "He chose who got the spotlight and as a rule he didn't like it at all when a dancer wanted to exert control over his own career... Balanchine was the holder of all knowledge, the provider and he sheltered us. He was a genius. We all wanted to give ourselves to him, and everyone wanted to be the primary object of his interest" (42).

perform in the New York City Ballet. Vilella states: “We just swallowed hard and put up with what he dished out. We had to carry around our feelings of pain and rejection- and anger. We couldn’t express them to his face” (81). These books were written from the perspective of dancers over two decades ago, and although the institution of ballet is generally known as being slow to change, more current scholarship grounded in Foucauldian theory does question the hierarchy of ballet, as well as the teaching strategies of traditional pedagogy.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison* (1979), Foucault describes a transition in the Western prison system from overt torture and physical abuse, to a more strategic style of control that is exerted through surveillance and training. In Jill Green’s “Foucault and the Training of Docile Bodies in Dance Education” (2002/2003), the Foucauldian concepts of discipline of docile bodies, relations of power, and surveillance as a mechanism of power are all applied to the analysis of a dance education study (see also Green 1999). She explains how technique classes normalize bodily expectations and standardize student behaviour, as well as place students under surveillance. She clearly states that Foucault viewed the body as a site of political manipulation and control, and his writing suggests that he would be suspicious of “typical somatic conceptualizations such as bodily experience and practice” (2002/2003,103). Green explains:

In other words, Foucault does not claim that the body can provide us with a grounded truth or that education through the body can free people from oppressive social policies and authoritarian regimes. His writing offers an approach rooted in critique of institutions through discourses created by the dominant culture. (2002/2003, 104)

In this context, a Foucauldian framework resonates with the study of ballet technique classes. As dance professor Clyde Smith states, “the dance classroom,

with their mirrors, watchful teachers and self-critical students” is an atmosphere of surveillance in which power produces discipline over docile bodies (131). When discussing his anti-authoritarian views and strategies of resistance to institutional control, Smith states that he embraces Foucault’s suggestion that his books be used as “toolboxes” to “disqualify systems of power” (125).

As communications professor Laura Shue and her research assistant Christine Beck demonstrate in their study of a commercial dance studio, there has been a significant change in the student-teacher power relationship (see Shue and Beck, 2001). The socio-economic status of attending dance classes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century shifts some of the power to the parents as clients of the studio. The authors explain that this shift of power forces the teachers/owners to strike a balance between process and product, which may include the use of traditional patriarchal methods and hierarchal studio organization to either control the daily operations of the studio, or to satisfy clients’ expectations. Additionally, the more recent implementation of digital surveillance in commercial dance studios with live feed to monitors in waiting areas, as well as real-time Internet access, has added a mediated audience for dancers and teachers (Berg 2015). This mediated surveillance intensifies the panopticism already present in daily ballet classes. Digital surveillance has been shown to satisfy parental expectations of involvement in their child’s dance education, simultaneously results in teachers feeling as though they are forced to conform to parental and studio expectations of traditional practices, thereby altering their pedagogy to exclude feminist strategies such as dialogue (Berg 2015).

In “Seeking a Feminist Pedagogy for Children’s Dance” (1998), feminist dance educator Susan Stinson argues that patriarchal and authoritarian teaching practices



reinforce cultural and bodily expectations for women and children, such as silence and passivity, as well as serving to objectify the body in dance (1998, 28). Livingston Schenk supports Stinson's argument, stating that traditional ballet training echoes these "pervasive cultural practices," asserting that, "because ballet is based on a very specific image of the female role and form and is a product of a patriarchal system, the ballet class format is a powerfully sexist cue for students" (375). Additionally, in Green's previously mentioned education study, which investigates how the dancing body is socially inscribed with gender expectations, she addresses how the 1990s saw the expectations of muscular and toned physiques added to the previous expectations of smallness and thinness for women (1999, 82, 89). Participants in her study consistently cited the mirror as "an ominous and powerful presence" and Green states that the mirror contributes to the students' "self-evaluation, behavior regulation, body objectification and competition" (1999, 88). In a more recent study, Sally Anne Radell and colleagues investigated the impact of mirrors in the ballet studio on students' body image (see Radell et. al. 2014). Results revealed that the dancers engaged in body objectification when they observed themselves and others in the mirror, and the stimulation of technical growth through the use of kinesthetic sensation was limited (161).

In "Frozen Landscapes: a Foucauldian Genealogy of the Ideal Dancer's Body" (2010), Heather Ritenburg similarly addresses the perpetuation of the ideal body image in dance within a Foucauldian framework. Ritenburg discusses Canada's National Ballet School artistic director Mavis Staines as having an international reputation for progressing toward "a more wholistic form of professional training based on health and well being" (Ritenburg, 80). However, Ritenburg voices ethical concerns as she states:

...by engaging the medical discourse of dancers needing to improve their self-image, to feed their bodies nutritiously, and to attend counseling to avoid disordered eating, the knowledge, that is, the truth of the ideal body remains the same but the surveillance is shifted to a new authority- that of the individual dancer... (81)

Ritenburg takes issue with what she sees as the burden of responsibility for the production of the ideal female body having shifted from social contexts, and in this circumstance, placed “in the psychological context of the dancing child” (81) within the traditionally hierarchical institution. She suggests that these attempts to counter the discourse of the ideal body may actually reinforce it.

However, training practices are being implemented in the twenty-first century that can result in an embodied communicative student-teacher relationship, which facilitates a shift away from external aesthetic demands and toward somatic and democratic practices. Paulo Freire’s seminal work *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) has grounded many recent dance education writings. At first glance, the context of Freire’s Marxist analysis of the Brazilian education system may seem inapplicable to the Western, Eurocentric setting of a ballet studio. However, many scholars seeking more democratic forms of student-teacher communication in Western institutions have enriched their practice using this critical pedagogy.<sup>14</sup> In Freire’s concept of the banking method, the students are empty vessels into which the teacher makes deposits (72). In describing the banking method of education, Freire lists ten education practices that “mirror oppressive society

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<sup>14</sup> Green explains: “As critical pedagogy tends to focus on social justice and marginalization regarding levels of status such as race, gender, class, sexuality, ability and so on, critical dance pedagogy often focuses on how these levels of status play out in traditional dance training” (2007, 1123).

as a whole” (73).<sup>15</sup> Stinson (1998) takes the time to quote these attributes in her essay because she states she recognizes traditional dance pedagogy in the banking concept (30). Subsequently, Stinson explicitly links feminist pedagogy and Friere’s liberatory critical pedagogy.

The commonalities between feminist and Freirean critical pedagogies are explored at length in Kathleen Weiler’s article, “Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference” (1991). Weiler explains that feminist pedagogy is an example of critical pedagogy in practice (450). She explains that both pedagogies are engaged in challenging dominant discourses and in so doing raise challenges for teachers and students (451). She states that both Freirean and feminist pedagogies, “...rest upon visions of social transformation; underlying both are certain common assumptions concerning oppression, consciousness and social change...both rest on a view of consciousness as more than a sum of dominating discourses...” (450). Feminist pedagogical practices used in ballet seek to move beyond the oppression present within the mind/body dualism required in ballet’s traditional authoritarian training method in order to develop autonomous dancers. As dance scholar Jennifer Jackson explains, “Over-familiarity with existing images of ballet can discourage creativity and breed habitual practice-obedient but mindless repetition. The very objective knowledge, codified vocabulary and legibility that make ballet powerful can distance it from the activity of dancing” (28). This sentiment is

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<sup>15</sup> Freire lists the following attitudes and practices: “(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught; (b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; (c) the teachers think and the students are thought about; (d) the teacher talks and the students listen-meekly; (e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined; (f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply; (g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher; (h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it; (i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which he or she sets in opposition to the freedom of the students; (j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.” (73)

echoed in one aspect of dance professor Claire Wootten's study at Canada's National Ballet School, in which she investigated the themes of experience, collaboration and authority within the dynamics of the student-teacher relationship in a feminist pedagogical<sup>16</sup> framework. The students asserted that the prominence of mimesis as a primary strategy in some classes was limiting to their artistry and style. Wootten explains that the biggest challenge to collaborative learning in ballet, and the subsequent egalitarian pedagogy, is power differentials in the classroom, which are confounded by the student-teacher dynamic (29). Power differentials among students often cause silence, which Wootten explains is already part of the culture. Dance training is dominated by the belief that speaking out disrupts the class and that good students remain silent.

Wootten explains, "Feminist pedagogy begins with the experience of the student and culminates in social change" (8). The transformation in ballet from traditional education to more student-centered learning is slow to occur, but many educators are now implementing strategies to affect the changes needed. Ballet teacher Gretchen Alterowitz recognizes the mind/body problem inherent in traditional pedagogy; in the report of her study, "Toward a Feminist Ballet Pedagogy: Teaching Strategies for Ballet Technique Classes in the Twenty-First Century" (2014), Alterowitz aims to demonstrate the benefits of teaching in a non-authoritarian way, altering the power dynamics in the classroom, resulting in an alternative student-teacher relationship. Alterowitz explains that although pedagogy and the student-teacher relationship "shapes ballet itself" the institution of ballet remains relatively static (9). She emphasizes the necessity of altering the traditional

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<sup>16</sup> Wootten explains that she has adopted the use of the plural term "feminist pedagogies" in order to represent "not a single pedagogical theory but a discourse of contradictory, complex and overlapping ideas that cannot be embraced as a unified whole"(16).

communication between students and teachers and she stresses the importance of how the subject is taught taking precedent over what is being taught. Her methods include peer assessment and group work as well as instigating conversations surrounding aesthetic requirements specific to ballet. Having student discussions in class is a strategy to alter dominance between students in addition to balancing the student-teacher power dynamic.

Taking the transition of traditional ballet pedagogy in a slightly different direction, Anne Burnidge (2014) seeks to illuminate threads between feminist/democratic pedagogy and somatic pedagogies. She uses the terms democratic and feminist interchangeably, which signifies her philosophical viewpoint, which "honors diversity of thought, knowledge, culture and personal identity" (38). Burnidge asserts that using somatic practices in ballet will change the focus for the dancers from the third person external perspective to the internal first person viewpoint, allowing technical development to come from within. Inspired by dance professor Sylvie Fortin's case studies with modern dance teachers incorporating somatic practice (1998), Burnidge explores her own use of somatics in the ballet studio, discovering both staunch resistance and complete engagement from various students.

As demonstrated in the above discussions, the student-teacher relationship is saturated with a patriarchal history, hierarchical constraints, external aesthetic expectations, as well as pressure to meet and exceed the codified technique. However, critical analysis by scholars and educators regarding institutionalization, the body, and pedagogy is shifting the foundations of traditional ballet for future generations.

## Chapter 3: Method

### Purpose

The purpose of the dissertation is to explore how an embodied student-teacher relationship manifests itself in the ballet studio, highlighting whether kinesthetic dialogue facilitates the transfer of bodily knowledge. Three research questions guided the study: 1) What combination of verbal and non-verbal communication is observed between the teacher and the students in each environment? 2) Do instances within this communication illustrate the pedagogical tool of kinesthetic dialogue? 3) Do moments within this pedagogical dialogue appear to trigger previously developed body memory in the students, based on their reactions to instructions, as well as in their performance of the material? Based on an extensive review of literature, this is the first study to investigate kinesthetic dialogue in ballet pedagogy.

### Ethnographic Fieldwork Strategies

When initially considering the optimal research method for this study, I determined that the lived experience of the students and teachers would best be investigated using ethnographic fieldwork strategies. As Aalten asserts, “the use of ethnographic perspective ensures an attentiveness to the dancer’s agency, informing and enriching the analysis” (109). The ethnographic fieldwork methods used to investigate the student-teacher relationship included participant observation<sup>17</sup> using pre-prepared class observation charts and field notes (also

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<sup>17</sup> I did not dance or teach in either study. However, participant observation is the primary form of data collection in ethnography and observation of the culture-sharing group makes the researcher a participant in the cultural setting (Creswell 243). Furthermore, my level of expertise elicits a strong kinesthetic response and my ever-present kinesthetic empathy (influenced by my dance experience) made me an active participant in the culture of the studio. Studies show that the MNS of expert dancers is more active than novice dancers when they are observing dance (Jola 2010).

referred to as direct observation or class observation), multiple interviews/focus groups with teachers and students as well as student surveys. Ethnographic tools were chosen because the research was inspired by a pre-existing phenomenon in ballet culture (kinesthetic dialogue). The use of bodily communication is recognized in kinesthetic cultures and many ethnographic studies have been conducted to report this type of research (see Hahn, 2007; Samudra, 2008; Sklar, 2006; Nelson, 2008; Novack, 1990; Wacquant, 2004). I considered myself both an insider and an outsider in this study. Although I was an insider to ballet culture, I was an outsider in the studies. The choice of ethnographic fieldwork practices allowed the participants' voices to be heard. The voices of the participants were central to the research, as the description of the embodied student-teacher relationship was contextualized by the participants' experiences of the transmission of embodied knowledge.

### Study Sites

The research was conducted in two locations (S1 and S2). One school is in Canada and the other is in the United States. The study consisted of data collection in two specific locations/situations for a prescribed amount of time. The study included observation of contextual conditions that were relevant to the phenomenon (kinesthetic dialogue), which resulted in thick description. According to Creswell, the isolation of one teacher and one ballet class in each school was considered microethnography, as the focus of the study was only part of the socio-cultural system (242). The selection of the schools stemmed from pre-requisite criteria for dancers to possess a high level of body awareness, as well as an intellectual engagement and personal commitment to their own dance education. The schools had many similarities in their

approach to training dancers and in their goal of preparing students for life in the dance profession. The S1 school trained professional ballet dancers and the S2 school trained contemporary dancers. When comparing the curriculum many similarities became apparent. Both schools incorporated academic classes into their programming. The S1 students graduated with a High School Diploma and the S2 students graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree.

The daily schedules at both sites involved academics, technique classes in ballet and contemporary dance, alternate forms of dance including Ballroom and Flamenco, conditioning for dance, as well as rehearsals for whatever performances the students were involved in throughout the year. Conditioning for dance differed from school to school. However, both programs included cross training to strengthen dancers for better performance, as well as to prevent injury. Both schools offered various physical training methods to address altering/correcting individual student movement habits to make the movement patterns more efficient and safer for their bodies over a long period of training and performing. Both schools offered physical education by neuromuscular retrainer Irene Dowd.<sup>18</sup>

The S1 school offered an onsite pool, as well as fitness classes incorporating weights. The S1 male students had specific upper body strengthening classes with weights to strengthen them for *pas de deux* requirements. All S2 students were offered coaching and/or classes in

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<sup>18</sup> In addition to her work at the S1 and S2 schools, anatomist Irene Dowd currently maintains a private practice in neuromuscular training. Dowd describes her private teaching practice as, "an individualized approach to solving functional problems of the musculoskeletal and nervous systems which involve discomfort or inability to achieve functional movement potential" (Matt 2014). Dowd's "dances" are taught at both schools to augment dance training.



alternate movement styles including the Alexander Technique,<sup>19</sup> Pilates,<sup>20</sup> and the Gyrotonic® Method.<sup>21</sup> One unique addition to the S2 dance program was customized fitness training by a local couple Patti and Gibby Cohen.<sup>22</sup> Both schools offered support teams, which include physiotherapists, as well as access to counselors, psychologists, medical doctors and medical specialists as needed.

## Participants

The directors of both schools agreed to allow one teacher and one class per location to participate in the study. The S1 teacher was a Russian-born male who was trained at a state ballet school. He spent his entire ballet career in Russia and was a renowned, award-winning principal dancer in Moscow. The S2 teacher was an American-born female who was trained in the United States where she danced professionally before embarking on a fifteen-year career as a soloist with two ballet companies in France.

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<sup>19</sup> Alexander Technique is named for its originator, Frederick Matthias Alexander. Richard Brennan describes the Alexander Technique as “not so much something you learn as something you unlearn. It is a method of releasing unwanted muscular tension throughout your body which has accumulated over many years of stressful living” (10). S2 teacher explained that releasing tension is one of the obstacles for a dancer in applying Alexander Technique to dance because it seems counter-intuitive for the dancer (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014).

<sup>20</sup> The Pilates method is named for its creator, Joseph Hubertus Pilates. Penelope Lately explains, “the exercise system that Joseph Pilates developed mixed the practical movement styles and ideas of gymnastics, martial arts, yoga and dance with philosophical notions” (279).

<sup>21</sup> Campbell and Miles explain, “The Gyrotonic Expansion System, created by Juliu Horvath beginning in the 1980s, is a relatively new approach to movement based on three-dimensional spiraling and circular patterns, with applications in exercise, therapy and rehabilitation” (147). Horvath was a classical ballet soloist, before exploring Yoga and opening a studio in New York City from which he has disseminated The Gyrotonic Expansion System all over the world (148).

<sup>22</sup> Patti and Gibby Cohen are “**body coaches** who primarily teach strength and help people understand habitual patterns and how to change them...” (Pace 2012). Patti and Gibby designed an approximately 20-minute strength workout for the S2 dancers. The men in the program were encouraged to repeat the workout more often than the women to prepare them for partnering work.

The student participants in both studies were chosen based on their similar ages and similar skill levels. Table 1 illustrates the number of student participants at each site of data collection, across various data collection formats.

Table 1. Student Participants.

Data Collect Technique	Number of S1 Student Participants	Number of S2 Student Participants
Class Observation	8	42
Survey 1	7	6
Survey 2	7	N/A
Email Interview	N/A	4
Focus Group 1	6	N/A
Focus Group 2	7	N/A

Note: S2 Surveys and Email interviews were only requested of the *Pointe 2* class, which consisted of approximately 18 dancers during each observation session.

The S1 students were adolescent males in academic grades 11 or 12 who were placed in one of two Level VI/VII classes as determined by the school. Some of the students were in their first year with the teacher and some were in their second year, depending on their ages and whether or not the school moved them into this class from the alternate Level VI/VII. The students in this class were of similar skill level. The criteria for the placement of students were both unknown to the researcher and irrelevant to this study. There were eight males in the class; however, between five and eight were present at varying times throughout the study.

The S2 students were in either first or second year of post-secondary education. The teacher taught a mixed-gender class twice per week and a women's *pointe* class twice per week. The *pointe* class was Level II out of IV levels of *pointe* work available in the program and this was the class that was asked to complete interviews and surveys. The levels of ballet at the S2 school coincided with the academic level of the students in the program, but not as strictly as in

the S1 school. For example, approximately one quarter of the first year students did not enter at Level 1 ballet, rather they were placed in levels of ballet and/or *pointe* that suited their current higher skill level. The school's focus was contemporary dance and the students' previous ballet training varied greatly. There were approximately 18 dancers in the *Pointe 2* class at each observation. The first year students, regardless of ballet level, had ballet class together once per week with the department's director. This class was observed once per visit (three times over the study's duration) to contextualize the research by watching the dancers communicate with a different teacher.

At the S2 school, 42 dancers signed consent forms and were observed at various times throughout the research period (Appendix H). The interviews and surveys were given to 18 women (who were 18 to 20 years of age) dancing *en pointe* twice per week. As mentioned, the S2 teacher taught an additional ballet class twice per week, which consisted of 12 males and 12 females (who were 18 to 20 years of age) dancing in soft ballet slippers. This class also was observed in order to spend more time recording the student-teacher communication (Table 4. Timeline of Data Collection, p. 63).

#### Preliminary Research: Pilot Study and Observation Chart Development

In August 2014, a pilot study was conducted at a local commercial dance studio. The primary purpose of the pilot study was to test the original class observation chart, which directly addressed the first research question dealing with the verbal and non-verbal student-teacher communication. The chart was originally designed to contain check marks in the categories (boxes) to indicate the types of communication the teacher favoured in each exercise (Table 2.

Class Observation Chart, p. 61). However, unlike the sample chart, which has been sized to display on one page, the boxes and margins in the fieldwork version were large enough to facilitate written field notes (original in Appendix G). The observation chart categories of demonstration and correction in traditional ballet class are derived from the dominant strategies used in ballet pedagogy.

The pilot study clarified the process necessary to record observations. For example, it became obvious that during the first observation class at each study location, it would be necessary to observe the communication and structure of the class without using the prescriptive structure of the chart. Observing the class while taking brief notes allowed me to have an understanding of the structure of the class, the teacher's general style of correction and the student-teacher dynamic. Therefore, in addition to filling out the prescriptive chart, I made notes of how atmospheric aspects contextualized the student-teacher relationship.

The original chart consisted of approximately half as many categories of teacher communication. Once the pilot study was conducted it became obvious that the combinations of teacher feedback needed to be amended (Table 2. Class Observation Chart, p. 61). For example, the original chart included the category of "individual tactile correction". However, after watching the first class, I had to add the specificity of "with" or "without verbal cue" which created an additional column on the chart. The categories describing teacher demonstration and class response to the demonstration did not change from the pilot study template. Without the benefit of a pilot study, the charts would not have been as efficient during the fieldwork stage.

**Table 2. Class Observation Chart**

NAME OF EXERCISE	NO PHYSICAL DEMO OR STUDENTS ALREADY KNEW THE CHOREO (indicate below)	PARTIAL PHYSICAL DEMO (some feet and/or hands and/or upper body- indicate below)	FULL PHYSICAL DEMO (to best of teacher's ability- not necessarily the entire length of ex)	TEACHER SITTING OR STANDING?	HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE MARKING	HOW MANY ARE WATCHING IN STILLNESS?	General <b>verbal guidance</b> for choreography ( <u>concept</u> ) cueing	Dancing together <b>Kinesthetic Comm.</b> Reference in notes & explain, could be cueing...	<b>General verbal</b> with <b>no physical</b> indication/movement	<b>General verbal with physical</b> indication/ movement (what kind?)	<b>General Verbal</b> followed by <b>Individual tactile</b>	<b>Individual verbal</b> with <b>no physical</b> indication/movement	<b>Individual verbal</b> from sitting or standing <u>far away from students</u>	<b>Individual Tactile</b> with <b>verbal</b> instruction	<b>Individual Tactile</b> in <b>silence</b>
Warm Up															
<i>Plié</i>															
Etc.															

Note: The chart has been adjusted to display on one page, which limits the spaces for notes. However, during classes a binder was used with two pages set side by side in portrait orientation, which provided more space for observations to be recorded (appendix G). The underlined category was added after the initial S1 class because the S1 teacher remained stationary for many of the exercises, often sitting down after the *barre* and using individual names. The S2 teacher never gave feedback using this category; therefore her chart was not amended. However, the verbal cuing in S2 was not for choreography. The verbal cues were used to prompt the application of concepts.

### Procedures: Data Collection Timeline

The research proposal was submitted for ethics approval at York University. The Human Participants Review Sub-committee approved the project on July 30, 2014. The teacher participants, who were both former ballet soloists with a reputation for sound and effective teaching, were recruited in the fall of 2014. At each site, the data collection began with class observation, followed by teacher interviews and communication with the students. This procedure was repeated three times at each site over the course of the study. Tables 3 and 4 detail the timelines for data collection in both studies.

Table 3. S1 Timeline of Data Collection.

S1 School	November 10-14 2014	December 15 2014	January 13, 15, 16 2015	May 22 2015	June 2,3,4 2015
Class Observation (19.25 hrs)	5 days of class observation, 1.75hrs per day Total 8.75 hrs		3 days of class observation, 1.75hrs per day Total 5.25 hrs		3 days of class observation, 1.75hrs per day Total 5.25 hrs
Teacher Interviews (2)	Interview #1, November 13, 30 minutes Not audio-recorded		Interview #2, January 20, 30 minutes, Audio-recorded		
Student Focus Groups (2)		Student focus group #1, 20 minutes, Audio-recorded			Student focus group #2 and 3, June 3 and 4, 25 minutes, Audio-recorded
Student Surveys (2)		Student survey #1 completed, Total 6			Student survey #2 completed, June 4, Total 7
Performance Observation				School Performance	

Table 4. S2 Timeline of data collection.

S2 School	October 6-10, 2014	November 17-21, 2014	February 16-20, 2015
Class Observation (22.5 hours)	5 days of class observation, 1.5 hrs per day Total 7.5 hrs	5 days of class observation, 1.5 hrs per day Total 7.5 hrs	5 days of class observation, 1.5 hrs per day Total 7.5 hrs
Teacher Interviews (3)	Interview #1, October 10, 30 minutes, Audio-recorded	Interview #2, November 19, 30 minutes, Not audio-recorded	Interview #3, February 20, 30 minutes, Audio-recorded
Student Email Interviews (0)			Sent February 19 <sup>th</sup> ; responses received June 1-9 <sup>th</sup> , Total 4
Student Surveys (1)		Distributed Nov 14 <sup>th</sup> , 5 received via email Nov-Dec. 2014	1 completed in person February 20, Total 6

## Class Observations

After the distribution and signing of informed consent forms, the S1 dancers chose pseudonyms to protect their identities (Appendix H). Three to five classes were observed per session, three times during the ten-month school year, for a total of 19.25 hours of S1 teacher observation (Table 3. S1 Timeline of Data Collection, p. 63). I attended the school's performance near the end of the observation period, to help contextualize the dancers' approach to their daily technique classes and to observe if their approach to performance mirrored their class work in any way. Attendance at the show was motivated by the theoretical debate surrounding technique and artistry in ballet training and performance (discussed in Chapter 4).

In S2, a total of four classes were observed per session, at three different times during their eight-month school year, for a total of 18 hours of S2 teacher<sup>23</sup> observation (Table 4. S2 Timeline of Data Collection, p. 63). The first day of observation during each session at both schools consisted of little or no note taking. This facilitated my engagement in the teaching-learning process, as well as my ability to observe the atmosphere and structure of the class without the pressure of recording specific events or communication.

The strategy of using observation charts after taking field notes for one class increased my efficiency in recording communication in subsequent classes because I had an idea of the structure of the class and the habits of the teacher prior to attempting to record details. Field notes taken without the use of the observation chart included general observations about the environment, structure of the class, teacher expectations, and

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<sup>23</sup> With the addition of one class per session taught by the director of the school, the total hours of class observation were 22.5. See Table 4. p. 63.



teaching patterns such as sitting during centre practice. Field notes also recorded student-teacher communication outside of the communication categories listed on the observation chart such as jokes, stories, and advice. Table 5 illustrates that 64% of S1 classes and 53% of S2 classes were recorded using charts. The original research plan was to record written field notes 50% of the time and use the observation charts the remaining 50%.

Table 5. Timeline for Use of Observation Charts

	Notes Taken or Observation (No Charts)	Observation Charts Used
S1 Dates	November 10, 2014 January 13, 15, 2015 June 2, 2015	November 11,12,13,14, 2014 January 16, 2015 June 3,4, 2015
S1 Number of Classes	4	7
S1 Percentage of Chart Use	36%	64%
S2 Dates	October 6,9, 2014 November 17,18, 20, 2014 February 16,19, 2015	October 7,8,10, 2014 November 19, 21, 2014 February 17, 18, 20, 2015
S2 Number of Classes	7	8
S2 Percentage of Chart Use	47%	53%

Note: Percentages rounded to the nearest decimal place.

### Interviews and Focus Groups

The interviews and focus groups generated narratives of student-teacher communication from both the teachers' and students' perspectives, which were transcribed (verbatim). The teachers completed informed consent forms, which requested three interviews of approximately 20 minutes each (Appendix H). This was an estimate; the S1 teacher completed two personal interviews and the S2 teacher completed three personal interviews. Four out of five of the interviews were 30 minutes long due to open-ended questions and natural progressions in the conversations. Despite having planned questions for the first interviews in both studies (Appendices A and B), the conversations took shape based on what was said by the teachers. After the first interview in each study,

I felt that the responses would better relate to the research if the teachers had time to reflect on them prior to meeting. Therefore, the teachers were sent emails outlining topics of discussion for subsequent interviews, which facilitated an easier second conversation. As an outsider to the schools, I felt it was imperative that the conversations remain informal to avoid limiting the content of the responses based on the teachers' affiliations with high profile institutions. Therefore, the participants determined convenient interview dates, times and locations.

The S1 teacher was interviewed twice and we had no casual conversations outside of scheduled interviews. The first interview took place outside of the ballet studio on a couch in a common area. This location made it difficult for me to feel comfortable with formalities such as audio-recording or taking notes. Intuitively, I let this be our introductory conversation and elected to write it down immediately afterward. My line of inquiry was about the teacher's communication with the students, his expectations of the students and what he felt was both effective and/or still evolving within his pedagogy (Appendix A). The second interview was audio-recorded and dealt with his dance training and teaching philosophy (Appendix A). Prior to the second conversation, I emailed the S1 teacher asking for a 20 minute recorded interview with the topic limited to his training as a dancer, the influences on his teaching as well as how his teaching has developed to this point and how his pedagogy is still evolving. This strategy was successful in both prompting the teacher to come to me directly after the class to schedule a time for the conversation, as well as allowing him time to reflect and formulate more thorough answers than in the first interview.

The S2 teacher was interviewed three times for approximately 30 minutes per session (Appendix B). Additionally, we had casual conversations after class or via email. The first interview began in a common area similar to the initial S1 interview. However, we had to move to the staff lounge because a tour group came through the school. This change of location better facilitated the audio-recording because it was quieter and completely private. The second interview was at a small and busy coffee shop and was not audio-recorded. I took abbreviated hand-written notes and expanded them immediately afterward in a digital file. These field notes served as a record of the conversation but were not a verbatim transcript as in the other four interviews. The third interview took place in the staff lounge and it was also audio-recorded (Appendix B).

The students' informed consent forms requested their participation in either focus groups or email interviews depending on the school (Appendix H). The S1 students participated in two focus group conversations (Appendix D). The first focus group took place in a studio, was 20 minutes in length and was audio-recorded. The subsequent focus group was divided into two sessions on consecutive days, one session was on stage and the other session was in a studio. The locations were determined by the location of the men's classes, as we would meet in the studio or on stage depending on the day. The second session was divided to fit into the dancers' schedule. The first half was 10 minutes and the second half was 15 minutes and took place on consecutive days. All of the meetings were audio-recorded (Appendix D). In each of two focus groups the students filled out short surveys (Appendix C).

In contrast, I had no face-to-face interaction with the S2 students as the interviews were conducted via email. After the first observed class, the S2 students had the option to

fill out a short survey (Appendix E). The final question on the survey requested their participation in an email interview (Appendix F). Four out of six S2 survey participants completed the email interview that was sent to them after they volunteered their email addresses. At the suggestion of the teacher, as well as through my own interpretation of the S2 student-teacher relationship, only the women dancing in the *Pointe 2* class were surveyed and emailed. This procedure developed during the fieldwork as the S2 teacher said she felt more connected to the women because she had the opportunity to work with most of them for two years, twice per week. From my perspective this student-teacher relationship equated more naturally to the S1 situation in which the men see the teacher five times per week for a full year or in some cases, two years.

## Data Analysis

As Creswell explains, the unit of analysis in ethnography is a culture-sharing group and the ethnographer attempts to interpret and understand their behaviour “informed by literature, personal experiences, or theoretical perspectives” (241, 243). Therefore, the interpretation of data in these studies was supported by the literature<sup>24</sup> discussed in Chapter 2, as well as my personal experience. My synthesis and review of data from these sources reveal that dominant traditional pedagogical strategies appear to be waning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as critical and feminist pedagogies interrogate the traditional methods. Considering Tomie Hahn’s theoretical perspective that it is sensational knowledge that facilitates the transmission process of embodied knowledge, I sought to explore and contextualize kinesthetic dialogue in an embodied student-teacher

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<sup>24</sup> The dominant traditional pedagogical theory versus innovative or critical ballet pedagogy is discussed in Chapter 2.

relationship. The how and why aspects of the investigation surrounding the kinesthetic dialogue and kinesthetic collaboration framed the class observation as well as participant interviews and focus groups. I adopted Csordas's theory of embodiment as a "methodological starting point" (1993, 136) and embraced Potter's challenge of observing another's experience of kinesthesia, or in this case kinesthetic dialogue, and recording and reporting it through "non-kinesthetic senses" (453).

Creswell further explains that the analysis phase in ethnographic research begins with description of the culture-sharing group and setting. The interpretation of the description is then based on the researcher's perspective (Creswell 162). Coding is not specifically mentioned as part of ethnographic analysis; however, Creswell discusses "highlighting specific information introduced in the descriptive phase or displaying findings through tables, charts, diagrams and figures" (162), which was part of the process for both S1 and S2, with each study analyzed separately. First, I reported the results by writing chronological descriptions of the preliminary meetings at each location, followed by my experiences during the fieldwork phases in each setting. Second, I prepared the analysis of the charts/field notes and transcripts. In this phase indexing/coding was used. Following Lacey and Luff (2009), a thematic framework for categorization of data (coding) used both *a priori* themes as well as themes that emerged from the data. Madison (2012) supports the inclusion of both *a priori* themes for categorization as well as emergent themes as she describes "coding or logging" data in ethnography as grouping information under "themes and categories that you have accumulated in the field" (43) and "you may also think about coding with your audience or readers in mind" (45). Considering these criteria the thematic categories based on

dominant pedagogical strategies as well as themes emerging from fieldwork were used in the reporting of results.

All digital data were printed to hard copy and organized for preliminary analysis. The data were first divided into S1 and S2 sections, then separated into visits (three dates per study), and finally split into collection methods including observation charts/field notes, teacher interview transcripts, student email interview transcripts, focus group transcripts and surveys. The only data that existed exclusively in hard copy versions were the hand-written observation chart results and some hand-written field notes. The charts and field notes are presented in chronological order and follow the traditional ballet class structure (Tables 6 and 13. Class Exercises. p. 85 and p. 147). All observation chart pages are numbered beginning each class at p. 1 (for original format of Observation Chart including page numeration see Appendix G). The analyses for each type of data are described in the following sections.

### Observation Charts and Field Notes

The familiarization stage for participant-observation data consisted of reading all field notes and observation charts in chronological order. Although coding as part of the data analysis strategy when using ethnographic methods is fluid (Madison 45), in these studies the thematic framework for categorization of data used both *a priori* themes as well as themes that emerged from the data in order to address traditional student-teacher communication as well as to document original findings. Specific examples of indexing/coding will be explained in relation to each data collection mode beginning with the observation charts/field notes.

In the case of student-teacher communication, which was first analyzed via the observation charts/field notes, the *a priori* thematic framework that influenced the preliminary coding emerged from both my lived experiences in the studio, and from dominant pedagogical strategies in dance training and scholarship in the field of Dance Studies. For example, the data regarding the student-teacher communication in both S1 and S2, which was the central focus of the study, were reported using the categories of tactile cues/corrections, teaching strategies, language and kinesthetic dialogue (see Chapters 4 and 5). These four themes were first substantiated by the literature (see Chapter 2). Then the observation charts were constructed to record examples of student-teacher communication based on these themes.

All examples of student-teacher communication, including verbal phrases or physical movements were highlighted on the observation charts/field notes. During preliminary coding of observation chart data, examples of student-teacher communication were hand-written on Post-it notes and stuck on the pages (as a way of highlighting). All examples of kinesthetic communication and kinesthetic dialogue (as defined in Chapter 1) were circled with a pencil to isolate them from the other communication. To report the student-teacher communication in each study, the highlighted information on the observations charts/field notes was digitally categorized into themes and then compared to the teachers' and students' interview and focus group transcripts. Three sources (observation charts/field notes, teacher interviews and student interviews/focus groups) all contained references to tactile cues/corrections, teaching strategies, language and kinesthetic dialogue; data therefore were organized under those categories.

The data were referenced using the study number, mode of data collection and date, which were listed on all tables and within the narrative of the results when specific instances were discussed. The charts/field notes were recorded following the structure of traditional ballet classes (Tables 6 and 13. Class Exercises, p. 85 and p. 147); therefore, if the communication included in the table or narrative results report referred to centre practice, the comment appeared midway through the class on the referenced date. Additionally, as previously mentioned, if the student-teacher communication was regarding the quality of the *plié* exercise, it was found in the second exercise listed on every chart across both studies, as every class began with a warm up exercise followed by the *plié* exercise. This format was chosen to facilitate future research by a dance researcher who would be familiar with this class structure.

### Transcripts

The familiarization stage in the analysis of the interviews and focus groups was the transcription of all audio-recordings (verbatim), as well as the reading of the email interviews. After the hard copies were printed and organized, the S1 and S2 teacher interviews, S2 student email interviews and S1 focus groups were categorized in digital files. The teacher participants' transcripts were organized according to dates (three visits to each school). For example, S1 teacher interview transcripts were divided into November 13, 2014 and January 20, 2015. The S2 student email interviews and the S1 student participants' focus group transcripts were organized by date and pseudonym. Therefore, when a student's comment was used in the dissertation, the pseudonym and date was listed as reference.



All interview and focus group analysis included going through the digital data and cutting and pasting “significant statements, sentences or quotes that [provided] an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon” (Creswell 61). These statements were organized based on the initial coding. For example, the S2 student email interview transcripts were printed to hard copy and read for familiarity. Then they were highlighted based on both the themes that emerged from the responses, as well as themes that were included in the interview questions (Appendix F). These comments were moved digitally into groupings of similar topics. For example, question 3 asked the students if the teacher’s approach had changed their relationship to ballet, their body or the performance of choreography. All participants replied in regards to their relationship to ballet and their changing relationship to how they perceived and focused on their bodies while dancing. Therefore, their somatic approach to ballet became a category of organization in the reporting of the results.

In contrast, some themes emerged from the responses. One example is the theme of injuries sustained by the dancers. The email interview questions did not specifically ask about injuries, yet this theme emerged in multiple responses. Therefore, ITD (IMAGE TECH for Dancers) as a tool for rehabilitation became an initial category of data organization and comments on injury were added into that data group. The final categories of organization for the S2 interview data included: Engaging In a Somatic Approach to Ballet, Individual Application and Extension of Concepts, ITD as a Tool for Rehabilitation and/or Postural Correction, and Difficulties in Application of ITD. These categories were based both on themes that were present in the interview questions such as

individual application of concepts (Appendix F), as well as on themes that emerged from responses such as rehabilitation of injury and difficulties applying ITD.

The same analysis was followed with both S1 and S2 teacher interviews (Appendices A and B). Similarly, in S1 focus groups, the topics of conversation (Appendix D) led to the two main categories of: External Expectations, and the Students' Individual Approaches to Technique. The clustering of comments allowed those main themes to emerge based on whether the students were reacting to external pressure from the school or teacher, or whether they were describing a personal approach to their training not imposed by an outside source.

### Surveys

Anonymous comments were retrieved from S1 survey #1 and survey #2 as well as S2 Survey #1. Due to the small number of surveys (total across both studies was 20), as well as the small number of surveys that contained comments (total across both studies was 11), any anonymous comments integrated into the narrative report of the data were referenced using the study number, survey number and date.

### Tables

Mapping and interpretation of the multiple sources of data were facilitated through the creation of tables, which appear in Chapters 4 and 5. Both sets of results are reported using identical tables. Tables include descriptive data pertaining to various sets of results, including the class exercises, general themes, modes of communication, and examples of kinesthetic dialogue. This stage of analysis was based on the research

questions as well as on the themes that emerged from the data in relation to those questions. For example, Tables 7 and 15 (pages 97 and 159) were created to list “general themes communicated by the teacher” in each study. This category emerged from the data, as it was apparent from multiple modes of data collection that the teachers had a chosen focus for the class, which was repeated, demonstrated and practiced throughout. My field notes, as well as teacher interviews documented the communication of the “general themes” listed in these tables including themes such as the placement of the pelvis or the use of *épaulement*. Similarly, Tables 9 and 16 (pages 105 and 165) were created in response to the patterns in the data that revealed the teachers’ kinesthetic advice (see definition of terms Chapter 1) and encouragement. These themes were the result of initial coding then digital clustering of teacher comments and student-teacher communication as listed on the observation charts/field notes. The categories of general themes, kinesthetic advice and encouragement emerged from the grouping of similar phrases and instances of teacher communication.

As mentioned above, during coding I actively sought out/scanned the data for instances of kinesthetic communication and kinesthetic dialogue. I purposefully reviewed all data and circled the kinesthetic communication and kinesthetic dialogue. I sought out these examples to substantiate and document the role of kinesthetic dialogue in the transmission of embodied knowledge. These results are displayed in Tables 11 and 17 (pages 111 and 171).

## Delimitations

Delimitations of the two studies included a variety of factors. Ballet classes were observed in order to use the specific framework found in a structured ballet class, the established motor repertoire of advanced dancers as well as the codified vocabulary. The student-teacher communication was framed by the traditional structure of the ballet class, which included the teacher as the authority with the students learning and practicing prescribed steps and sequences, as well as the traditional vocabulary and sequence of exercises for advanced level classes. This delimitation allowed the data described in the results to be easily accessed by date from the original charts and field notes as the structure of the classes did not vary. For example, student-teacher communication regarding the quality of the *plié* exercise was found in the second exercise listed on the observation chart in every observed class across both studies. Every observed class began with a warm up exercise followed by the *plié* exercise, adhering to the traditional ballet class structure.

Additional delimitations included selection of the schools, the number of visits to the schools, as well as the data collection techniques used. The parameters of the study (criteria for site selection) included the schools' similar programming and comparable successes in training regimens that produced professional dancers, as well as the advanced level of the dancers. Initially, the number of visits to the schools was proposed at either three or four spanning the school year. However, after the third visit it became clear that the student-teacher communication, although having evolved over the school year, was not changing dramatically enough to justify a fourth visit to either school. The timing of the visits varied due to circumstances that affected regular class times including

student involvement in shows, evaluation classes and school holidays. Although it was relevant to observe the relationship between the accompanists and the teachers, this communication falls beyond the scope of this study. However, the accompanists played a central role in the structure, flow and efficiency of the ballet classes. The musicality of the dancers and the musical expectations of the teachers are reported in the results.

### Cultural Influences/Bias and Limitations

Limitations of the research include my intention to study a specific phenomenon that is undocumented as this is the first study in ballet pedagogy to explore kinesthetic dialogue in a student-teacher relationship. As an insider driven by research questions, I ran the risk of carrying into the field “metaphorical sieves” if I allowed my search for specific evidence to narrow the data collection particularly during the class observations (Hahn 2). I acknowledged that information was at risk of slipping through the sieve if I screened for answers (Hahn 2). Therefore, research questions were designed to elicit a breadth of information to moderate my subjective observation, which could potentially limit the data collected. For example, the first research question required the recording of all verbal and non-verbal communication present in the observed student-teacher relationship. Therefore, the observation chart was designed to effectively and quickly record a variety of information, which would serve to contextualize the instances of kinesthetic dialogue that I hoped to observe.

My familiarity with the culture of the ballet studio, its processes and atmosphere facilitated the isolation and study of the student-teacher communication, as I did not have

to familiarize myself with all aspects of ballet studio culture. However, as Caroline Potter suggests:

Kinesthesia as an internally perceived sense renders it difficult to describe at the interpersonal and social levels. On one hand the ability to perceive the felt experience of movement within one's body seems a universal human capacity, but on the other hand the anthropologist's analysis of another's sense of motion is filtered through her own non-kinesthetic senses, chiefly vision and sound. Beyond one's personal attempt to experience the movements first hand, data is gathered via visual observation and dialogue with other moving persons. (452-453)

The above statement encapsulates one of the challenges I faced throughout my fieldwork. I attempted to document the kinesthetic experience of other people through "non-kinesthetic senses." Therefore, descriptions of kinesthetic dialogue between the students and teachers, based on direct observation, were framed, supported and facilitated by my lived experiences as a student and teacher.

I acknowledge my subjectivity as an observer to the participants' experience. As suggested in the literature review, research in kinesthetic cultures comes from the body of the participants as well as the participant-observer. My lived experiences could not be bracketed out entirely as my kinesthetic empathy for the students and the teachers was involuntary and ever-present. During the observations, I tried to put aside my biases regarding the student-teacher relationship and pedagogical strategies with the expectation that being aware of recording details, as well as attempting to experience the present situation as it unfolded, would facilitate a more objective data collection. However, my kinesthetic empathy for the dancers and the teacher was unconscious and inevitably influenced my observations regardless of entering the situations aware of my responsibility to record the communication without emotional investment.

The logistics of the fieldwork created unforeseen challenges that shaped the research strategies and ultimately the results. For example, the teachers' participation was a result of uncontrollable circumstances. The S1 artistic director autocratically assigned a male teacher teaching a male class. The teacher used a traditionally based approach to classical ballet training that was a hybrid of his life spent in a Russian state ballet school, his career as a principal dancer in a Russian ballet company, and his teacher training at the S1 school. At the S2 school, I agreed to work with the S2 teacher, despite not knowing anything about her teaching practices, when she volunteered to participate in the study. She had a unique and untraditional approach to teaching ballet through the use of somatic practice in the studio. The similarities in class structure, vocabulary and level were born of the structure and vocabulary of an advanced ballet class; however, the gender and pedagogical differences were unforeseen.

Additional unforeseen circumstances limited data collection, including that the number of student participants in observed classes varied due to injury. One of the S1 men watched a whole class. Another S1 student missed the focus group because it was during an *allegro*<sup>25</sup> class and he was being coached elsewhere for an injury that restricted his jumping. Similarly, in each session that I attended at S2, at least one of the women would sit at the side of the studio half way through the class due to injury. It was not necessarily the same dancer each time. Additionally, the length of interviews was determined by the availability of the teachers and the noise level within the interview environment determined whether or not the interviews were audio-recorded. Although

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<sup>25</sup> An *allegro* class is a session dedicated to jumping. The S1 men had these classes in addition to the two-hour ballet technique class, which also included 30 minutes of *allegro*. The women at the S1 school had *pointe* work during the time the men had *allegro*. This is a traditionally structured professional ballet training system, which prepares the dancers for their gendered roles in ballet.

the students in both studies agreed to be observed in classes, their participation in focus groups (S1) and email interviews (S2) was voluntary. The voluntary nature of the email interviews and focus groups affected the amount of data collected from the student responses (Table 1. Student Participants, p. 58).



## **Chapter 4: Study One Results**

### Introductory Discussion

This chapter begins with a brief discussion section regarding preliminary research and site selection for the study. During this phase, I approached the S1 school via an administrator with whom I had a twenty-year professional relationship. When we met in May 2014 to discuss my research, she explained some of the parameters that the school would consider with reference to parental approval. Considerations included my proposed email interviews with students being changed to group conversations (focus groups) conducted in person. I received the director's agreement to have the school participate in the research at the beginning of June 2014. When the class observations began at the S1 school in November 2014, I felt the circumstances were stained for a few reasons. In addition to the teacher being chosen by the director to participate in the research, rather than volunteering after meeting me, I was placed at the front of the studio as the sole audience member, without being introduced to the dancers.

As the class began I was aware of myself as a female in a group of men, and I wondered if both my presence as a live audience, as well as my gender, would affect the dynamics of the class. The answers to these questions came from the students. During a focus group, the dancers told me that they were less nervous when a man watched than a woman because a man can somehow understand differently (3 June 2015). Although five out of six of the students replied on the initial survey that my presence did not alter the class or affect their focus, one student did write that he felt my presence in November caused the teacher to be less harsh and to censor himself. Additionally, the embodied memories that I had as a ballet student surfaced on my first visit to this atmosphere. The observations from the first week consisted of data that were initially contextualized by

my own experiences because they were not yet contextualized by the participants' experiences. These first impressions are relevant as a baseline for the observations and the subsequent evolution of my perceptions of the student-teacher relationship.

Some of the information from the interviews and focus groups corresponded with my own observations and perspectives, and some of the data contrasted with my perception of events. It is relevant to note that upon reflection, I realized that my view of, and/or the atmosphere and communication themselves, changed with each visit. As the research progressed, hearing the viewpoints of the teacher and students altered my perception of the events that I had observed. In many ways, I was an outsider to the embodied relationship that was fostered daily for ten months and, in some cases, two years. However, there were multiple students who were genuinely enthusiastic about my degree and/or research, and these reactions made participation in the observation classes more comfortable. Once I conducted interviews and focus groups, which revealed how the participants perceived the atmosphere and the student-teacher relationship, their viewpoints influenced how I perceived the student-teacher relationship as well as how I reflected on the experiences in the classes. The comments from the surveys were anonymous and the data are woven into the text, often in response or substantiation to the narrative of my field notes.

This chapter addresses the characteristics and structure of the observed classes. The studio spaces and class atmosphere are described as they were recorded and perceived in the narrative of my field notes. My initial perceptions of these class elements are reported as I experienced them in each visit. The studio space and atmosphere of the classes are themes that emerged from the data because they were often referred to within class observation notes and they were frequently commented on by the participants. The

discussion of class space and atmosphere is followed by a report describing the student-teacher communication throughout the year. This section addresses the first and second research questions regarding the combination of verbal and non-verbal communication present in class, as well as the presence of kinesthetic dialogue. The section consists of the following four categories: tactile (or hands on) corrections, teaching strategies, verbal corrections, and kinesthetic dialogue. When I report on the communication observed in class, the voices of the participants begin to converse with my own observations surrounding the student-teacher relationship as I include the anonymous student comments from the surveys.

Subsequently, drawing on the data from the personal interviews provided the perspectives of the teacher. The teacher's input included his dance training and professional career, his teacher training and teaching experience, the class atmosphere and structure, as well as the expectations and objectives he has of/for the students. Finally, the students voice their perspectives as they were expressed in multiple focus groups and through their responses to the surveys. The dancers specifically addressed the categories of studio spaces, atmosphere and student-teacher communication, including the efficacy of verbal and physical corrections. They also discussed their personal experiences with applying technical corrections. The chapter concludes with a discussion highlighting teaching strategies as well as my personal reactions to the observed student-teacher communication.

#### Characteristics and Structure of Classes: Observations Regarding All Sessions

The first five observed classes in November 2014 equaled 8.75 hours of observation over five consecutive days. It was during this observation period that the

baseline observations were recorded. The initial visit was the longest observation session; the following two sessions consisted of 5.25 hours of class time each visit. On the first observation day in November, the administrator came to the reception area to meet me and introduced me to the teacher who had just read and signed the informed consent form. I explained to the teacher that I would only observe the first day and not take very many notes. It was surprising that the teacher had not been informed of the project earlier in the school year. However, the teacher was gracious and accepting of the situation that was presented to him.

After our introduction, I went up to the common space outside the studio to wait until the teacher arrived. When the teacher arrived and we entered the studio together the male students were in the middle of a previously choreographed floor warm up; the teacher gestured for me to sit beside him along the mirror at the front of the studio. I thanked him but I moved the chair closer to the piano, which was in the corner of the room. I was tense for most of the class as the dancers sent me a few sideways glances. The teacher had not introduced me, and it was somewhat rare to have a complete stranger visit a regular daily ballet class unannounced. In an effort to be fully present in the first observation class, I made very quick short hand notes, which I expanded upon immediately following the class. During the remaining four days of the first observation session, I spent two days filling in charts (Table 2. Observation Chart, p. 61) and two days writing notes without using the chart. The differences in the class exercises during the three observation periods are reported below in Table 6 on page 85. The classes were one hour and forty-five minutes in length.

Table 6. S1 Class Exercises.<sup>26</sup>

<b>November 2014</b>	<b>January 2015</b>	<b>June 2015</b>
<i>Barre</i>	<i>Barre</i>	<i>Barre</i>
<b>Floor work, 10 minutes.</b> Warm Up <i>Plié</i> <i>Battements Tendus</i> from First <i>Battements Tendus</i> from Fifth <i>Battements Jetés</i> <i>Ronds de jambe à terre/Ronds de jambe jeté</i> <i>Battements Fondus</i> <i>Battements Frappés</i> <i>Ronds de jambe en l'air</i> <i>Adage</i> Stretch with leg on the <i>barre</i> <i>Grands Battements</i> <i>Relevés</i>	<b>Same floor work.</b>  Order of <i>barre</i> exercises is the same, with the addition of:  <i>Petits Battements</i>	<b>No floor work.</b>  Order of <i>barre</i> is the same as January.  No additions.
<b>Centre Practice</b>	<b>Centre Practice</b>	<b>Centre Practice</b>
<i>Adage #1</i> <i>Battements Tendus/ Pirouettes</i>  <i>Pirouettes</i>  <i>Battements Fondus</i>  <i>Ronds de jambe en l'air</i>  <i>Grand Battements/Pirouettes</i>	<i>Adage #1</i> <i>Battements Tendus/ Pirouettes</i>  <i>Pirouettes</i>  <i>Battements Fondus</i>    <i>Adage #2</i>	<i>Adage #1</i> <i>Battements Tendus and Jeté en Dehors/en Dedans/ Pirouettes</i>  <i>Pirouettes:Attitude/Arabesques</i>  <i>Battements Fondus</i>    <i>Grands Battements/Pirouettes à la Seconde</i>  <i>Adage #2</i>
<b>Allegro</b>	<b>Allegro</b>	<b>Allegro</b>
<i>Sautés</i> in first and second <i>Échappés</i> <i>Changements and Glissades</i> <i>Assemblés</i> <i>Jetés battus</i> <i>Brisé,Entrechat-cinq/</i> <i>Cabrioles</i> <i>Jeté, Ronds de Jambe Sautés</i> <i>Sissones Ouvert</i> <i>Grands Assemblés</i> <i>Grand Jeté</i>	<i>Sautés</i> in first and second <i>Échappés</i>  <i>Assemblés</i> <i>Jetés battus</i> <i>Royales</i> <i>Sissones, Cabrioles</i> <i>Sissones Ouvert</i> <i>Grand Sissone Ouvert</i>	<i>Sautés</i> in first and second <i>Échappés</i>  <i>Assemblés</i> <i>Jetés Battus</i>  <b>Separate Allegro class to follow.</b>

<sup>26</sup> In November the class was already set, in January they were in the process of setting it, and in June the class had been set the week before. In June, the class fluctuated; on the second day in the *allegro* section due to special guests observing and on the third day the class was cut 15 minutes short to allow for participation in the focus group and surveys.

At the end of my first class visit, the teacher asked me to speak to the students about my presence. To create a more informal atmosphere, I asked them to move closer together and the teacher stood slightly behind me. I asked the students if I was a surprise guest and a few nodded. I introduced my research and myself. I clarified that, although I would write things down, the information was not about their performance. I assured them that I was writing about how their teacher communicates with them. Later, in a focus group, I discovered that explaining my purpose had eased their feelings/anxiety regarding being “judged.” I informed them that the director of the school had suggested that we might have a conversation at some point and they were receptive to the idea. The students were quiet during this conversation, but their eyes lit up and they smiled when I was engaging them through my facial expressions or requesting responses to my questions. I thanked them for their work that day. When they thanked me in return, some of them bowed slightly which reflected the traditional training of ballet as well as their embodiment of their roles as students. As the students became accustomed to my presence, our relationship became less formal. By our third focus group, seven months after the initial conversation, they seemed comfortable speaking freely and they took time to add thoughtful written responses to survey questions.

Throughout the research period, the location of the class changed daily; however, each of the studios had a similar clean, empty appearance. The floors were light grey, the walls were cream, the *barres* were light wood with thin gray metal posts extending to the floor, rather than the traditional approach of attaching the *barre* to the wall. High on the two storey walls there were large photos of past student performances and class moments. The photos were printed on fabric and most were in black and white. There was a baby grand piano in one corner of each studio and a few chairs at the front of the room. The

built-in wooden squares (cubbies) by the door were meant for students' belongings and shoes. After warming up, the male students stored their personal items in the cubbies and they brought only water bottles to the *barre*. The bottles were usually placed behind a post, which kept the room orderly looking and this appeared to allow the dancers to avoid kicking them over while dancing.

There are some general observations regarding class structure and characteristics that run through all my field notes from November 2014 to June 2015. For instance, the teacher admittedly preferred a quieter environment to facilitate focus and hard work (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015) and this was evident in every class. After the *barre*, he always sat in a chair at the front of the room to watch the centre practice. He often stood to demonstrate a correction or an exercise when the students were not performing. However, when seated the teacher communicated energy and direction with his arms and upper body from the chair. The dancers stood in two straight lines and a few times they were asked to move a few inches one way or the other to facilitate a *corps de ballet* precision. The teacher's voice was soft and steady and he did not raise his voice at all, even to stop the performance of an exercise. As soon as he lifted a hand the music stopped. His tone was serious and demanding, and initially I interpreted some comments as sarcastic. However, the dancers commented with mature insight that the teacher "can be a bit blunt and his English can make him sound rude" (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015).

The class structure followed the traditional ballet class format including *barre*, centre practice and *allegro* (Table 6. S1 Class Exercises, p. 85). The June classes had less *allegro* than the previous visits. The teacher had planned only about 15 minutes of *petit allegro*, followed by a short break and a separate *allegro* class. Although the school has

developed its own curriculum, the Vaganova<sup>27</sup> influences were present in the style of the class and in the sequence of the exercises. Some examples include use of *épaulement*<sup>28</sup> with a full turn of the head and the centre *adage* beginning with *grand plié* into *pirouette* in *retiré* in extension *à la seconde*. The teacher confirmed in his interview that the transition to this curriculum was easier for him because it was based on the Vaganova method, which was the system used during his training at the state school (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015). The *barre* exercises were performed without stopping between sides and often connected to one another. The accompanist changed the tempo, style and dynamics of the music to match the exercises. The class was only stopped to review the next exercise when the class was first learning the choreography, as in January, or if there was a general correction for the class. Musicality was the main group correction that would cause the *barre* work to be paused.

#### Session One: November 2014

For four out of five days during the first week, when I entered the class the dancers glanced at me. However, they did not say hello unless I said something first, to which they would politely and quietly reply. Generally, they had light conversations, but many students warmed up in silence, sometimes with earphones on. The pre-class ritual set the tone of the class, which I observed was serious and focused. Exactly ten minutes before class the dancers took off warm up clothes and put them in cubbies by the door.

Their uniforms consisted of fitted white tank body suits and light grey tights worn over

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<sup>27</sup> Agrippina Yakovlevna Vaganova's (1879-1951) teaching method was developed in the 1920s and with the publication of her book *Basic Principles of Classical Ballet* in 1939, her method became "the property of the entire Soviet ballet theatre" (Chistyakova, vi, xi).

<sup>28</sup> *Épaulement* in Vaganova syllabus is translated as "head and shoulders" and is explained as "the first suggestion of future artistry of classical dancing..." (Vaganova 20). The S1 teacher liked the dancers' heads turned over the downstage shoulder and a feeling of breadth across the shoulders.



the top of the body suit. The tights were rolled down to the waist and worn with grey ballet shoes that matched the tights. The light colours of their clothes and the studios gave the environment a clean, fresh look that I described initially in my field notes as “sterile, cold and silent.” The dancers began their class five minutes early with a set of floor exercises; they took turns counting as they performed the floor work as a group. The first day I entered the studio on time because the administrator had asked me to enter the studio with the teacher. However, from Tuesday to Friday I arrived ten to fifteen minutes early and observed in silent stillness while I waited for the teacher and the accompanist. At exactly the scheduled class time the teacher entered and the students continued their floor work for 5 more minutes while he observed. The accompanist also entered on time, and class began as soon as the floor work was complete.

Twice during the total of eleven classes that I observed, the class took place on stage at the theatre attached to the school (once in November and once in January). The stage had the legs flown out and there were portable *barres* placed along three sides of a rectangle, with the opening facing the audience. I chose to sit on stage at the front, although both times I asked the teacher if I should move to the audience. The first time he replied that I should do what was most useful. The second time, in June, I asked his opinion because unexpected high profile guests attended the class and I wondered if it was appropriate for me to be sitting onstage. The teacher replied that I should stay with the class.

The pre-class ritual felt different when the dancers were warming up on stage, compared with the other days in a studio. They had popular music playing very loudly in the theatre and there was a difference in their approach to the warm up. They were more animated, casual and talkative. The music appeared fun and relaxing to them. This was

the only day during my first visit that they played music. Both experiences on stage appeared to change the approach to the work. The first day they were on stage, Mac<sup>29</sup> was injured and counted the warm up from the audience using a variety of languages. This brought to mind the reality that these students would likely be traveling internationally to get jobs and that some might already be international students speaking a second or third language.

### Session Two: January 2015

In general, the class structure and characteristics did not change from day to day. Therefore, January's visit consisted of three observation classes rather than five, as it seemed unnecessary to observe the same set class more than three times in one visit. However, the interaction between some of the students and the teacher seemed to have changed from November to January. Additionally, having spoken to the teacher in November and with the dancers in December, I had their perspectives as context for the January visit. Their perspectives allowed me a more informed position from which to observe the interactions. The class that they were setting in January was the evaluation class that the students would perform for a panel of teachers from the school. They would be judged on their progress and their future at the school would be decided by their performance of these exercises. My first observation day in this session was only the second day that the students had performed the exercises. The dancers struggled when the teacher asked them to individually demonstrate exercises. When the students were individually called on to show the exercises, the studio was silent and the students' voices were quiet while counting the exercises. The dancers struggled through the *barre*

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<sup>29</sup> All names are pseudonyms.

exercises and the teacher was obviously disappointed that they had not practiced the previous day's work.

In general, during the January classes there seemed to be an air of confidence about the students as they prepared to perform in the centre. For example, in November the teacher had been demonstrating and encouraging the use of stronger *épaulement* to begin exercises in the centre. By January this stylistic nuance was beginning to become embodied in some of the dancers, which gave them a stronger and more confident presentation. One student in particular embodied this change of attitude. Ken was a graduating student who had been with this teacher for two years and, as reported later in this chapter, he voiced his perspective on the current class in relation to his future with a ballet company. When he came into the centre in January he was still focused on applying corrections and working on his technique, but there was a difference in his demeanor and maturity in his relationship to the teacher. Christophe is another confident student whom I met for the first time during the January visit. This brought the total to eight men in the class. I explained the purpose of the research to Christophe giving him a consent form to return to me on the next visit. He reacted to my explanation with an enthusiastic, "that's exciting!" (16 Jan 2015).

### Session Three: June 2015

The three classes that were observed in June were structurally different than the previous classes partly due to the missing floor work. The teacher also specifically mentioned to me that they would not do very much jumping because he had the students for a separate *allegro* class (Table 6. S1 Class Exercises, p. 85). The class had been set the week before I arrived. There were tangible differences in the class atmosphere during

this visit. The students were chatting while warming up and they said hello when I walked in. They did not do the floor work as a group. Christophe got up from the floor to follow me across the studio and asked about returning his consent form. After the class, the teacher and I had a conversation about the focus group and he suggested that it be done in two parts. He decided that he would dismiss the students ten minutes early for the next two days; this would enable them to remain warm enough for *allegro* class.

The second observation day in June brought a wonderfully revealing incident surrounding guests watching the class. When I arrived at the school, the class had been rescheduled to begin fifteen minutes later. Therefore, I had extra time to watch the dancers warm up on stage. Similar to the first class that I had observed in the theatre, the dancers played popular music. However, this time they played hip-hop music with explicit lyrics and they did not change it when I arrived. Jag greeted me and asked how I was; I replied and then confirmed that the class time had been rescheduled. I sat down to type my observations of their behaviour and demeanor. I chose to sit on stage at quarter stage with my back to the audience. The dancers were chatting and celebrating that the class was to be shortened and that the following *allegro* class also was to be shortened. I told them that we would be speaking with them for the last ten minutes of the class and they were very pleased. However, when the teacher arrived they were instantly silent and he announced that they had guests. The director of the school accompanied by the choreographer in residence to the affiliated ballet company entered stage right coming from the school. She told the dancers that the choreographer would be teaching them this summer. The mood shifted quickly to facilitate an internal focus for the dancers and there was an instant acceptance of the pressure to perform well.

The guests moved to the audience and the teacher confirmed that they would like to see an entire class including *allegro*. This request changed his teaching plan greatly compared with the day before and altered the plan of finishing the class early. Additionally, the teacher altered his mode of correction at the *barre* to include walking to the dancers and speaking so that the audience, myself included, could not hear him. This may not have been a conscious adjustment made for the audience, rather the stage space demands a louder voice should the teacher have chosen to sit while they were at the *barre*. In comparison to the previous day, the *barre* was run straight through for forty minutes total, with no group correction between exercises. The *barre* was fifteen minutes shorter than on the previous day when the same exercises were performed. This gave the class an air of performance, especially when compared to the usual daily routine in which the dancers took time to work on technical details and to learn concepts. The teacher repeated the four *allegro* exercises from the day before with the addition of seven exercises that they had not performed. The additional exercises included larger jumps and *entrechat-six*, which would have been of interest to the choreographer from a class planning perspective. The men also performed a series of *grand pirouettes à la second* one dancer at a time, which I had never seen them do previously.

The director left the choreographer alone in the audience after thirty-five minutes of *barre* work and she returned for the last ten minutes of his visit to announce their departure and thank the class. The class continued for fifteen minutes after they left, which was supposed to have been the time for the focus group, had the teacher remembered. The teacher apologized for forgetting to finish class early; instead he asked the dancers to stay for ten minutes during their break. He asked me to dismiss them five minutes before their next class. They were willing to stay and as we sat down on the floor

together, I gave them two bags of candy, which added to the already excited atmosphere. This was a wonderful opportunity to hear exactly how they felt about this experience and I simply asked them to voice their reactions to the class. I sat on the stage floor with them, and they spoke excitedly and quickly for six minutes before I dismissed them for their *allegro* class. The content of this discussion was audio-recorded and is reported in the focus group results section of this chapter.

I was able to follow up with my pre-planned questions the next day when the teacher allowed me the last fifteen minutes of their ballet class for the final conversation. At the end of that class, he turned to me and said, “They are all yours, well for maybe fifteen minutes” (6 June 2015). They dressed in warm up clothes and they willingly shared individual insights into their training. This time I consciously sat in the teacher’s chair, which made the atmosphere more formal. An indication of this formal tone was how the students sat silently waiting for me to begin. I tried to make the atmosphere more casual and engage them by showing a photo of the choreographer in residence as a student dancing at their school. They asked me about my background and I told them briefly about my experience at their age. During the focus group the hierarchical configuration, consisting of me in the chair and the students on the floor, seemed to cause them to speak one at a time. Ultimately, this conversation was easier to decipher when transcribing and the students waiting to speak created longer and more thoughtful responses than had been expressed on the previous day. I initially chose to sit in the chair because during the audio-recording of the previous day, I could not always tell who was making sounds of agreement or adding short comments from my place sitting on the floor. These benefits, including thoughtful responses and students waiting patiently to

speak, were unforeseen and perhaps inadvertently changed the informal tone of the day before.

#### Student-Teacher Communication: General Observations

This section reports my observations of the student-teacher relationship using the following four categories: tactile (hands on) corrections, teaching strategies, language, and kinesthetic dialogue. Three of these themes emerged after I began compiling and summarizing the data. They had not been previously decided. The only category that pre-existed the studies was kinesthetic dialogue as it was the central topic of the research. My personal observations in this account are augmented by voluntary comments and relevant data from the multiple-choice surveys. The following excerpt from my field notes addresses the style of corrections given to the dancers at the *barre* on the first day, which included hands on corrections, a teaching strategy using both demonstration and physical interaction with one of the dancers, as well as verbal individual corrections. The following quote reflects my initial, uncontextualized observations of the class, as I did not know the students' names or the history of their relationship to the teacher. The short hand field notes that were expanded immediately after the first class include the following observations:

At the *barre*, he began sitting and did get up to work on “boy 1” shoulders, “boy 2” turn out, “boy 3” turn out. That is as far as he went throughout the *barre* in his correcting. I started to wonder if they had to rotate to those three front spaces to be touched... Later in the class he did mention that some of the dancers had been with him for two years so perhaps the three he picked on today are new to him? ... He was physically very strong with them, turning out from the thigh with a strong finger down the turn out muscles or actually hitting the abdominals with a flat hand... He took his jacket off at the *barre* and had one of the boys put their hands on his back to illustrate that the back stays square when the leg goes to *tendu derrière*. It was such a nice teaching

moment, but the dancers seem either terrified or withdrawn, perhaps they do not understand him? (Field notes 10 Nov 2014)

As indicated above, the teacher used varying forms of correction in every class and a common pattern developed over the course of the observations. Generally, during the *barre* the teacher would give individual corrections using tactile, verbal and kinesthetic cues. He spent most of the *barre* standing and walking to the dancers giving individual corrections and if there were group corrections they occurred between exercises and usually pertained to the musicality of the execution. Later I asked the teacher what he felt his strengths and weaknesses were. He confirmed that “personal corrections” were his strength and he felt that he needed to improve his communication with the students as a group because sometimes he felt that he could not “reach them” (Personal interview 13 Nov 2014). This ability to correct each dancer based on their weaknesses was evident and consistent in his teaching. The dancers agreed that they were given a lot of individual attention. Jag suggested it was due to the small class and Jeff stated, “He knows us by now, but he took a few months to get to know us, and now it’s really just targeting what we need to improve” (Focus group 15 Dec 2014). My observations support the teacher’s self-assessment that his strengths lay in individual technical assessment. The teacher often worked with individual students between exercises and rarely gave sweeping technical corrections surrounding specific steps. However, as listed below in Table 7 on page 97, there were general themes that the teacher emphasized to the group as a whole. He often gave talks that lasted a few minutes to emphasize the themes.



Table 7. S1 General Themes Communicated by the Teacher.

November 2014	January 2015	June 2015
Responsibility for personal corrections.	Responsibility of remembering exercises and the importance of evaluation class.	
Musicality of choreography.	Musicality of choreography.	Musicality of choreography.
Demonstrating the intention of achieving a correction or improving a skill, reacting to correction by showing personal motivation to change.	Demonstrating self-motivation and taking responsibility for retention of corrections.	
Anticipating the cue to begin the next exercise. For example, the teacher expected the dancers to be in position before he gave the cue, “Ready...and.” They were to be still and wait for his command.	Looking like a <i>corps de ballet</i> . Their jobs will begin in the <i>corps</i> and they must dance as a group.	Anticipating the cue to begin the next exercise. He explained, “You are still in school.”
The placement of the pelvis as a key to releasing tension in the body.	Placement of the pelvis as key to releasing tension in the body. He stated, “Do not be frozen, the joints move.”	Placement of the pelvis as key to releasing tension in the body.
Alignment: Maintenance of the “square” above, and separate from the pelvis. <sup>30</sup>	Alignment: Maintenance of turn out and leg alignment through the reduction the turn out of the feet and help stability.	Alignment: Finding balance through alignment of pelvis, length of spine and the function of the hip in <i>plié</i> .
Co-ordination of the <i>port de bras</i> in <i>allegro</i> .	Co-ordination of the <i>port de bras</i> in <i>allegro</i> .	Co-ordination of the <i>port de bras</i> in <i>allegro</i> and in <i>grand pirouettes</i> .

<sup>30</sup> The teacher explained that the shoulders and hips are a square, the pelvis does not tuck under, and the legs are separated by the isolation of the leg in the hip socket. Shifting the “square” over supporting leg would allow the students to find balance. He explained that the joints move independently of one another to release tension in the hips and if the students forced the feet it was be more difficult to find the movement of the thighbone.

## Tactile Corrections

The S1 teacher's use of firm physical correction appears to stem from his own dance training. Although both his dance and teaching experience in Russia has now melded with his teacher training at the current school, he admitted there are differences in the approaches. He explained that when he and his wife started teaching at the school, "some people just scared us at the beginning because you cannot touch students, you cannot raise your voice, you cannot apply your hands, and still inside I have something that sometimes just stops me, I don't know how students might react..." (Personal interview 20 June 2015). My initial observations of the hands on corrections noted that he seemed "rough with them" (Field notes 11 Nov 2014), although the physicality seemed acceptable to the dancers.

In observing the tactile communication, it appeared that the firm touch was due to the strength and size of the male dancers, which allowed them to be physically manipulated without injury. However, in addressing the efficacy of certain types of corrections, one of the students wrote, "I have found that touch can be borderline abusive sometimes, not actually, he is just a bit rough" (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015). Only one student out of seven felt that touch was one of the most effective modes of correction in the class, whereas three students felt that it was the least effective (Table 8. Survey #2, p. 99). In response to the efficacy of tactile correction one student commented, "I find I have to figure out how to make the correction for myself. When my teacher puts me in the position I find it hard to apply the same position later" (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015). Ken disagreed with this statement, as physical manipulation helped him to understand certain corrections. However, he still implied the use of firm touch with his choice of words. He said, "When we are on *barre*, sometimes he'll force you into the position that

he wants and you are like, oh that's how it is supposed to be" (4 June 2015). The touch that was being discussed and used in the S1 class, which I observed in classes and was explained by the students, refers to the dancers being put into, or forced into, a position. This type of manipulation is in contrast to a lighter touch often used in ballet pedagogy, which brings into consciousness parts of the dancers' bodies. My observations of the dancers cuing themselves by touching parts of their own bodies is a topic explored in the second S1 focus group.

Table 8. S1 Survey #2, June 2015.

Responses	4) What is/ are the <i>most</i> effective mode(s) of correction you have received in this class?	5) What is/are the <i>least</i> effective mode(s) of correction you have received in this class?
Touch	1	3
Verbal	4	2
Metaphors	4	1
Demonstration	4	0
Silence (being left to work)	3	2
Other	0	0
Written Responses	5	3
Total Participants	7	7

Note: Five out of seven participants wrote an explanatory response to at least one of these questions.

### Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies became apparent through my observations and were also commented on by both the teacher and the students. The teacher had expectations regarding how the students approach their work including taking responsibility for remembering and thinking about their corrections, as well as showing their "intention" to work on them in class (13 Nov 2014) (Table 7. S1 General Themes, p. 97). Positive reinforcement was not a strategy he employed while being observed, although negative

reinforcement could be considered a teaching strategy in this class. An example of negative reinforcement was the removal of the repetitive correction once it was achieved. More frequently during the observed classes, the repetitive correction was removed while the student was working with what the teacher calls “intention.” For example, one of the teacher’s pedagogical tactics is the use of silence directed toward an individual student while they are working. For example, one day Juk was given corrections throughout the entire class including tactile corrections, verbal feedback, and kinesthetic cues. The next day his name was not mentioned once. He was neither touched nor given any individual attention. When I asked the students about this strategy Connor stated:

It was kind of like confusing cause the next day you didn’t really know if you were applying them [the corrections], or if you were doing it right, you would kinda have to guess whether you were like...you were doing it, like he wasn’t correcting you because he was pleased with you; he wasn’t correcting you because he was mad at you... (Focus group 15 Dec 2014)

Mac immediately clarified that he feels this strategy reflects the expectations of them as professional dancers. Prior to my question about how silence makes them feel, we had been discussing class expectations and they explained they would not be given corrections in a professional company and they knew they would have to be autonomous.

Mac stated:

...when you get the correction in class, I think, in an ideal world you feel it the first time and be able to do it the day after and I think that is what he is trying to implement into us, so we will learn to get the corrections quickly. I think that’s why, because like you said, one day you will get a lot of corrections and the next day he’d be quiet. And he will just be like, nice exercise and you just go through the class ...I think it goes back to what he expects, not just in the ballet world, I think that he, well maybe not he, but teachers in general...try to raise us in one way. (Focus group 15 Dec 2014)

As indicated above, both students have accepted this teaching strategy as part of their everyday training and they deal with it to the best of their ability when they are the

subjects of the tactic. In response to the survey questions regarding the most or least effective modes of correction, three dancers felt that being left alone to work in silence was one of the most effective modes of correction, and two dancers felt that it was one of the least effective strategies (Table 8. S1 Survey #2, p. 99). This left two dancers seeming indifferent to the strategy.

In an interview, the teacher inadvertently explained his use of silence as a teaching strategy when he was discussing pedagogical differences between his dance training in Russia and the culture in which he currently teaches. He explained:

We were always taught to go through the corrections before or after class, or before class, so that when you stand to do exercise you know what to work on, you are not waiting for the teacher. Here it was always strange for me because the music playing and the teacher always constantly talking, talking, talking, and giving corrections. So I feel like quite often they are not listening, they are not used to thinking and applying corrections from day to day: on a daily basis...I told them that the best motivation is to come into class and achieve something, and do something a little bit better, so that's how you make even a boring class interesting, if you really understand what to work on and what to improve. (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015)

This comment demonstrates the teacher's expectations that the students will become autonomous through his advice. The students' understanding of this expectation was revealed in the group conversations.

Another strategy that the teacher acknowledged as a conscious teaching tactic was educating the dancers regarding how one step connects to, or prepares them for, another step. He stated that in his training, he wished that his teacher had told him how the *barre* exercises relate to the *grand allegro* and he tries to do that for his students (Personal interview 13 Nov 2014). On Survey #2, one student revealed this strategy as one of the most effective modes of correction. The student suggested that the verbal correction of "relating movements" is effective because "when he [the teacher] says that one

movement is like another, if you are stronger at a different movement then you can connect the two” (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015).

One teaching strategy that was employed throughout the research period was the use of the mirror for visual feedback when the students were given a correction. In November the teacher asked “one boy to *tendu derrière* and *plié* in fourth with his pelvis in the pirouette position, he made him do it quite a few times” and a different student “to face sideways and *plié* in fourth in order to get his pelvis between his feet in fourth” (Field notes 10 Nov 2014). During many corrections, the students were asked to look into the mirror to find the alignment for themselves. In the first focus group, the students stated that they believed that the teacher wanted them to be autonomous when they leave school (Focus group 15 Dec 2014). As professional dancers they believed that they will have teachers who run a company ballet class much like a warm up to maintain technique rather than to refine technique. The dancers also stated that they found they need the mirrors to apply postural corrections in this class and felt “kinda stressed” when they were on stage without the mirror (Focus group 4 June 2015). The teacher corrected their use of the mirror with advice including “check yourself from your eyes,” meaning use the mirror without turning their heads to disrupt the line (Field notes 12 Nov 2014). The use of mirrors in dance instruction is explored further in the discussion section of this chapter.

A teaching strategy that was an obvious attempt to communicate expectations was the teacher talking to the dancers for two to five minutes on a particular subject. The teacher would talk to the dancers about an expectation but the dancers would not move or speak. The information was valid and often helpful to the dancers. However, the dancers’ lack of response made it impossible to observe the level of comprehension or

appreciation of the advice. Some of the topics included taking responsibility for corrections, self-motivation and demonstrating intention to apply corrections and improve technique (Table 7. S1 General Themes, p. 97). There were more talks during the January visit because the evaluation class was being set and the dancers were struggling to remember the previous day's class. He reminded them that their evaluation class was in four weeks, that he was marking them and asked them, "how do I motivate you, with a mark, will 20% motivate you?" (13 Jan 2015).

### Language

In addition to both tactile corrections and the above-mentioned teaching strategies, another theme to emerge from the data was the use of verbal corrections. The teacher admitted that his weakness lays in general communication with the dancers as a group. He felt that perhaps "he cannot reach them" because they were of a different generation (Personal interview 13 Nov 2014). Specifically in the first week, despite what I perceived as attempts by the teacher to use metaphors, similes or references to popular culture, the students did not smile or respond to his questions or his talks about the technical or artistic aspects of their performance. Their faces remained what I recorded as "blank" or "stone-faced." For example, in November the teacher stated, "Some of you will have to do this 10, some 100 and some 1000 times, I don't want you to feel hopeless" (Table 9. S1 Images, p. 105). He gave a light smile at his remark and this made me smile because I thought it was a nice way to tell the students to keep trying. However, my notes continue to reveal "...the boys stayed totally stone faced" (11 Nov 2014). The teacher appeared to be saying that the students may not achieve the correction right away,

but they will in time. However, the message may or may not have been received by the students.

Another illustration was a statement in January, in which he told the dancers that some would “get it right away, some will take more time” but that he did not believe that no one would achieve this correction (13 Jan 2015) (Table 9. S1 Images, p. 105). In this instance it was also hard to see how the students interpreted these words because they did not respond. Another example of miscommunication, or perhaps missed communication on the part of the students, was the teacher’s use of an image regarding maintaining the length of the spine and their freedom of movement as they become tired later in the class. He stated, “you are like shrimp, the more you cook the more you curl” (12 Nov 2014) (Table 9. S1 Images, p. 105). At the time, that fitting image made me smile, but it elicited the same non-responsiveness from the dancers.



Table 9. S1 Images, Kinesthetic Advice, Encouragement, and Verbal Cues for Concepts.

	<b>November 2014</b>	<b>January 2015</b>	<b>June 2015</b>
<b>Images, Kinesthetic Advice and Kinesthetic Cues</b>	<p>“You are like shrimp, the more you cook the more you curl.”</p> <p>“<i>Écarté</i> is a <i>glorious</i> position.”</p> <p>“You need to be able to sing the phone book. That is <i>ronds de jambes</i>.”</p> <p>“Almost fall forward.”</p> <p>“It is not because I tell you to turn your head, feel it in your whole body.”</p> <p>Hands on his body to show, lifting and turning.</p>	<p>More precise timing: “you’re stirring something, like boring plain porridge, let’s add something.”</p> <p>“If you have a stronger base you will not waste energy trying to stand.”</p> <p>“I told you I have a megaphone, I can bring it if you don’t hear me.”</p> <p>“Do it with me, I have done my dancing.”</p> <p>Range of different turn out: “You all have different limits here.”</p> <p>Clapping for musicality.</p>	<p>“Stretch up as you <i>plié</i>.”</p> <p>“You have medals on your chest. Present them proudly.”</p> <p>“<i>Adage</i> is like a sentence.”</p> <p>Double turn in second: “you are more compact but getting taller.”</p> <p>Using hands to indicate lift of body.</p> <p>Teacher hopping on balls of feet to indicate weight placement.</p>
<b>Encouragement</b>	<p>“Some of you will have to do this 10, some 100 and some 1000 times, I don’t want you to feel hopeless.”</p> <p>In response to mistakes in choreography: “Good for you. You didn’t follow anyone.”</p> <p>It is obvious you are trying.</p>	<p>“Some will get it right away, some will take more time…”</p> <p>“It is so beautiful when you are moving together, when you are moving together your mistakes are not so obvious.”</p> <p>The teacher told an injured student to mark jumps.</p>	<p>“Better, at least I saw intention.”</p> <p>“Is something wrong? You will tell me later, after class.”</p> <p>“Good. Getting better.”</p>
<b>Verbal Cues</b>	<p>“Shift square over leg.”</p> <p>“Hip over <i>demi-pointe</i>.”</p> <p>“Too much tension.”</p>	<p>“You are locking between your shoulder blades.”</p> <p>“What creates the dynamic of your <i>épaulement</i>?”</p> <p>Regarding standing to begin the exercise: “How much taller are you getting?”</p>	<p>“How do you move into that <i>plié</i>?”</p> <p>“Lift from the top of your head.”</p> <p>“Where is your artistry?”</p>

As previously mentioned, the student responses to the teacher's attempts at verbal communication were impossible for me to interpret because the dancers gave him no verbal feedback, their facial expressions did not change, and they did not nod or give any physical indication that they had heard him. For example, my November field notes state:

At one point in the centre he asked them, "Was that a hard exercise?" and they all stared blankly. He said, "Can you not say something!?" This was eye opening for me because he wants them to have a voice, but they seem terrified to talk. (11 Nov 2014)

However, some of the miscommunication between the teacher and the students, or the lack of willingness to respond to the teacher's questions, may be a result of the teacher's accent. As one student stated, "Sometimes the broken English is hilarious in this class, but it means you have to translate it from Russian-English to Canadian-English" (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015). Despite the language barrier, four dancers out of seven stated that verbal corrections were among the most effective modes of correction in this class (Table 8. S1 Survey #2, p. 99).

Although the students often gave no indication whether they understood the images, the teacher often attempted to incorporate varying ideas and references. One day the teacher employed a teaching strategy in which he gave relevant verbal and kinesthetic cues to improve the *ronds de jambes à terre* with *port de bras*. He began by explaining that he was thinking of the phrase from *American Idol* in which they say, you have to be able to sing the phone book (Table 9. S1 Images, p. 105). The students remained still and silent, so the teacher turned to me and asked if I knew this phrase. I replied that I did, and I repeated it for the students thinking perhaps this would help them understand. The teacher continued that he felt this way about their *ronds de jambes*. He stated because this is their daily routine, they need to make it interesting. Then he guided them with his

upper body through the musicality and feeling of the *port de bras* and *ronds de jambes*. Although he was still seated in his chair, the students moved with him. They had not moved when he was explaining verbally, but responded to the kinesthetic dialogue immediately. In the second interview we reminisced about the unsuccessfulness of this verbal interaction. The teacher stated, “No reaction, maybe they don’t understand, what is it, how you can move *port de bras*, do simple movement of your arm and at the same time it is already part of dancing” (20 Jan 2105).

In addition to these types of misunderstood verbal cues, some corrections that I perceived as encouraging, were not interpreted that way by the students. For example, in June a student received what I recorded as positive feedback. There was a student who was trying to stand with his feet at 180 degrees turned out in fifth position. The teacher told him to use less turn out so that he could maintain his alignment on one leg. A few exercises later the student was still attempting the flat fifth position. The teacher began correcting him but stopped and told him that it was good that he was attempting to stand in that fifth, despite his lack of strength making it difficult. When the student was indeed unsuccessful in holding the turn out during the exercise the teacher paid him individual attention after the exercise and had him attempt a *retiré* position and balance using less turn out. The student refused to follow the instruction and the teacher told him that he would not be able to hold the position that way. However, the student proceeded to hold the balance successfully and the teacher said, “Not bad” (3 June 2015).

In reference to situations like these, the same student stated, “There’s one correction that I receive where my teacher says that I will not be able to do it, or it is extremely hard to fix. I find this discouraging and now it’s hard to work on that correction” (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015). During this instance, I was observing the

teacher telling the student the truth about his technique. However, the student's negative response to the teacher's attempted communication confirms the teacher's self-assessment that he is not always able to reach the students.

When giving verbal corrections in November and January, the teacher was repetitive and often spoke to the same students about the same corrections multiple times in a short amount of time. The dancers received an individual correction multiple times and they often received a simple "no" over and over as they attempted the movement. Sometimes he would say something more encouraging like "closer" or "I see the intention," more rarely he would say "better." During my observation, I never heard him say anything to the effect that the student had actually achieved the correction, even if to my own eye they had accomplished it or come fairly close.

In June, the teacher was more encouraging in general. For example, after a *pirouette* exercise he stated, "Better, at least I saw the intention" (3 June 2015) (Table 9. S1 Images, p. 105). When asked on survey #2 if they were happy dancing in this class, six students replied "yes" and one student replied "sometimes" (Table 10. Survey #2, p. 109). In explanation of their answers, one student added, "I'm always happy because ballet is simply what I love to do. The hardest thing is to get rid of frustrations and grow from them" (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015). Another student stated, "Most of the time I am, but sometimes I get frustrated with certain things, like not being able to do certain things or fix a correction" (S1 Survey #2, 4 June 2015). The students did not express frustration with the teaching strategies, they expressed frustration with what they perceived as their own inability to achieve the corrections or improve their technique.

Table 10. S1 Survey #2, June 2015.

Responses	1) Are you comfortable when you are being given an individual correction in this class?	2) Have you asked for ballet coaching to grasp a concept, or work on corrections, from this class?	3) Are you happy when you are dancing in this class?	6) Feel free to add thoughts on the back of the paper.
Yes	5	6	6	0
No	0	0	0	0
Sometimes	1	0	1	0
Other	0	1	0	0
No Response	1	0	0	5
Written Response	2	6	3	2
Total Participants	6	7	7	2

Note: The responses supplied on questions one to three were, “yes,” “no” and “sometimes.” Written responses were described to participants as optional. All seven participants wrote a response to at least one question.

### Kinesthetic Dialogue

As discussed above, the teacher employed tactile corrections, various teaching strategies such as the use of the mirror for self-correction, as well as verbal cues, corrections and images to facilitate learning. The final category of communication pertaining to the student-teacher relationship was kinesthetic dialogue. Kinesthetic dialogue was evident in each class as an effective strategy in the transmission of embodied knowledge from teacher to student. This observation is based on the amount of engagement that the students displayed during these physically based teaching moments and the immediate physical change to their performance. Despite the teacher’s self-assessment regarding his group communication, there were many instances when the dancers, as a group, understood the teacher’s message. This was often the result of kinesthetic dialogue created by the teacher’s demonstration and the students’ subsequent

bodily imitation or reaction. The kinesthetic dialogue was often accompanied by verbal cues. However, the dimension of kinesthetic collaboration is the factor that facilitated both the achievement of the desired aesthetic in the moment and the potential for the students' application of the information in future classes. Table 11 on p.111 consists of three examples from each visit, which illustrate kinesthetic communication (non-verbal communication from the teacher), kinesthetic dialogue (a physical response from the student) and kinesthetic collaboration (a change in the way the student is performing the movement).

Table 11. S1 Examples of Kinesthetic Dialogue Resulting in Kinesthetic Collaboration.<sup>31</sup>

Observation Date	Teacher's Kinesthetic Communication	Student's Kinesthetic Response	Kinesthetic Collaboration
November 11	Danced <i>pliés</i> with <i>port de bras</i> facing Juk at the <i>barre</i>	Adapted musicality to match teacher	Closer to achieving the teacher's desired musicality and aesthetic of <i>port de bras</i>
November 11	Demonstrated <i>épaulement</i> from the chair. "Without turning the head the <i>épaulement</i> is not complete"	In imitation, the students stood taller and turned their heads	Some students were closer to achieving the teacher's desired aesthetic for the position
November 12	Teacher demonstrated the openness of the shoulders with presence for Jonathan	Jonathan mirrored the physicality	Jonathan looked like he was sensing the physicality of the position
January 13	Teacher danced <i>ronds de jambes en l'air</i> with Jeff, switched to his hand to indicate sharper movement, patted his own abdominals to indicate postural change	Jeff was attentive and mirrored the teacher's movements	Jeff took the musicality and quality of the teacher, as well as adjusting his posture
January 13	After taking time to have them stand in precise lines, the teacher stood to show them <i>épaulé</i> .	All emulated the teacher	They retained some of the quality while they danced the exercise
January 14	Teacher demonstrated the co-ordination of the <i>port de bras</i> in the <i>glissade</i> , <i>assemblé</i>	Some marked and some watched	A few got "closer" to the correct co-ordination
June 2	Connor finished an <i>allegro</i> and was walking away, the teacher gestured to his waist	Connor nodded, imitated the gesture and adjusted his posture to show understanding	Acceptance of the correction for next attempt at the exercise
June 3	The teacher had a special kinesthetic connection with Jeff. In this instance, he danced silently with Jeff to modify the <i>port de bras</i> in <i>ronds de jambe</i>	Jeff mirrored the teacher's movements and due to the lack of music (performance) was able to nod	The other side was closer to the teacher's desired aesthetic
June 4	Demonstrated the spiral feeling in the body from second position to <i>arabesque</i> . Danced the arms and indicated the ribcage while seated.	Dancers tried the <i>pirouette</i> with his corrections.	Some dancers got closer to the indicated ideal

<sup>31</sup> Note: Three examples were chosen from each visit.

The participants' focus and the quiet formal atmosphere facilitated both physical improvement in the dancers as well as instances of kinesthetic dialogue that engaged me to the point where I was unaware of anything other than the experience I was having at that moment. For example, many times the teacher gave a general correction for the dancers to turn their heads/faces in *épaulement*. These moments, when the teacher sat up on the edge of his chair and demonstrated the feeling of the body and turn of the head were moments in which the class was transformed by their kinesthetic response to the demonstration. I was subsequently fully engaged in the student-teacher communication. Before a *grands battements* exercise in the centre, the teacher demonstrated the *épaulement* feeling and they all lifted and responded to imitate him. He advised, "It is not because I tell you to turn your head, feel it in your whole body" (11 Nov 2014). He continued to explain that sometimes they would have to stand on stage without moving and they would need to have this type of presence (Table 9. S1 Images, p. 105). With reference to the kinesthetic response of the dancers to the use of *épaulement* I wrote, "Suddenly you see the classical princes in perfect uniform, in perfect lines, in all their glory and majesty and tradition" (11 Nov 2014).

Another example of my total engagement in a teaching moment took place on the day that the dancers had guests in the audience, while they performed class on stage. The teacher wanted to elicit an uninterrupted flowing quality in their *adage* exercise in the centre that he felt was missing as a group. He was sitting in a chair while he began the teaching moment by telling the dancers that *adage* is like a sentence with no full stops (Table 9. S1 Images, p. 105). He suggested, "maybe there is a comma," and asked them "can you at least breathe at the beginning of the new sentence?" (3 June 2015) The teacher danced the upper body from his chair, while the students danced the *adage* with



him in silence. He both told them, and showed them, where to breathe and how to move through the positions with the use of his *port de bras* and breath. The framework of choreography allowed the kinesthetic dialogue to be maintained with the entire group for the duration of the exercise, due to all of the participants focusing on the execution of the same phrase of movement in response to the teacher's physical gestures. The teacher communicated the feeling and quality that he wanted by using his arms and upper body and very little verbal cueing other than exaggerated breath and a few words.

In contrast, on another day the students had a collective negative kinesthetic reaction to a subtle verbal cue that may or may not have been accompanied by a facial expression while they were performing an *adage* exercise in the centre. Due to my position beside the teacher, I could not see the expression on his face when he made a subtle unimpressed sound. This was one of the only times within the research period that the class as a whole became unsure while they were dancing. They continued to dance after the teacher's reaction had unsettled them, but they faltered and became both unmusical and out of sync with one another. The teacher stopped the exercise asking them what had happened and, as usual, he did not receive any verbal response. This instance is relevant because my own parallel experience prompted the inception of this research. The teacher's subtle bodily communication was felt by all of the dancers, even if the teacher was not intentionally influencing the current exercise. It seemed that he had not meant to stop them from completing the *adage* or change their current performance; rather he likely had feedback that would have been given once they had completed the exercise.

The teacher's use of demonstration during exercises such as *plié* and *ronds de jambe* created a constant presence of kinesthetic dialogue throughout the observation

period. Primarily the teacher was trying to communicate musicality and quality with his own demonstration. He often danced the *plié* exercise in front of one dancer at the *barre* to emphasize the musicality and his desired use of both *plié* and *port de bras*. In one example, the kinesthetic dialogue consisted of the student following the teacher's *port de bras* and adopting his illustration of the timing of the *allongé*.<sup>32</sup> *Allongé* in the Vaganova system, and in this class, refers to the turn of the head and rotation of the palm down before moving the arm(s) from second position down to preparatory. The teacher's use of kinesthetic dialogue escalated when the class danced on stage because the class could not necessarily hear him as well over the music. Additionally, they had to see him moving without the aid of the mirror. Therefore, his kinesthetic cues became larger, he clapped more often to indicate musicality, and he indicated postural correction using his hands on his own body. Through kinesthetic dialogue the dancers learned a specific feeling and/or musicality that the teacher wanted to impart that was missing from their previous performance. The result of this kinesthetic dialogue was a kinesthetic collaboration. This collaboration created a new way of performing for the student. Survey results show that four students stated demonstration was one of the most effective modes of correction and none of the students thought it was the least effective (Table 8. Survey #2, p. 99).

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<sup>32</sup> Although Vaganova did not use the term *allongé* in her book, she does describe the movement of the hand from second to preparatory position saying, "open the hands, taking a deep, quiet, but not exaggerated breath (without lifting the shoulders), turn the hands palms down, and as you exhale, bring them smoothly down..." (Vaganova 47) In other codified systems of ballet the term may refer to the extension of the leg *en fondu* in *arabesque*.

## Teacher Insights as Discussed in Interviews

Despite us not having a conversation about interviews when I first met him, the teacher was willing to be interviewed as this expectation of his participation in the research had been explained in the informed consent form. The teacher approached me after the third class to ask if I had any questions. We then arranged to meet after class the following day. The first interview was held just outside the studio in a common area of the school. We sat side by side on a couch and I immediately decided that I needed to participate in this conversation without being anxious about recording or memorizing the exact words of the discussion. In contrast, the atmosphere for the second interview was more formal. The teacher was on lunch break when I arrived at the school. After waiting in the common area of the school until the meeting time, I went up to the office in which I had first been introduced to the teacher. Surprisingly, we left the office and I followed him down three flights of stairs to a small music room in the basement. The room was bare aside from a piano and two benches. The two piano benches enabled us to sit facing one another. The teacher asked if I had to “write something?” This question made transparent the fact that I would have to record the information and it put me at ease with implementing the formality of audio-recording the conversation. The material from the two interviews was analyzed and reported according to topic, rather than framed as two separate conversations. The topics addressed include: the teacher’s dance training and dance career, teachers who have influenced his pedagogy, and the transition from the Russian school to his current situation. These topics reveal his expectations of both the class atmosphere and the students themselves, as well as revealing the teacher’s self-assessment of his pedagogical strengths and weaknesses.

## Shaping Pedagogical Practices

The teacher began the conversation about his dance training with a statement that would need no further explanation when relayed to anyone familiar with traditional Russian professional ballet training systems or Russian physical culture. He said, “my training, it’s the usual training for a Russian” (Personal interview 20 June 2015). He explained that at ten years of age, he attended a state ballet school and trained there for eight years. He then progressed naturally to the affiliated company. He explained that although he was a guest artist with other companies, he danced with only two ballet companies during his 27-year career. He placed an emphasis on his long career. He was quietly proud of his career as a principal dancer, and discussed the respect that he felt from his colleagues in the company when he taught them ballet classes. He highlighted how he had been unable to begin teaching at a school prior to his retirement from the stage due to travelling during the last five to seven years that he was dancing.

I was interested in how he had become the teacher that I observed over the last year. I asked him if, upon reflection, he could see a teacher from his own training who may have influenced his teaching, even if he had been unaware of this at the time. At first, he could not remember any teachers at the state school standing out as different to him as a student. He remembered the atmosphere and expectations of the school as a whole. When I inquired whether different teachers had different teaching strategies he stated, “maybe a little bit, but demand and discipline was everybody, everybody was the same... it’s not just respect, some percentage of even fear or something...you could not allow yourself to come into class without knowing the class...” (Personal interview 20 June 2015). The teacher later recalled one teacher at the school that stood out. Although, she was not his teacher, he remembers being afraid of her at the time. He explained:

I found more difference in the company, but at school, I don't remember it. I clearly remember, for example, my wife, she is working here, she had a teacher from St. Petersburg and for me she was so strict I just, yeah, I was scared of her, but [my wife] said that she is very kind actually in class and with the girls ... I think it's a talent to build this atmosphere when students are not afraid of you, but respect so much, and respect not just you, but the work you are doing in class, doing properly everything, I mean not in terms of technique, but in terms of respecting the process. (Personal interview 20 June 2015)

One of the first statements that the teacher made to me in our first interview was related to his wish to expand his pedagogy. He said that he teaches the way he was taught and he sometimes wishes he could learn another way (13 Nov 2014). As an observer, I noticed that the respect and discipline that he fosters in his own classes seems reflective of the atmosphere he described in his early training in Russia.

The teacher feels that his teaching career truly began in 2002. After completing the S1 School's Teacher Training Program (TTP), he was hired part-time and after one year of teaching became a member of the full time faculty. As former professional dancers with extensive experience, he and his wife were able to complete the TTP in one year. When asked about the transition to the new school and new training system, he explained how he and his wife had been ready for a change and had come to the school with open minds. He stated:

...we weren't like overwhelmed with new things and we were ready to explore, and maybe we were open because we just came here and decided that if you came in a school then it's a school...it was good experience, we learned English more and then we got in the system. So we didn't push our training in this system, but...we are trying to meld it. And curriculum here actually based on Vaganova system. (Personal interview 20 June 2015)

He stated that his time as a student teacher at the S1 school was his "best time" to see different teachers. He was exposed to multiple teachers and their differing strategies. He stated, "you take class from somebody and you see good things, you see something needs

to be improved and something you disagree with, but I think it's internal" (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015). I interpreted that to mean that he felt comfortable adopting some teaching practices and intuitively rejecting strategies with which he disagreed.

The cultural change facilitated a melding of his Russian training with a new system. I was curious if his previous perspectives on training may have shifted when arriving at the present school. The teacher explained that he and his wife had some teacher training with a famous Russian teacher whose ideas were similar to the training he encountered at the S1 school and that there were aspects of the Russian teacher's class that he admired. He explained that Russian pre-professional ballet training is similar throughout the nation. However, in reference to his current country he stated, "here there is such a diversity of training, such bad training and better training and good training, with students coming to university from all different backgrounds. In Russia it's quite similar training, you don't see so much difference... (20 Jan 2015). He stated that the teacher he admired in Russia had the advantage of having similarly trained students, which is comparable to the S1 school environment as a result of both the students long-term training, as well as the audition process that selects physically capable and aesthetically pleasing students for the school. He admired the teacher's ability to create a class in which the students looked similar to one another. He explained, " they look like they had one teacher, height of arms the same, turn of head the same, musicality ... the same, her ability, her authority, her respect...and the corrections she gave, so clear, and so precise, and so helpful" (20 Jan 2015). In observing the S1 teacher's individual corrections and hearing the students' positive reactions to his work, it seems that the Russian teacher's propensity for effective individual correction influenced his pedagogy positively.

Within his teaching, the expectations and atmosphere of the teacher's own dance training are evident. The teacher observed how he and his wife teach a hybrid of the Russian style/syllabus in which they were trained with the new style/syllabus in which they train their students. He explained how he has developed his own methods in this school because of the differences in approaches to teaching that he has witnessed since his arrival, as well as differences in the culture and subsequently the students themselves.

He explained:

There are many, many things that Russians [are] teaching very differently than here, not just in terms of training and technique, but in terms of approach to training, in terms of connections between students... culturally, and methodically, and technically it's different and we are teaching differently than, for example, than in Russia they are teaching now. But at the same time, I think we are teaching a bit differently from people here, it's still our background and our training. (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015)

The teacher offered a technical example of difference between the training systems.

He said, "For example, in *port de bras*... it's more attack and energy, difficult to get from these students in general, they are so, I don't know..."(20 Jan 2015). He feels that one of his responsibilities, as a teacher is to teach them how to approach their work with attack and demonstrate the energy and intention they are putting into the movement. For example, in one observation class after watching the *battements jetés* at the *barre*, the teacher asked the students if they had eaten lunch that day? They were all still and did not respond, so he followed by asking, "where is the energy?" which explained what had prompted his question (Field notes 13 Jan 2015). He encouraged them to perform the exercise on the other side with more attack and dynamics.

## Current Pedagogical Choices and Future Professional Development

When asked to describe areas of his teaching that are still evolving, the teacher explained that he wanted to learn better communication skills when addressing the dancers as a group. He wanted to better “capture their attention” (13 Nov 2015). He explained how his teaching experience in the company was different from what he was doing at the S1 school and suggested that teaching in the company setting did not prepare him for teaching younger students (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015). The teacher stated:

I started actually teaching at our company...I did just ballet classes and gave training class and gave some rehearsals, but it's very different from what I am doing here. Maybe that's why... I'm still struggling with this because in the company I was principal dancer...all my colleagues, they are all my friends, so it's a different connection...let's say my position in ranking and I was principal dancer there and it's also building this respect...Even if you are friends in terms of dancing it's a lot of respect. It's connections in the class and in rehearsal, it depends on it a lot, respecting you as a dancer, respecting you as a teacher... (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015)

He explained how he would like to build a respectful relationship with the dancers he teaches now. He recalled the hierarchical system in which he was trained, and he realized that this is how he feels about his relationship to his current students; he desires this atmosphere. However, there was a part of him that acknowledged that they need support.

He explained:

...its not that ...I want to be their friend, but it is kind of like inclining to this hoping that, or not hoping, but somehow... that I have this level of respect as well, ah, they are kids and I just get crazy about this. I have to remind myself that they are kids and that they need a push, and they need to be reminded that they are students and there is a distance between us and maybe it's from my training because it's between the teacher and the students there is a huge, huge gap in terms of respect and everything, here it's not as much, so it's about my training. (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015)

This conversation about distance between student and teacher and building respect contextualized the atmosphere of the observed classes. It explained the dancers'



focused and positive attitude toward silent work. It addressed the impression I had of the presence of fear, which could be interpreted as the students' adherence to the demand for distance and respect. I began to feel that the element of fear was actually reverence. Obviously, based on their personalities each dancer felt differently about their relationship to, and with, the teacher. However in observing classes, there were two students (Ken and Christophe) who showed obvious confidence in their approach to the work and the development of their stage presence.

The teacher acknowledged the individuality of the students. However he admitted that he is unsure how to adjust his teaching to individual needs. He stated:

I'd like to improve my understanding of students... they are all different of course, I understand they are all different, but at the same time you have a class of eight to ten students you cannot, it's better for them to adjust rather than for me. Of course you are trying to be different with different students, somebody you can push more and somebody are just a little closed and not go anywhere, so this is one thing, I'd like to learn how to motivate them better. (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015)

The teacher recalled that in all his years teaching at the school he had only one student who he felt had real "talent" (13 Nov 2015). He explained that this student was intellectual in his approach and he thought about how to embody the corrections between classes. He would like to be able to motivate all students to work this way. I interpreted his comments, and reference to talent, to suggest that he feels that this propensity toward personal motivation and an intellectual approach to physicality is a natural ability that cannot necessarily be elicited from all students.

Within a regimented schedule, including teaching two technique classes and an additional *allegro* class daily, plus extra rehearsals for shows, I asked the teacher how he finds inspiration for the changes that would allow his teaching to evolve? The teacher replied, "I think I am constantly changing, I don't think that I have found my way...to be

honest my teaching is based on what I was taught, what I was taught at school, what I learned during my dancing, what I learned here, and I am still look for something. I don't know, I feel like I didn't find it yet..." (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015). As he spoke about what he might apply in his teaching, he did not feel that there was one particular teacher that he "would like to become" and he suggested that he might continue to take various elements from different teachers. He explained that he thought there was always room for improvement and he was always looking for something good to use. One of his foundational teaching beliefs was the need for focus and hard work facilitated by a quiet environment. He strongly disagreed with the teaching strategy that he had observed prior to our meeting, which motivates students with excited, loud vocal prompting. He stated:

...I don't really like this experience, maybe because during my training it wasn't like that, you see the teacher running around room, screaming, jumping, sweating, making them work and lift their energy, and as a dancer we had teachers and they did not do this, but maybe it's just practice now, today's practice... They are counting, ONE, TWO with this enthusiastic voice, maybe it's today's practice and it helps the dancers, but I have always preferred quiet atmosphere, just a working atmosphere. (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015)

He embodied this belief in his quiet presence, and the way that he never raised his voice above the music or in frustration. Kinesthetic dialogue often occurred in silence due to his wish for focused work and quiet communication.

Despite his strongly held beliefs and ingrained teaching habits, when I commented that he had been quite patient with one of the students during a certain situation, he replied, "maybe I am too patient, and but I am still learning..." (20 June 2015). It was the presence of this open-minded attitude, as well as his gracious participation in a project he knew nothing about, that compelled me to question my

initial negative response to his teaching style and attempt to understand how he developed his pedagogy.

### Student Perspectives Resulting from Focus Groups

The students' voices play a central role in the contextualization of the student-teacher relationship. As a feminist teacher studying a culture that traditionally silences the student, these data were central to my project. The dancers' embodiment of the student-teacher relationship was central to the exploration of kinesthetic dialogue. During our conversations, the students were always willing to participate and they gave thoughtful and insightful answers. They supported one another by nodding and making sounds of agreement. The students responded positively and supportively if a fellow student appeared unsure about his statement. It seemed to be a caring and supportive atmosphere among the group and this facilitated their participation in the conversations. When I was within hearing distance, they spoke gently and kindly to one another both in the studio and in the hallways.

The student involvement in the project was based on the dancers' schedule. The time allotted for focus groups relied solely on the understanding and co-operation of the teacher. For the first focus group the administrator suggested that the teacher schedule twenty minutes of his *allegro* class for the conversation. At first I felt uncomfortable taking class time. However, as I began to understand the schedule, I realized that would be the only way to have time with the dancers in a group. The administrator began the process of scheduling the first focus group in November 2014, and she succeeded in scheduling it on December 15, 2014. I suggested that if the dancers were too busy with *Nutcracker* rehearsals that I could wait until January 2015. She told me to take the

opportunity because otherwise I might not see them until June 2015 and ultimately she was correct.

The first meeting occurred one month after my initial weeklong visit and it was on a day when I was not at the school for an observation class. I felt this timing gave the event a more formal tone than the two subsequent meetings, as I was dropping into their daily schedule with no warning and they had no time to adapt to my presence. My initial introductory comments during the conversation were more strained because we had no immediate shared experience to discuss. Despite this sudden change in their schedule, the dancers were warm and forthcoming with their responses. The other two focus group conversations took place after I had watched their class, which made the conversations feel more natural. However, based on their participation, the length of their answers and the tone of their voices, the dancers seemed comfortable. One dancer did not participate vocally in any of the conversations, but he did nod or smile in agreement, and during the last session he asked a question regarding the survey. This voluntary involvement demonstrated that he did not object to participating in the research. The teacher had previously informed me that this particular student was “shy.”

The focus group data were reported based on topics rather than as separate conversations that unfolded during each of the three visits. There were two main themes that emerged regarding the pedagogy. The first theme addressed external expectations and these data included how the students perceive the teacher’s pedagogy, such as his expectations and strategies, as well as their experience being observed by unexpected guests. The second theme examined the students’ individual approaches to technique within the structure of the ballet class. This information included their personal strategies

for learning, such as how they apply corrections daily as well as how they attempted to meet the expectations of the environment.

Prior to the first focus group the dancers were ready to begin *allegro* class and had taken off their warm up wear. The teacher came to the studio and asked how long I needed to speak with the dancers. He agreed to return in 20 minutes. Once he left, I closed the door and told the dancers that they could get dressed. I gave the dancers strawberry candy canes to eat. Upon transcribing the focus group, I discovered that the candy canes added a dimension to the conversation. The students crunched, rustled paper and spoke with the candy in their mouths. Their obvious enjoyment humanized the digitized voices, realizing my experience of sitting on the studio floor talking to the dancers.

Close to the end of this session, I gave the students the first multiple-choice survey. Some decided to volunteer written explanations for their choices. As they wrote they began to pull off their warm up clothes in anticipation of the teacher's arrival. I was surprised by this group action. At exactly the 20-minute mark the teacher arrived, the dancers stood, thanked me and put their clothes away in the cubbies. By the time I had said hello to the teacher, the dancers were standing silently, dressed in uniform, in straight lines, ready to begin class. I had yet to gather all of my things from the front of the room, as well as my coat and boots from the cubbies. The silence of the studio was broken by my movements as the dancers stood in silent lines. By the time I exited, as quickly and quietly as possible, the class had begun the first exercise behind me. I had never before experienced this hyper-awareness of scheduling or the group motivation to be ready for the teacher. However, one of the teacher's themes on all three visits was the

students' preparedness to begin before he said the words "ready and" (Table 7. General Themes, p. 97).

The second and third focus groups took place on consecutive days in June and immediately followed the classes that I had observed. As previously mentioned, the first of the two June conversations was very animated due to unexpected guests having observed the class. During transcription, I could not always identify the speakers because they were excited and they often spoke simultaneously. This was one of the most memorable incidents at the S1 school due to the students' excitement, animated responses, genuine reactions and unrestrained emotion. However as previously discussed, the following day I unconsciously changed the atmosphere as I sat on a chair in order to be able to see their faces. This made the conversation more formal; however, it also facilitated thoughtful responses, which are reported in the following sections.

### External Expectations

The dancers dealt daily with meeting external expectations placed on them by the school, by their teachers and ultimately by the form of dance that they were practicing. Ballet has an ideal aesthetic that their daily class was designed to help them achieve. Their teacher had expectations of them in technique class. I asked the students how they knew what those expectations were when they first began their relationship with the teacher. One student<sup>33</sup> explained that they learned what the teacher expected as they took the class. He had not specifically laid out his expectations in a verbal conversation. Mac explained that he thought the teacher wanted them to "stay at least on this level, and

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<sup>33</sup> In this case the student's voice was unrecognizable on the audio-recording.

sometimes kind of peak and then go from there, so that [they] get a continuously good development.” Connor added the following:

He also says like, he expects us to remember everything from the previous day and just kind of stay in your body and hold onto everything. He is not going to keep reminding us to go back and fix that, it’s our choice, so we have to remember, it’s giving us more responsibility, I think it just comes with the older we go in the school... just from other years it’s more like we have to remember. (Focus group 15 Dec 2014)

Multiple dancers felt that the teacher targeted their weaknesses and helped them to improve technically by reminding them what to work on, while still expecting them to remember corrections. They accepted that it was their responsibility to improve themselves and they understood that the teacher was giving them strategies regarding how to work effectively. Mac explained, “Getting ways... to get things done, like not just ballet, you could implement this technique in academics, in learning how to study, or whatever...I think it goes back to deeper than just learning exercises and corrections” (Focus group 15 Dec 2014). Ken added that he felt that the teacher was trying to get them to be independent and self-aware.

The students brought up the notion of the teacher working to make them autonomous. This was an insightful interpretation of the teacher’s pedagogy considering that the teacher did not specifically voice this objective, either to me in interviews, or to the students during the observed classes. They stated that upon graduation they would no longer have a teacher to help them develop their technique and they saw the teacher’s approach as a means of facilitating their autonomy. Ken stated:

So I think he wants us to develop that self-awareness and realize what’s going on with our own body, so we can keep ourselves in check instead of graduating and just slowly declining in our technique. I think he wants us to graduate and be able to develop our own technique by ourselves. (Focus group 15 Dec 2015)

Jag agreed with this statement adding that he thought that was what the teacher meant by his comment, “You did not do your homework today” (15 Dec 2014). He said this while performing a vocal and facial imitation of his teacher. Jag interpreted this comment from the teacher as referring to the dancers maintaining their technique outside of a company warm up class and rehearsal schedule. He suggested that when they are dancing in the company setting that they will remember corrections that they are given with more ease after this type of training at the school (15 Dec 2014). Connor added,

It is like when you are at your school, ballet class is to help you improve your technique and help you improve yourself as a dancer. But when you are in a company, ballet class is to help you warm up for the day ahead or the day of rehearsals. So you want to warm up in the right way, and be able to do it in your mind, and be completely self-aware and really know your body inside and out. (15 Dec 2014)

As Connor explained above, the students agreed that they perceived technique class as an opportunity to better their self-awareness and learn to correct themselves in preparation for their future careers.

The students acknowledged the pressure of external expectations and by comparison they noticed a difference in how they felt when those expectations were removed. Ken explained, “I noticed that when we were doing Spring Showcase, all our warm up classes, it was a lot easier because you were dancing more for yourself and not as much for him.” Jonathan added, “And when you do it for yourself it is a lot easier compared to when he is like telling you, then you are like trying to think about it” (Focus group 15 Dec 2014). These students were self-motivated and the added external pressure was something that they had learned to deal with. For example, when the school’s director and company’s choreographer attended class unexpectedly, Christophe explained:



I think unconsciously you are tense not knowing, and a huge part of ballet especially with [the teacher] is you don't want to tense, you want to relax into the movement, so it's always kind of stressful. But it's good to kinda test how you can deal with your stress in front of two people like that, because I find that harder than going on stage when it's black, because two people you can see where they are looking and they are judging too. Everybody's judging. (Focus group 3 June 2015)

As Christophe stated, many of the dancers found it more difficult to be able to see the expressions on the faces of the audience. For example, Ken was affected by the choreographer making, what he perceived as disgusted faces.

Two of the dancers said that the director made them more nervous than the choreographer. Many dancers agreed that the choreographer being male made them less nervous when he watched them, compared with a female spectator. They felt he could relate to their struggles "somehow." In contrast, Jeff was not as nervous about the choreographer. He explained, "he's coming to teach us, you know, he's gonna work with us" (Focus group 3 June 2015). The anticipated student-teacher relationship with the choreographer allowed Jeff to relax. Jeff said that he always got nervous when the director watched, when she left the class for a period of time he felt relaxed, however, when she returned he was anxious again.

### Students' Individual Approaches to Technique

In addition to discussing external expectations, the students were asked to address their personal journeys including how they worked on their technique, as well as to express their feelings about this class. When I asked if this class was different than other classes they had taken in the past or present, Ken explained that it was more focused on strength building. He explained that other classes they had taken that year included performing the exercises and doing "some trick stuff," not really focusing on technique.

He explained, “this is more like technique, getting through the smaller things, and the basis [for] the strength to do the bigger things later on” (Focus group 15 Dec 2014). Other students added various thoughts including how the training in this class had given them technique to “fall back on when they are moving faster.” They explained how the class had given them strength, in addition to developing strong basic technique, which had become ingrained and supported them when performing “big tricks” (Focus group 15 Dec 2014).

As a means of addressing the atmosphere of the class, I asked the dancers about how difficult they found the concept of releasing tension when they had someone demanding that they release tension. I asked how hard it was to accomplish this correction in that atmosphere. The dancers felt that the tension came from their own internalizing of corrections and their drive to achieve the changes, rather than from an immediate external source. Mac explains:

...The atmosphere isn't really tense, I wouldn't say. The more corrections you get during the class, the more you'll think about it and stress out about it. In warm up class there are no corrections, so it is just chill straight through. But a way of releasing it [tension] is just realizing it yourself, like when you catch yourself being... (indicates tension)...once you catch yourself it's easier to release it because you are like, why am I stressing or tensing? It usually goes away. (Focus group 4 June 2015)

Ken agreed with Mac's statement. He said, “It's not really tension from the atmosphere, but it's more from trying to do things, and it just kinda gets tense after working” (Focus group 4 June 2015). The dancers felt that it was their own “over-thinking” or mental tension that produced physical tension in their dancing. For example, Connor explained: “I personally get tense when I try to over-think it, like when he gives me a correction ...I try so hard and it doesn't work and I over-think it and like get in my head too much and I just end up... everything just gets like locked in a way” (Focus group 4 June 2015). The

dancers did not recognize the teaching as a factor that affected their tension level. All comments suggested that they recognized their desire to achieve technical goals as a source of tension. They saw their inability to release the tension in their bodies as their own personal challenge.

The students had a variety of individual strategies for releasing the tension. Ken explained that his tension was mostly in his upper body and that he needed to become aware of the tension before he began an exercise, otherwise he had difficulty relaxing into the movement while he was dancing. Christophe found that tension built in his dancing if he was focused on individual body parts rather than the body as a whole. He stated, "...I find that we are tense because mentally we are/I'm tensed [physically], let's say I am having a bad day or he has said something that really shook me, I'll be tensed mentally and unconsciously you're tense physically as well" (Focus group 4 June 2015). Christophe suggested that thinking of the whole body elongating rather than focusing on one body part helped "with the stress" and helped him release into the movement. Connor agreed with the idea of approaching the body as a whole unit and added, "I'm just trying to get out of that over-thinking, but it's more just breathing and really just trying to work on that and trying to think of it in a simpler way, instead of thinking/wondering, 'how much work do I have to do to do that?' " (Focus group 4 June 2015) Jonathan had a similar tactic for simplifying his thinking and avoiding tension while performing. He stated:

Sometimes I find I get overwhelmed thinking about all the stuff that I am trying to fix all at once. So if you just take a step back and think about one thing you can fix here and then once that's good you can move on, and keep going like that instead of trying to fix everything all at once, it gets a little crazy sometimes. (Focus group 4 June 2015)

In addition to mentally focusing on one correction at a time, during the June visit, I noticed that the dancers were using tactile cues while they were dancing to remind themselves of corrections. For example, upon preparing to begin an exercise at the *barre*, Christophe ran the back of his hand down his tailbone, which I appeared to cue the neutral alignment of his pelvis. Jag tugged on his hair at the crown of his head, which appeared to remind him of his constant correction of “lengthening his spine.” Ken used the most intricate and constant self-correction during a few exercises at the *barre*. He explained the mental process that accompanied his physical cueing:

I actually do this one (hand to shoulder, elbow in line with shoulder) because my back gets tense, my whole body gets tense, so I go like this (puts hand on his shoulder) so I can relax here (indicates ribs under raised arm) and then align...then I put my hand back out (to second position), but then I'll put my hand on my hip (gestures to standing hip) because I sink into it, so I can kinda make sure that it's up. (Focus group 4 June 2015)

Mac explained that he did not think of his physical self-prompting on his own. He said that he was working in response to advice another teacher had given him outside in the hall that day. I had observed the other teacher watching him through a viewing window. He said that he assumed that other dancers were also working on advice from multiple teachers (Focus group 4 June 2015). Mac commented that the most effective strategy he employed in applying corrections was physicality. He explained, “...most of the time it works best if you actually do it. Some people, I am not one of those, some people can just hear it and visualize it in their head and then just do it” (15 Dec 2014).

The dancers emphasized improving their technique as a central goal of this class. Despite the technical emphasis in ballet class, when asked about the use of artistry, five students replied that they did feel that this class demanded artistry (Table 12, S1 Survey #1, p. 133). However, two students commented on the combination of artistry and

technique. One student wrote that he felt that he could only “sort of” apply artistry in ballet class “because you can’t bring artistry to movements that you do not have the right technique for yet” (4 June 2015). The other student stated plainly that this class did not demand artistry because “I feel [the teacher] wants it done one way” (4 June 2015). This remark reflects the teacher’s earlier comment that he strives to have the students appear as “one class” with the same training.

Table 12. S1 Survey #1, December 2014.

	1) During ballet class do you feel comfortable asking your teacher to explain further if you do not understand a correction or suggestion?	2) Do you think of your personal corrections between ballet classes?	3) Do you feel that your ballet classes demand artistry and performance quality in addition to technique?	4) When I observed in November, do you think that my presence in your class changed things in any way? If yes, can you suggest what you felt changed?
Responses				
Yes	5	6	4	1
No	1	0	1	5
Other	0	0	1	0
Written Responses	1	1	2	3
Total Participants	6	6	6	6

Note: The responses supplied on the total of four questions were “yes” or “no.” Written responses were not requested during this survey, the initiative came from the participants themselves. Four out of six participants wrote responses to at least one question.

### Discussion: Technical Development and Artistic Individuality

This discussion section begins by briefly exploring the comparison of technique and artistry. The pedagogy of the teacher is then discussed highlighting the use of the mirror in dance training as well as my reactions to his teaching strategies. Although the teacher verbally demanded artistry, he had a dual focus on developing technique while

demanding artistry from the dancers. One widely recognized defining factor in the debate about what constitutes dance is intention. The difference between moving one's arm, and executing a dance movement with one's arm, lies in the intention of the mover. As Anna Pakes states, "...if I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I raise my arm, I am left with intentions" (87). In S1 there are two categories of intentions that emerged. First, intentions can be related to artistry and second, intention can be seen in relation to improving technique. Choi and Kim explain that the aspect of artistic capital in addition to technical capital must be fostered in training to distinguish ballet from aesthetic sports (1). It is the dancer's intention behind the technical movement that adds individuality and artistry to the execution of the steps.

In the observed classes, there was a contrast in the demands from the teacher. He asked often for artistry while simultaneously insisting that the arms, heads and body positions looked the same for all dancers. As mentioned, one of the students commented that he did not feel that he used artistry because the teacher wanted the movements done one way and a second student suggested that artistry is reserved for steps in which the dancers are proficient. Despite these students questioning their conscious application of artistry to their technique class, as an observer, I witnessed moments of exquisite artistry among many hours of focused technical work. When I recognized or experienced a moment of artistic intention from a dancer, it drew my attention to that dancer as an individual person. I saw their personality and presence within the group. The teacher stated that he admired the Russian teacher from his past training for her ability to create a cohesive class and this raises the question of whether this goal allows for individual artistry, or does it subscribe to a more traditional ballet aesthetic and set gender roles?

## Pedagogical Choices

The use of the mirror is one teaching strategy that has been reported as being built into the class from the beginning of the observations sessions. This brief discussion includes recent research pertaining to the use of the mirror in dance training. In this study, students were asked to watch themselves in the mirror to use visual feedback while practicing individual corrections and performing exercises in the centre. Beginning in the November session and continuing into the June session, the classes on stage seemed to alter the class atmosphere. In November, I speculated that perhaps being out of the school felt different for the students, perhaps the performative nature of the theatre put more pressure on them to produce the desired results, or maybe they felt more professional on stage and that made them approach the work differently than in the studio. At the time of observation, I did not know what they were thinking or feeling about being on stage for their class. In the final focus group, seven months after the initial observation class onstage, one of the dancers explained what it was about being in that location that altered their performance. He said that they felt “stressed” about not having the mirror in order to apply corrections (Focus group 3 June 2015).

During her presentation at the IADMS<sup>34</sup> conference, “The Science of Motor Learning: Creating a Model For Dance Training” (2015), Donna Krasnow stated that a sudden change from using a mirror for constant visual feedback and skill acquisition, to suddenly having no mirror is “traumatic” for the dancer (Krasnow 2015). Krasnow stated four points regarding the use of the mirror. She explained that use of the mirror could create dependency for the students. She noted that seeing two-dimensional images in the mirror distorts dancers’ proprioception. The mirror limits the development of the

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<sup>34</sup> International Association for Dance Medicine and Science

students' highest kinesthetic sense and finally, the mirror doesn't allow the development of the dancers' peripheral vision due to their focus being externally directed (Krasnow 2015). All of these aspects associated with consistent use of the mirror potentially added to the dancers feeling "stressed" when they were on stage without a mirror.

### Personal Reactions to Observations

The teacher made clear consistent pedagogical choices within his practice. Some of the students readily accepted and obviously flourished as a result of his teaching strategies. However, some of the students were vocal in their reactions to feeling constrained by some of the teacher's strategies such as the use of tactile corrections "being a bit rough." However, it is worth considering heat, or the "sense of energy" (Potter, 454) in relation to touch. Heat is comparable to kinesthesia as they are both senses that are experienced internally, as well as in relation to the external environment. For example, the dancers warmed up prior to the classes and following the classes they put on clothes to retain that warmth, despite the fact that none of them were leaving the building. Externally, heat can be associated with the sense of touch as what you touch also touches you and there is a "partial melding of subject and object" (Potter 457). This perspective of including heat in the occurrence of touch as a mode of communication complicates the perspective of the S1 teacher touching and adjusting the students without their input as a banking strategy. The teacher is not only touching the student but being touched by the student's body. Although the S1 teacher appeared externally to be putting the students into position, and this was how the students interpreted the touch, in actuality the teacher was consciously or unconsciously reacting to the position that the student was



first maintaining. Therefore, in some sense there was a dialogue from the student to the teacher as the teacher directed the position.

My personal reactions to the teacher's pedagogy cannot be excluded from the discussion. Despite my intentions to report data in context, all data were filtered through my feminist lens and the strong kinesthetic responses that I experienced as an audience member inevitably coloured my observations. One of the first negative reactions that I experienced in the class was a physical response to my perception of the studio atmosphere. I felt tension in my neck and upper body and an inability to breathe freely in the first class. The silent room and the silent students gripped me, and although I did not realize it for half the class, I sat still and silent as well. I became aware of my rigid posture when the tension in my neck drew my body into consciousness.

I initially felt that the students were afraid in class and I wrote the word "terrified" in my field notes. However, through further observation and participant interviews, I eventually realized that they were not terrified; that was a misinterpretation of how they felt. The word "terrified" was based on my own initial uncontextualized reaction to the total silence and stillness that met the teacher's questions. Although that was how it appeared at the time, I had not spoken to the dancers or the teacher when that observation was recorded. As my observations continued, the dancers asked questions without hesitation regarding choreography, and I began to see that they understood the atmosphere to be formal and respectful. Additionally, the teacher did admit that when reflecting on his own training there was an element of something else "maybe fear" that gave teachers the respect he remembers in his training at the state school (Personal interview 20 Jan 2015). Our conversation about his desire for respect and a hierarchical distance between the teacher and student contextualized the atmosphere of the class

including the dancers' attitude toward silent work, as well as the fear that I thought was present. I began to feel that the element of fear was actually reverence. He instilled his aspiration for a quiet working environment with his quiet presence, and the way that he never raised his voice above the music or in frustration.

However, some of his strategies made me uncomfortable. He often communicated his expectations through what I came to think of as "lectures" between exercises (Table 7. General Themes, p. 97). I use the term lecture because there was no opportunity, or perceived opportunity, for the students to respond and when he asked questions they were often rhetorical. The information was communicated in a traditional banking method, which was autocratic and made me feel as though I should not be observing the interaction because the students had no voices. The lectures lasted a few minutes with many pregnant pauses for an uncomfortable silence to fill the room. I felt extremely awkward during these talks because I felt I was watching children being scolded rather than young men being educated. Some dancers looked at the floor and some looked at the teacher. I felt empathy for the dancers, as I have been in the role of the silenced student during my career.

Another mode of correction that evoked a strong response from me was the use of the word "no" over and over again when a student repeatedly attempted an individual correction to a step. My reaction to some of these instances was aggravation on behalf of the student who, although continuing to work diligently, must have been getting frustrated by the repetition of the same reaction from the teacher over and over again. I was uncomfortable with this strategy, because as an observer it seemed that perhaps the teacher lacked the ability, patience and/or willingness to explain the correction in any other way and it was the student who was left with the responsibility to discover why or

how they were not achieving the correction. I had a strong desire to add my advice to help the struggling dancer, but I had to remain silent in this situation.

Additionally, in the January session, I found it uncomfortable to watch the dancers struggle when the teacher asked them to recall and individually demonstrate exercises. When the students were called on to show the exercises, the silence in the studio and the chosen student's quiet voice while counting the exercises was difficult for me to sit through. I found that I was tense when the dancers struggled through the *barre* exercises as the teacher was obviously disappointed that they had not practiced the previous day's work. When flustered the dancers remained composed but would blush and they reverted to silence and stillness when they could not show the exercise. The teacher moved on to the next dancer and this was repeated. There were two dancers who had performed well and the teacher suggested that he would only be asking those two dancers for exercises. This was a relief for me; however, it may have been disappointing for the other dancers depending on their reaction to this unanticipated competition. It appeared that somehow, the two selected dancers had won and this strategy was reflective of traditional pedagogy that fosters competition at all levels of training.

## Summary

Although some of the pedagogical choices of the teacher differ greatly from my own teaching philosophy, the dancers were not overtly negative about the class and they voiced and demonstrated respect for their teacher. They made it clear that their class situation was not upsetting them and they felt they had learned a lot from the class. The conversations with the dancers also made me aware of how my perception of events, no matter my intention, was influenced by my own experiences and ingrained belief system.

The driving research questions provided a guide to ensure a thorough exploration of the embodied student-teacher relationship. The first research question regarding what type of verbal and non-verbal communication was observed in this study, was answered by the reporting of extensive data within the categories of tactile cues, teaching strategies, language and kinesthetic dialogue. The second question addressing moments that illustrate kinesthetic dialogue within the pedagogy was addressed through class observations as well as through information listed in Table 11. Examples of Kinesthetic Dialogue on p. 111. These examples of kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue and finally kinesthetic collaboration also address the third research question regarding the triggering of the body memory of the students. Chapter 5 uses the same categories and tables to report results for S2.

## Chapter 5: Study Two Results

### Introductory Discussion

This chapter begins with a brief discussion section regarding the selection of the site of the second study, as well as the pedagogy of the participating teacher. My initial visit to the S2 school in April 2013 was a result of the previously mentioned research conducted for a course paper, in which I compared contact improvisation and ballet teaching. While at the school, I realized that the highly trained dancers and innovative teachers had a relationship that was cultivated over a four-year program and that the relationship was based on respect and a common goal of achieving a career in dance. I returned to the school in April 2014, after having been introduced to the director of the dance program via email. After observing three of his ballet classes, he suggested we meet over coffee. On the way out of the building for the meeting, the director and I briefly observed a *pas de deux* class, followed by the brief observation of a professional company that was renting another studio space in the building. These events contextualized the student-teacher relationship within a school that prepares professional dancers and affords them the education that comes with observing professionals in their field. The director was generous with his time, spending an hour speaking with me about the program and my proposed research. He invited me to contact his administrative assistant for the fall schedule and suggested that I return in September 2014 to observe classes.

When I returned in October 2014, the anticipated situation of observing the director of the school was unattainable in terms of a continuous relationship between the observed teacher and the students, as the director taught fourth-year ballet on Tuesdays

and first-year ballet on Thursdays. After her generous offer to participate, the S2 teacher and I experienced open communication and mutual understanding resulting from a common teaching philosophy, which facilitated my observations. However, it is worth noting that this collegial relationship may have impacted the perspective from which I recorded the student-teacher communication. Additionally, my teaching experience lends an embodied and kinesthetic response to the fieldwork. The teacher sensed my support and when my research was complete, the teacher spoke to her experience participating in the research via email. She wrote, “Thank you for your support and questions. Each time we speak, you inspire me to ask more questions, investigate more and ask what language works? It's fascinating to observe what registers, what sticks. Like a tune or jingle” (Email correspondence 18 Feb 2015). One of the benefits of the project for the teacher was how she used her participation in this research to reflect on and discuss her teaching.

Data reveals how the teacher formed the method she called IMAGE TECH for Dancers (ITD) by combining somatic practices, including both the work of Irene Dowd and the Alexander Technique, with the use of imagery. In her current neuromuscular retraining techniques, Dowd continues the work of somatic practitioner Lulu Sweigard with her further development and adaptation of Ideokinesis. Ideokinesis is an imagery system that Sweigard used as a treatment method to adjust postural alignment patterns in dancers in her extensive study from 1929-1931 (Krasnow and Wilmerding 274). Dowd has continued the development of these images by noting that the “kinetic nature of dance” requires dynamic images rather than static ones (274). Krasnow and Wilmerding state that Dowd “presents suggestions for practical sessions using imagery designed to improve neuromuscular coordination for a variety of anatomical areas” (274). Dowd’s

work teaching “functional anatomy” and her focus on “improving mind/body instructions” is noted as a basis for the creation of sound dance images by teachers in dance education (Hanrahan 33). Pavlik and Norden-Bates define imagery as “a consciously created mental representation of an experience, either real or imaginary, that may affect the dancer and her or his movements” (2016, 51). The S2 teacher credited both Dowd and the Alexander Technique with influencing the development of IMAGE TECH for Dancers and she often used dynamic images in her work. For example, one of the dynamic images used in the Ballet 1 class included the dancers being asked to perform “buoyant *pliés*,” like a duck swimming who remains calm on top of the water, but is actively paddling (Table 16. S2 Images, p. 165). This instruction references the contradiction of the smooth, sustained movement of the *plié* with the active engagement of the deep rotators to facilitate alignment. This image also addresses a common dance practice of “releasing too much into gravity; promoting heaviness rather than buoyancy” as buoyancy is promoted by the Alexander Technique (Nettl-Fiol and Vanier 10).

In this chapter, my class observations are supported by both the casual conversations I had with the teacher inside and outside of the studio, as well as formal audio-recorded teacher interviews and the student email interviews. The student responses from the email interviews were nuanced and contained layers of information that allowed me to utilize some of the data in conversation with my class observations. The remaining data are reported and categorized in themes within the section discussing student interviews. The students described many of the images and anatomical concepts that they found useful within their training and it was relevant to apply their lived experience to augment my observations of the teaching. Therefore, the students’

experienced voices are used in definitions and explanations of the teaching themes, goals, concepts, images and corrections. The section reporting the students' perspectives from interviews includes common themes that emerged in response to specific interview questions, such as the students' relationship to their bodies and ballet. In this section there are also themes reported that emerged from the data that were not specified within the interview questions, such as the use of ITD in recovery from injury.

#### Characteristics and Structure of the Classes: Observations Regarding All Sessions

Each of the three observation sessions consisted of 7.5 hours of teacher and/or student observation. Of the observation time, six hours were consistently spent with the S2 teacher; three hours were spent observing a mixed-gender ballet class (Ballet 1 on Mondays and Tuesdays) and the other three hours observing women *en pointe* (*Pointe 2* on Wednesdays and Fridays). Additionally, 1.5 hours was spent with the Ballet 1 class being taught by the director of the school on Thursdays. The class taught by the director provided comparisons for how the students related to different teachers and provided context for the S2 teacher's relationship to the students. The director's more traditional pedagogical approach provided comparisons for the S2 teacher's application of somatic strategies.

For the first observation session in October 2014, I was allowed through security and went up to the third floor dance department to meet the assistant administrator in her office. She showed me to the studio where something unexpected occurred; when I asked if I could introduce myself and speak to the students, she replied that I could not address them. This took me by surprise because the week before my scheduled arrival I had sent



an introductory email to be distributed. The email stated who I was and described my research. It explained that I would need informed consent forms signed by all of the participants. I had requested that the students and the teacher be sent the explanatory email prior to the first observation session, and I had sent the request twice. The forwarding of my email had unexpectedly not happened. Therefore, on the first two observation days, considering that the Ballet 1 students did not know why I was observing and had not given their consent, I was bound by ethics not to take notes regarding their behaviour or performance in the first class. However, I did write about the structure of the class and the S2 teacher's behaviour because the teacher had received my introductory email, and upon entering the studio, she expressed her enthusiastic interest in my project. I took this as verbal consent to begin writing about her class because it was apparent that this teacher was willing to participate and that she understood that York University's Ethics Committee had approved the project.

At the end of the first Ballet 1 class (Monday), the teacher spent some time speaking with me in the hallway and was very enthusiastic about my work. She was interested in the method of data collection that I would employ while at the school. Therefore, I expressed my concern regarding the efficacy of my method when applied to a variety of teachers working with the Ballet 1 class, as opposed to my original proposal of observing one teacher with the same group of students. I explained that I had anticipated observing one teacher and one group of students while I was visiting the school for the week. She immediately volunteered to have me observe her classes for four days that week, and she suggested that I observe the students in an additional class for the fifth day. As mentioned, she taught Ballet 1 on Monday and Tuesday as well as *Pointe 2*

on Wednesday and Friday. Therefore, I observed the Ballet 1 class on Thursday taught by the director of the school. I gladly accepted the teacher's invitation to watch her classes and she escorted me to the administrative assistant's office to acquire a schedule for the week. This made me feel welcome and I will not forget her hugging me and telling me she would see me the following day in class. At this time, I spoke to the administrative assistant about distributing the consent forms. She agreed to do so and I felt relieved. However, the following day she informed me that the school's legal department would look over the letters of consent prior to their distribution.

On the second day of classes (Tuesday), the S2 teacher informed the Ballet 1 students about my project and welcomed me officially to her class. However, I did not have the students' written consent; therefore, I continued to write about the class structure and the teacher. This imposed limitation on the first two days of observation was a factor in my decision to interview only the *Pointe 2* class. The first day that I met the *Pointe 2* class (Wednesday), I was able to speak to them about my project and have them sign consent forms before observing their class. Table 13 on page 147 shows the *Pointe 2* exercises from all three observation sessions. Many of the exercises from the *Pointe 2* class were exactly the same as those in the Ballet 1 class, which allowed me to see the teacher communicating the same material to dancers of different ages and genders. I was also able to record the *Pointe 2* responses and behaviours because they were informed participants. On Thursday, I distributed the consent forms to the Ballet 1 class; a total of 42 dancers signed between the two classes.

Table 13. S2 Class Exercises (*Pointe 2*)

<b>October 2014</b>	<b>November 2014</b>	<b>February 2015</b>
<i>Barre</i>	<i>Barre</i>	<i>Barre</i>
Warm Up <i>Plié</i> <i>Battements Tendus</i> from First with <i>Cou-de-pieds</i> <i>Battements Tendus</i> from Fifth <i>Plié-soutenu en croix</i> with <i>Petit Developpé</i> <i>Battements Jetés</i> with <i>Cou-de-pieds</i> <i>Ronds de jambe à terre</i> <i>Attitude</i> swings at <i>barre</i> <i>Attitude</i> swings in centre Rises in First facing <i>barre</i> <i>Ronds de jambe en l'air</i> <i>Battements Fondus/Petites Battements</i> <i>Grands Battements</i> <i>Grand Plié</i> facing <i>barre</i> in Second	Warm Up <i>Plié</i> <i>Battements Tendus</i> from First <i>Battements Tendus/Chassés</i> <i>Battements Tendus</i> from Fifth <i>Chassés en croix</i> with <i>Cou-de-pieds</i> <i>Battements Jetés</i> <i>Battements Jetés en cloche</i> <i>Ronds de Jambe à Terre</i> <i>Attitude</i> swings at <i>barre</i> <i>Attitude</i> swings in centre Rises in First facing <i>barre</i> <i>Battements Fondus</i> <i>Grands Battements</i> with <i>attitudes en criox</i> <i>Relevés</i>	Warm Up <i>Cou-de-pieds</i> and <i>Retirés</i> from First <i>Cou-de-pied</i> and <i>Relevés</i> <i>Demi-pliés</i> and <i>Chassés</i> <i>Plié</i> Foot presses and <i>Chassés</i> <i>Battements Tendus</i> from First <i>Battements Tendus</i> changing alignment <i>Plié-soutenu en croix</i> with <i>Petit Developpé</i> and <i>Détournés</i> <i>Battements Jetés</i> with <i>Piqués</i> <i>Ronds de Jambe à Terre</i> <i>Attitude</i> swings at <i>barre</i> <i>Attitude</i> swings in centre <i>Battements Frappés</i> with <i>Ronds de jambe en l'air</i> <i>Grands Battements</i>
<b>Centre Practice</b>	<b>Centre Practice</b>	<b>Centre Practice</b>
<i>Battements Tendus</i> with <i>Pirouettes</i> and <i>Cou-de-pieds</i>  <i>Echappé Relevés</i> with <i>Soutenu</i> Turns  <i>Pas de Bourrée Piqué</i> with <i>Posé Coupé de Coté</i>  Diagonal <i>Pirouette</i>  <i>Pirouettes Traveling/Balancé</i>	<i>Battements Tendus</i> with walks  <i>Echappé Relevés</i> with <i>Détournés</i>  <i>Pirouette</i> combination  Diagonal: <i>Relevés en attitudes</i> and <i>Pirouette en attitude</i> and en dedans	<i>Battements Tendus</i> with <i>Pirouettes</i>  <i>Echappé Relevés</i> with <i>Pirouettes</i> and <i>Détournés</i>  Diagonal <i>Pirouette: Relevés Developpé devant, lunge Pirouette en dedans</i>
<b>Allegro</b>	<b>Allegro</b>	<b>Allegro</b>
<i>Sautés</i> in first and second  <i>Échappés</i>  <i>Changements</i> and <i>Glissades</i>  <i>Assemblés</i>  <i>Jetés battus</i>	<i>Sautés</i> with <i>Pas de Bourrée</i>  <i>Temps Levés, Assemblés</i>  <i>Jetés battus, Entrechat quatre</i>	<i>Changements</i> and <i>Soubresauts</i>  <i>Glissades</i>  <i>Temps Levés</i> in <i>Arabesque, runs, Cabrioles</i> and <i>Brisés</i>  <i>Grand Jeté en avant</i>

Throughout the research period, the location of the classes stayed the same. The S2 teacher's Ballet 1 classes and the director's Ballet 1 class were in the same studio. The *Pointe 2* class was in a slightly larger and brighter studio. These locations remained the same for the academic year. Both studios had a similar appearance and atmosphere. The floors were medium grey and the *barres* were dark wood. The *barres* were attached to one wall lined with the mirror. Contrastingly, along the three walls with no mirror the *barres* were attached to the floor. Both studios had a baby grand piano in one corner and windows high along one wall and they filled the second storey of the space. There were no photos on the walls. The students brought their belongings into the room with them and placed them in the spaces between the standing *barres* and the walls. The walls were lined with clothes, street shoes, bags, coffee cups and water bottles. There were two entry doors to the studios with two chairs at each entrance. I often chose a chair based on it being free of student belongings. Sometimes this put me at the back of the *Pointe 2* class when the dancers moved to the centre. However, by the last few observation classes in the *Pointe 2* studio, I chose to move to the front of the room to watch the centre work. In all classes the teachers used the mirror as the front during centre practice.

There are some general observations of the class structure that run through my field notes from October 2014 to February 2015. For instance, the teacher systematically touched every dancer at the *barre* to begin their communication for the day. During the *barre* she gave verbal corrections projected to the entire class while physically correcting an individual dancer. This strategy kept the class conscious of her presence and guidance, while she worked individually with a student. In every class, the first exercise began facing the *barre* and the teacher went through a ritual that I began to term as the

“checklist” with the students. She asked them to attend to various parts of their bodies to which they responded by turning their focus inward and often touching or tapping parts of their body. The checklist is described in more detail within the tactile and teaching strategies section of this chapter. The exercises at the *barre* were often long because the teacher would link both sides together. The teacher’s physical demonstration was generally performed with her whole body using rhythmical and vocally diverse verbal accompaniment. For instance, her voice would be higher to indicate *cou-de-pied* and lower to indicate the subsequent *plié*. She would say “scoop” and “land” with a change of tone and vocal quality that was reflective of the movement she requested from the students.

When the dancers moved to the centre of the room, they danced wherever they chose to stand. There were no lines or set patterns. During the centre practice and *allegro*, the teacher watched silently during the exercises. She never sat down during the class and she often watched the centre practice from the back of the room. During the final observation session in February she mentioned that she could see the dancers’ energy and intention more clearly from behind them. She waited until the class had finished performing the exercise before offering feedback. The class generally repeated every centre and *allegro* exercise twice to apply her corrections. The Ballet 1 and *Pointe 2* class structures followed the traditional format including *barre*, centre practice and *allegro*. The *Pointe 2* class is described in detail because it was the class from which the student voices emerged (Table 13, Class Exercises, p.147). In October and November, the teacher did not incorporate *grand allegro* in the *Pointe 2* class as the time was used to perform steps such as *échappés* and *relevés* in the centre practice and turns from the

corner. However, she did cover *grand allegro* in the Ballet 1 class and in the *Pointe 2* class in February, which allowed me the opportunity to observe her communication during this final section of the class.

#### Session One: October 2014

Having done preliminary research through observation at the S2 school the previous year, I knew that the students were not required to follow any guidelines regarding their dancewear. However, the women in both classes wore their hair in a bun and all students wore ballet slippers or *pointe* shoes depending on the class. In a few instances there were dancers wearing socks for classes. The Ballet 1 class had a wide variety of clothing, including sweat pants and t-shirts. Generally, the Ballet 1 students removed most of the bulkier warm up clothing during the *barre* and during the centre practice most of the students wore tight fitting dancewear or yoga pants. Pre-class rituals consisted of Ballet 1 playing loud popular or hip hop music (often with explicit lyrics) and some of those dancers having lively conversations while stretching and warming up. A few students wore earphones with their own music playing. However, generally over half the class was silent during their individual warm up. Contrastingly, the *Pointe 2* class consisted of mostly body suits with tights or tight fitting pants, which made it appear as though the women dressed more traditionally for *pointe* work. The women applied toe tape and put on *pointe* shoes in the last few minutes before their classes and never played music during their warm up during the observed classes. The atmosphere was more internally focused and quiet before *pointe*.

Early in the first week, I emailed the teacher thanking her for the warm welcome and requesting an interview time during the week. In the email, I included interview topics such as the integration of Alexander Technique into her ballet classes, the goals of her teaching philosophy, and the objectives that she had set for her students. She replied with possible times to meet and stated, “It has been a pleasure to have you in my classroom. Your presence is informed and supportive. I feel like you really get what I am doing... I can feel it” (Email correspondence 8 Oct 2014). Our mutual interest in moving away from traditional ballet pedagogy facilitated an easy rapport with this teacher. This first session was focused on establishing the dancers’ anatomical alignment, and upon reflection, it was the least overtly encouraging session for the dancers. The teacher was attempting to establish concepts, anatomical patterns and class structure, which led to less verbal encouragement than appeared in the following two sessions. That is not to say that the teacher was not motivating the dancers, she designed her pedagogy to motivate sound alignment which facilitated successful execution of movement. However, the more overt verbal praise increased in the following two sessions.

#### Session Two: November 2014

When I entered the building for my second observation session, I felt welcomed when the guard called up to the administrative assistant and she informed him that I knew my way around. My field notes describe the atmosphere as follows:

I sat in the studio and the students glanced at me, but did not make a big deal out of it. It felt natural for me to be there and they smiled if I made eye contact. I immediately felt like I was not forcing myself to be there. I was comfortable with the smells of the studio and the warm temperature. The students were chatting, but most dancers focused on warming up and their

own rituals. The stuff all over the studio was a comfort and a reality... (Field notes 17 November 2015)

I stood when the teacher came over to welcome me back and we hugged warmly. She told the class, “we are welcoming Tanya back, she is busy writing about you” and they applauded. It seemed a genuine response based on the eye contact and smiles. After class one of the male dancers saw me in the hall and thanked me respectfully. The collegial relationship with the teacher developed as I emailed after the first class to thank her for welcoming me despite my not emailing her directly prior to my arrival. She responded that she was interested to hear my thoughts on the Ballet 1 dancers because she was “too close to see” student progress and only taught them twice per week, which made significant progress difficult to detect (Email correspondence 17 Nov 2015). This type of inclusion in the daily student-teacher relationship through casual conversation helped contextualize her teaching strategies.

The November session clarified which students were in various levels and years within the program. I began to know their names and I realized that one dancer, who chose the pseudonym Serena,<sup>35</sup> was dancing in both Ballet 1 and *Pointe 2*. This meant that Serena saw the teacher four days per week. Serena chose to participate in both the survey and the email interview. Her informed experiences added significantly to the discussion of student-teacher communication in this environment as she spent six hours a week with the teacher. On the survey Serena commented, “In every class I take [the teacher] is in my mind, her words correcting me. I am constantly thinking about her concepts.” Due to the voluntary nature of the research, the dancers who participated were probably more motivated to write responses by the positive changes in their technique

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<sup>35</sup> All student names are pseudonyms.



and approach to ballet. Therefore, it was impossible to report how or why students may have had negative experiences with the concepts and strategies, although some direct observations can substantiate moments of ineffective implementation of the concepts by the students. Additionally, student interviews mentioned difficulty applying the concepts in their first year due to classes moving at different paces and multiple teachers focusing on various aspects of the ballet technique.

Table 14. S2 Survey, November 2014

Responses	1) Had you experienced Alexander Technique prior to meeting the S2 teacher at the S2 School?	2) In technique classes outside of this one, do you apply/practice Alexander Technique, IMAGE TECH or other concepts that the S2 teachers establishes with her students?	3) If given the option, would you sign up for coaching classes with the S2 teacher for IMAGE TECH?	4) Do you feel that this somatic (internal/ anatomical) way of working in your classes with the S2 teacher has strengthened your overall technique?	5) Will you continue to apply these concepts to your work after you are finished your current training with the S2 teacher?
Yes	1	6	6	6	6
No	5	0	0	0	0
Written Responses	0	1	1	1	1
Total Participants	6	6	6	6	6

Note: One student volunteered comments to support her choices despite a lack of designated space for comments.

A pedagogically significant event occurred during this second session when two of the faculty could not make it to school due to snow and illness. The S2 teacher taught a combined class including the Ballet 1 students and some additional dancers who had never worked with her before. This situation provided perspective on the efficacy of the

teacher's strategies, as well as the substantial ability of the dancers in this program to adapt to new situations. Someone observing for the first time may not have recognized that some of the dancers were not the teacher's regular students and had not previously heard her images or concepts. All of the students danced with focus and intention, appearing driven to adapt to the teacher's concepts. Due to the novelty of the approach, some dancers were unsuccessful in physically implementing the concepts. However, their intention to understand and apply the work was apparent. While observing the teacher with the new students, the changes in pedagogy included less verbal cueing and more full explanation of concepts between exercises. The teacher did not slow the momentum of the class; rather she adapted her discussions to give rudimentary information while the dancers practiced. She maintained the exercises and themes of the week while adapting them to facilitate the first-time students' understanding of the concepts. Witnessing the teacher's relative success in adapting her pedagogy to a class with varied levels of experience substantiates Serena's comment, "The atmosphere in the class is very friendly and open, which I believe helped myself and others to be more open to trying the concepts" (Email interview 8 June 2015).

### Session Three: February 2015

As I waited in the Ballet 1 studio for the teacher, I felt the familiar and comfortable atmosphere surround me. The teacher was always welcoming and came over when she arrived to hug me and ask how I was doing. She acknowledged my presence to the students before beginning, saying that they were lucky to have Tanya back from Toronto and again the students applauded in welcome. At the end of the class the teacher

acknowledged to me that she had “changed a few things” since I had been there in November. She was conscious of the information she gave in each lesson and how that information was delivered and received by the students. The teacher made an effort to include me in the education process while I was there.

In this observation session it was obvious that the teacher was putting the responsibility on the students by making fewer tactile corrections. Her tone was slightly more demanding and she challenged them to apply the information that she had been providing since September. She gave fewer general corrections and more quiet verbal, individual corrections. Within the final class of this session, the teacher addressed some of my questions and observations that I had shared with her over the week. For example, she had the students practice concepts and then apply them to choreography based on conversations we had. One of the newer themes this session, which was based on the dancers having had at least six months of training, was to ask them to go deeper into the work by realizing hesitations and eliminating those hesitations because their bodies knew the information to accomplish the movement (Table 15. General Themes, p.159).

After the final class the teacher unexpectedly asked if I could “say a few words” to the class. She asked the dancers to come over and sit down. She stated that considering that I had been there to see them progress all year, and as a teacher, a dancer and a writer, perhaps I could tell them what I observed? My field notes record the unexpected and collegial moment:

I said to the dancers that I had been telling [their teacher] how they were looking uniform even though they are approaching the work from a somatic place (from the inside out), and despite her not telling them where to put their heads and arms and rather they were sending them there. I told them that I could really tell if they are applying the work, and perhaps they thought I could not tell, but that I did notice. Some smiled or chuckled. I said that I

believed that this work would help them in every form of dance, not just in ballet. I thanked them for their work. I was sincere and my voice had the calm tone to it. I feel ok with what I said, and given warning probably would have said something similar, just more eloquent. I liked the students looking at me sitting on the floor and I tried to say something that would encourage them, but that was relevant. I am happy in that chair talking at the upturned faces of students. I felt blessed to be given that kind of respect and blessed to have met [the teacher]. (Field notes 20 Feb 2015)

The decision not to return to the school for a fourth visit resulted from the realization that I had gathered detailed information from multiple sources. Therefore, I could present a comprehensive report of the aspects of the student-teacher communication as well as the context in which it had taken place.

#### Student-Teacher Communication: General Observations

As in Chapter 4, this section addresses the first and second research questions regarding the combination of verbal and non-verbal communication present in class, as well as the presence of kinesthetic dialogue. Observations of the student-teacher relationship are reported using the same categories: tactile (hands on) corrections and teaching strategies, as well as language and kinesthetic dialogue. These themes emerged after I began compiling and summarizing the data for S1 and I have applied them to S2. My personal observations in this account are augmented by casual conversations that I had with the S2 teacher regarding the events of the classes, as well as information taken from participant interviews and the student survey. The following excerpt from my field notes encapsulates the way in which the teacher prepared the students for their careers in dance. After the second Ballet 1 class in February, the teacher spoke to the dancers as a group. My field notes stated:

At the end of the class [the teacher] gave them a little speech. She told them that she wrote their evaluations yesterday and she was pleased with their class yesterday, then today she felt panicked because she saw them working differently. She said, to use the word that Jason had used in class, she saw them working in a superficial way. She said that in their career (if they forget the program for a minute) and talk about their career, it would be about digging deeply into the movement you are experiencing/working on. You will be asked to go deeply/invest in it. She said that she encourages questions and she likes questions. She encouraged them to use this class to ask questions. She said, "I want to feel like you are leaving me with two huge suitcases that you can take with you for four years and a career and that you will not come back to me and say I did not tell you something. I want you to be autonomous. I do not want to hold your hand anymore. We have gone slowly and now I am throwing harder things at you. (17 Feb 2015)

The teacher's focus throughout the observation period was preparing the students for a career in dance that would afford them longevity and allow them to experience limited injuries. She emphasized her belief that training at the school should foster the autonomy of the students (Table 15. General Themes, p.159). The teacher's obvious strength was her individual correction of the students. Every observed class contained teaching moments before, during (between *barre* and centre practice), and/or after the class in which a student would approach the teacher to ask for personal attention. She always gave them a few quiet and patient moments of personal feedback, which required the students' internalized focus as she facilitated their understanding of a concept.

The general themes of both the Ballet 1 and *Pointe 2* classes were the same, but the students were approached in different ways. For example, during one conversation the teacher said that she wondered what would happen if she used the words that she used in *Pointe 2* with the Ballet 1 class. She indicated that the first-year students would not yet have the capacity to understand her direction or apply the concepts based on the deeper level of embodiment, which was developed during the second year of working in a somatic way. The teacher explained that generally in a year-long course, she began with

the theme of a *cou-de-pied* and *retiré*<sup>36</sup> class, followed by a *ronds de jambe* class and then an *attitude* class (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). She lamented the fact that I had missed the *ronds de jambe* class, as she felt that the *Pointe 2* class had made great progress within that theme. She explained that she repeated these themes in her teaching in order to delve more deeply into the concepts and re-visit material that the students may have forgotten while working on a new concept (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). The teacher explained why she began teaching first-year students concepts surrounding the placement of the pelvis. She stated:

I start with the pelvis because it is so easy to tuck, once they have an understanding of neutral spine, neutral pelvis then I add the turn out muscles...until the pelvis is established and the joints are in their house, I do not mention muscles. I want them to leave with a suitcase and be autonomous, if I dress it up too much then they won't walk away with anything. (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014)

In this excerpt, the teacher was also explaining why she used simple combinations at the *barre*; she reverted to exercises that would allow her students to apply the concepts without being distracted by complex choreography. She stated, “I do one thing [concept] with them because I want it to stick, I want them to be able to translate. For example when they go to the Balanchine teacher and he is telling them, ‘down’, they will be able to see that it is [down] with their legs not tucking under” (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). Table 15 lists the predominant themes of the observation sessions as well as supporting concepts and the concepts that were applied individually with the students to facilitate the understanding of the main theme.

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<sup>36</sup> The teacher used the terms *coupé* and *passé* to indicate the use of *cou-de-pied* and *retiré*. *Cou-de-pied* and *retiré* are the terms used throughout this dissertation to indicate these movements.

Table 15. S2 General Themes Communicated By The Teacher<sup>37</sup>

October 2014	November 2014	February 2015
<p>Theme: <i>Cou-de-pied</i> and <i>Retiré</i>: “Scoop”: <i>Cou-de-pied</i> is connected to the arm from <i>fifth en bas</i> to <i>fifth en avant</i>, as the foot lifts, the pelvis lifts up in the front.</p> <p>Alignment: Stacking the body/bones to find alignment. Find sit bones underneath you. Gather your visceral sphere. Everything is easier if the pelvis is level, the legs will just fall. Organize mini diagonals, or mini diagonal of supporting leg.</p> <p>Autonomy of the student.</p> <p>Arms come from your hoola hoop. Shoulder blades sliding down the back.</p> <p>Put the leg in its house (applies to shoulder too).</p>	<p>Theme: <i>Attitude</i> “baby” <i>attitudes</i> to help with alignment.</p> <p>Alignment: The creases of the hips are important.</p> <p>Autonomy of the student.</p> <p>No limbo<sup>38</sup> between movements.</p>	<p>Theme: <i>Attitude</i> with zippers and mini diagonals.</p> <p>Alignment: Anchor points under sit bones and/or under shoulder blades.</p> <p>Demonstration of the autonomy that the student has gained through the tools that the teacher had been teaching all year.</p> <p>Trust your body. Physically apply the concepts that you know. Just do it.</p>

### Tactile Cues and Teaching Strategies

From the moment the dancers began the class standing facing the *barre* in first position, it became obvious that tactile correction from the teacher, as well as student self-correction played a central role in the internalization of ballet technique. The teaching strategies in this class were consciously implemented and strategically organized, which resulted in a structured learning environment. One strategy that the

<sup>37</sup> Metaphors are explained within the language section of this chapter.

<sup>38</sup> The concept of limbo is explained in the discussion section of this chapter.

teacher used in Ballet 1, which all students that I observed had experienced, was the use of the first six classes in September to learn images associated with anatomy in the form of the teacher's method, IMAGE TECH for Dancers (ITD). She explained that the use of her personally developed method, which incorporated somatic practices into ballet training, was controversial at the school. Therefore, she limited the teaching of ITD to 20 minutes per class for the first six classes. She stated, "I shovel every image I have at them, which is not good ...but there is an overview and I can go back to it" (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). Serena reflected on these early weeks in the program and stated:

In our first week with [the teacher], she began teaching us her 'IMAGE TECH' warm up, where we use visual imagery and find various muscles, bones, and joints in our body by physically touching and initiating them. What helped me to be on board with this was the way that she wanted us to use internal focus and imagery to locate and understand the movement of our muscles and joints. I immediately felt the positive difference from using visual imagery to help understand how my body's joints and muscles coordinated while dancing. (Email interview 8 June 2015)

Giving the students a vocabulary of her images and anatomical concepts allowed the teacher to build on and elaborate her theories based on these foundations.

Within the observed classes the teacher had the students move from the *barre* to the centre of the room to repeat exercises and apply concepts, which included transfer of weight and postural alignment. In an interview, the teacher explained that this was the same approach that captured their attention when she first began teaching them ITD. She stated:

IMAGE TECH is interesting because it's in the centre of the room and there is no *barre*. So I have their attention immediately because they are standing on one leg... they are going to fall over and then that's embarrassing, so I actually, no matter what their level is, I have everybody's full attention right away because they are standing on one foot and they are struggling to stand on one foot. So you are going to listen to everything that is going to help you stand up at that point. You give somebody a *barre* and they can just check



out. They can hang on and check out, and then they fall over in the centre, but that is way later in the class. So they have just wasted 40-50 minutes.  
(Personal interview 10 Oct 2014)

I observed how the students were actively engaged by the teacher challenging them to move away from the *barre* or take their hand off the *barre* multiple times each class. The *barre* was usually an hour long and the teacher commented to the students in the October session that they (Ballet 1) were being patient, as many of the students had not been exposed to this type of integration of somatic practice in ballet. In all classes during the research period the students were given “personal time” to work on their balance at various times within the class (Field notes 6 Oct 2014).

Throughout the research period, whenever the dancers stood ready for the first exercise facing the *barre*, the teacher began with what I termed “the checklist.” The teacher would give cues that were related to Alexander Technique and ITD, as the students gently tapped parts of their body and/or brought their focus inward. She often began with a phrase referring to feeling the top of the head, being aware of the space above the head, or growing into the space above the head. The dancers did not all choose the same tactile cues, but many touched their finger to their ears or the top of their head. Later, one of the dancers explained that the idea of the energy coming out of the tops of her ears worked well for her (Tara, Email interview 9 June 2015). The teacher would begin moving from student to student during the *barre* offering a very light touch on selected areas of the body that needed the dancers’ awareness to accomplish the movements related to the theme of the class. For example, touching or gesturing toward the back of the supporting leg and the opposite side of the upper back were cues when standing in *cou-de pied*, *retiré* or *attitude*.

During the first observation session in October, the teacher's use of touch was the first teaching strategy that I noted as different from any ballet teacher I had seen or experienced in my career. The teacher barely touched the students and moved her hands along the dancers' bodies almost without touching them. With the use of light touch the teacher was obviously cuing greater concepts with the choice of location and combination of movements for her hands. Serena explained the teacher's use of touch:

Compared to other teachers that I have had, [the teacher] corrects you in a way that is unique to each person's body. While we are at the *barre*, she comes around and helps us to find and initiate specific muscles, concepts, and coordination, just with a slight touch of her index finger, in a way that resembles that of an Alexander Technique teacher. I have had other teachers in the past approach hands-on in a more aggressive way, which I often find leaves me feeling more confused and reliant on their touch to find the muscles and coordination again. [The teacher's] "magic touch" forces me to concentrate internally and leads me to discover more about my body and how to use it efficiently for ballet. (Email interview 8 June 2015)

As Serena discusses in the above excerpt, it is the teacher's self-professed goal to have the students self-correct rather than be reliant on the teacher putting them into a position. One of the most prevalent self-corrections was the motion of the students' hands lightly brushing down fronts of the thighs during a *demi-plié* two or three times. Both my field notes and student interviews stated that this motion was used to help students bend in their joints and not grip the hip flexors, thereby releasing the tension in the hip joint, which may result in a deeper *plié* and increased ease of movement.

In the November interview, the teacher explained that she is not supposed to touch the students based on school policy. She said she worked within these parameters with the use of light touch and had the dancers touch themselves firmly when learning ITD. For example, with the Ballet 1 class in order to find their "mini diagonals" she had the students touch their sit bones and follow the hamstrings right up to where they insert.

She found that when the students went to the *barre* they had “woken up those muscles.” However, she stated that she felt that two weeks later the work had returned to being intellectual concepts and not as physical anymore (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014).

Individualized attention catering to the unique body of the student is a deliberate teaching strategy that was coupled with the teacher’s use of tactile cues. As Serena stated in the above excerpt, the teacher adapted her corrections based on the performance of the student. She expected that the student would attempt the correction using an internal focus and feel a revised technique from their embodied perspective. Jennifer explains, “[the teacher] very carefully analyzes each dancer and works to tailor the information in ways that will deal with their question or difficulties” (Email interview 1 June 2015). The teacher encouraged the students to individually apply the concepts with phrases that included, “put your brain in front of it” (Table 16. S2 Images, p.165). She wanted the students to think and feel before they attempted the concept. She applauded their efforts with phrases including “I saw a lot of brain to body information going on” (Field notes Feb 2015). The teacher encouraged dialogue regarding the mind-body connection that she was working to establish by asking the students questions and/or taking time to answer student questions, as well as inviting other students to add their comments.

As a teaching strategy, the teacher used the mirror as the front of the room whenever the dancers moved into the centre of the room. The dancers were expected to maintain their internal focus while they received and applied visual feedback from themselves in the mirror. Tara explained how the teacher used the mirror differently than other teachers, expecting an internal focus to be applied while using external feedback. She stated:

The factor that has really allowed me to go deeper into the work is the success that I've experienced with being more aware of my body. Teachers always say that you need to feel the shape, not stare at yourself in the mirror. But it is extremely difficult to do that when you don't know what you're supposed to be feeling. [The teacher] finally found a way to make that common saying quite easy to understand... [The teacher's] concepts have helped me understand the skeleton that I was born with, and not only how, but specifically which muscles to use to manipulate that skeleton into shapes. (Email interview 9 June 2015)

Despite using the mirror for visual feedback, the verbal instructions/kinesthetic advice drew the students' focus inward by highlighting the students' awareness of the proprioception of the movements (kinesthesia) through the application of images and concepts.

However, the teacher expressed that the repetition and application of images and concepts was limited by the classes being 1.5 hours in duration and only twice per week. The teacher admitted that seeing her students twice per week presented challenges to her pedagogical strategies saying, "I have to be more patient than usual or find a new approach" (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). She explained that she would add more layers if she had them longer, but that she felt that she was "just a cog in the wheel" (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). The teacher explained that she had to give the Ballet 1 students a "lecture" the previous week. She told them that although they may have grasped the concept that they had to move on to the next idea. She explained that although she hated lecturing, it did seem to have an effect and they returned on Monday with renewed enthusiasm (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014).

Table 16. S2 Images, Kinesthetic Advice, Encouragement, and Verbal Cues For Concepts<sup>39</sup>

	October 2014	November 2015	February 2015
<b>Images and Kinesthetic Advice</b>	<p>Pelvis level during a <i>relevé</i>: like a platter with a bowl of Cheerios on it, when it bounces the cheerios land back in bowl.<sup>40</sup></p> <p><i>En attitude</i> you are the leaning tower of Pisa. Put a gram of sugar on the shoulder of the lifted leg.</p> <p>Have a fish-hook on your visceral sphere and the legs drop down.</p> <p>Lift the lower leg in quickly in <i>passé</i> like a marionette.</p> <p>Top of your head to the ceiling.</p> <p>Shoulder blades sliding down the back.</p>	<p>Nutella Arms/ scoop nutella<sup>41</sup> and let the shoulder blades wrap around your ribs.</p> <p>Buoyant <i>plies</i>: a duck in a puddle. Duck's look so calm above water, but underneath they are paddling.</p> <p>Marching ants moving up the spine (to align the torso).<sup>42</sup></p> <p>Move from/come up from your "unders."<sup>43</sup></p> <p>Take the chair with you as you walk. Take the risk of moving forward in one piece.</p> <p>Find the house for your leg. You can do 45 degrees and little by little lift it higher.</p>	<p>Sit bones fly and front of pelvis up (level pelvis).</p> <p>Feel the top of your head and the sit bones are the bottom of the tri-pod.</p> <p>Play with the <i>épaulement</i>.</p> <p>Be rhythmical not nervous.</p> <p>Feel the internal sensation of coming upright.</p> <p>Eliminate the moment of hesitation in transitions.</p>
<b>Encouragement</b>	<p>Better!</p> <p>Better, nice ladies!</p>	<p>I care about you as individuals. I am not comparing you to one another.</p> <p>That's nice Sam! He grinned and everyone smiled or laughed at the exchange.</p> <p>Trust yourself.</p>	<p>Your body knows more than you think it does. Trust your body.</p> <p>Inching your way through it is not necessary anymore; apply what you know.</p> <p>Hold onto the things that feel good and organized.</p>
<b>Verbal Cues</b>	<p>Up in your "unders."</p> <p>Where are your diagonals?</p> <p>Firecrackers bring you up.</p>	<p>How do I send my arm open? Send your arms up.</p> <p>Put your brain in front of it.</p> <p>How long is the waist? First rib on the gesture side.</p>	<p>Wide base.</p> <p>Stacked anchor points.</p> <p>Jets underneath you.</p>

<sup>39</sup> Examples were chosen from each observation session that were repeated multiple times by the teacher and related to the overall theme of the class. Examples were discussed in student and teacher interviews.

<sup>40</sup> Also used a turkey on a platter bouncing and being caught for the same anatomical reference.

<sup>41</sup> Serena stated that she was able "to comprehend how my hip joints function by thinking about the rotation in my shoulder joints, while using the tool of [the teacher's]"Nutella Jar port de bras" (where my arms are curved above my head in an open 5th en haut, in the shape of a rounded jar, with the 'thickness of Nutella in the air', as I rotate my arms from turned in to turned out)..." (email interview 9 June 2015)

<sup>42</sup> The image of ants marching up the spine is used to trigger the dancer's understanding and use of their abdominal muscles and promote neutral spinal alignment.

<sup>43</sup> "Unders" refer to the sit bones, deep rotators and/or top of the hamstrings.

## Language and Kinesthetic Dialogue

In addition to tactile cues and teaching strategies, language also played a role in the teacher's communication with her students. She made it clear, both in casual conversation and in a formal interview, that when she began teaching she made a conscious choice to remove negative phrases from her pedagogy and moved away from how she was taught as a dancer. Early in her teaching career, she remembered hearing herself say a phrase to a student that was used when she was dancing and she made the conscious decision to never use that phrase again. Within her classes at the S2 school, images and metaphors were the primary verbal cues given to the students to trigger kinesthetic memory. The anatomical concepts are passed to the students through light touch, verbal explanation/images and kinesthetic dialogue. The images can also be considered kinesthetic advice given by the teacher, as the images affect both the students' somatic approach to the movement, as well as the external aesthetic and technique.

Images and kinesthetic advice affected the students' performance in the same ways. In some instances, kinesthetic advice more actively changed the external movement as opposed to some images, which affected the student in more subtle ways. For example, the instances listed in the October session include the pelvis as a platter, a gram of sugar on the shoulder and a "fish-hook in the visceral sphere" to engage the lower abdominals (Table 16. Images, p. 165). All of these images when applied by the student allowed for subtle changes of alignment or engagement/understanding of muscles or alignment. In contrast, other instances on Table 16, which include quicker *passé* like a marionette, top of your head to the ceiling and shoulder blades sliding down the back made more noticeable changes to the students' performance during observation classes.

This reasoning, based on the observations of changes in student performance, applies to all three sessions listed on Table 16. In this study, images and kinesthetic advice affected the students' understanding and performance in similar ways.

There were multiple instances of images and kinesthetic advice. For example, rather than telling the student to drop their hip while their leg is in second the teacher would instruct them to “find the house” for their leg (Table 16. S2 Images, p.165). This drew the focus into the hip joint and the students had to feel where their leg was “at home,” or in other words in a natural alignment with the pelvis while they looked in the mirror to see if they were achieving this alignment. Another connection she encouraged was the feeling of the foot lifting into *cou-de-pied* being connected to the use of the lower abdominals even if the foot is passing through the position as in *adage*. Additionally, when the foot moves to, or through, *cou-de-pied* the teacher suggested a string connecting the arm to the heel to encourage co-ordination of the arm and foot lifting together. The teacher also highlighted how the *Pointe 2* students' prepared their body to perform an exercise. She suggested that how they stood before the exercise and in preparation to go *en pointe* sent a signal to their body.

There were conversations between the class members and the teacher in all sessions. The teacher encouraged the students to voice what they were experiencing. In the first Ballet 1 class, she actually waited in silence for them to answer one of her questions. She asked them about one of the themes that they had been working on and they at first seemed hesitant to reply. The teacher wanted to hear how the concept of a connection between their upper back and their hamstrings influenced their kinesthetic experience (Table 17. Kinesthetic Dialogue, p. 171). The students replied that the idea of

connecting these areas unified their body allowing them to have an image of themselves as a whole (Field notes 6 Oct 2014). The following day a student in the Ballet 1 class asked how to initiate the turning waltz step from the corner (Field notes 7 Oct 2014). This inquiry demonstrated the willingness of that student to apply the concepts that the teacher was presenting. Later in the year, in regards to the Ballet 1 class, the teacher admitted that she “almost stopped asking them questions” after growing discouraged with the lack of verbal response (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). However, the teacher still had many instances of humour with the students. For example, one day she joked that they did not suddenly exchange hip joints with someone and forget how to work and the students chuckled and understood her meaning (Field notes 18 Nov 2014). The conversations with the *Pointe 2* students were more interactive and in-depth as the students engaged in the process of individual exploration with the concepts and images.

ITD provided the students with a vocabulary of images to draw from when given a verbal cue, as well as images that could be adapted to their specific needs. Tara explained, “[The teacher] is not afraid to admit that not all her concepts work for every person...she is always willing to hear alternate ideas...her vulnerability and honesty create a trusting relationship between her students and herself” (Email interview 9 June 2015). Another student also felt confident adapting images. Sara stated, “I have become confident in knowing that [the teacher] wishes us to explore the concepts and figure them out for our own bodies and create more images for ourselves” (Email interview 3 June 2015). Some of the students found that the images provided worked well and helped them achieve their desired results. Serena explained:

For *en dedans* and *en dehors piqué* turns with arms in 5th *en haut*, she has a concept of imagining the *port de bras* as a quick ‘cowgirl’ lasso and



coordinating it with the legs. I remember this in particular helping the coordination and initiation of my turns and *port de bras*, it helped me to achieve triple *en dedans piqué turns* :). Her concept of the ‘tripod/pine tree’ changed my dancing forever. The idea that in my visceral centre I have the top point of the tripod (or for my case the idea of a pine tree worked better) and from that point in the front and in the back I had the two diagonal lines branching down to my hip flexors and from my hip flexors and down the energy and the ‘roots’ of my tree spreads down to the floor, almost as if my legs are so elongated that they were like roots down into the floor. The top of my ‘pine tree’ all the while is growing upwards, taller and taller, lifting my energy through the ceiling of the studio. (Email interview 8 June 2015)

Another dancer may not have found that the pine tree image versus the tri-pod image would have changed the kinesthetic sensation of the stance. However, as Serena explained, one image “worked better” than the other when she came to individually apply the idea.

The teacher’s kinesthetic advice that accompanied the images included the idea of flexibility within the vocabulary to facilitate the adaptation of the concepts for individual dancers from day to day. For example, when applying the idea of the students having “anchor points” under their sit bones or alternately under their shoulder blades, the teacher suggested that each day the anchor points needed to be re-invented. She told the students to trust their anchor points being re-invented every day. She stated, “when we sleep it all goes away and we have to re-invent every day” (Field notes 17 Feb 2015). It is through an open-minded approach to the vocabulary of images that the teacher attempts to facilitate the students releasing tension in order to move freely. She stated, “working with all this tension is not working!” (Field notes Feb 2015)

Developing the theme of anchor points, the teacher suggested that the students sense their sit bones underneath them when transferring from one supporting leg to the other, as well as during a *fouetté* movement from *arabesque* to *éffacé* with the leg *devant*.

She suggested that during choreography if they were in partners and one dancer had to execute this *fouetté* while being pulled by their partner, they would need to have an internal feeling of coming upright that is grounded in their image of the anchors being underneath them.

The anchor points can also be located under the shoulder blades. The teacher explains how this image facilitated “better” *port de bras*. She explained:

I got really excited, I was working with somebody that didn't come from any ballet [training] in the summer program, the idea of *épaulement*<sup>44</sup> to her was just turning your body, so we got into this thing about sending the arms. I don't know if I was in that in October, but where you send the arms from; that gives you *épaulement*. If you can get the generator under the anchor points then you have better *port de bras* than anyone who you teaches you to put the arms, and the head, and the thing, and the [other] thing, because it's not organic and you can't repeat it, it doesn't flow into those positions, you just have to place it and tilt your head and that doesn't makes sense on a body, a body won't remember that. (Personal interview 18 Feb 2015)

As the teacher explained in the above description of her teaching strategy, she communicated to her students by facilitating their success in adapting ballet to their bodies and making the positions “organic.”

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<sup>44</sup> The teacher used the word *épaulement* to refer to the alignment of the shoulders when traveling on the diagonal. The example she used involved the use of the arms in making an *effacé* line. This is different than the S1 teacher's use of the word to mean standing in *croisé* alignment. However, both teachers were referring to an internal sense of *aplomb* while working in alignment and a sense of spiral in the upper back, regardless of whether or not the dancer actually changed the shoulders in relation to the spine or used the arms extended from the body.

Table 17. S2 Examples of Kinesthetic Dialogue Resulting in Kinesthetic Collaboration.<sup>45</sup>

<b>Observation Date</b>	<b>Teacher's Kinesthetic Communication</b>	<b>Student's Kinesthetic Response</b>	<b>Kinesthetic Collaboration</b>
October 6	The teacher's body was squarely behind the student creating a kinesthetic awareness of her presence. The teacher ran her hand lightly above the student's back opposite to the standing leg. Then she applied the same gentle tactile indication toward the supporting hamstrings and inner thigh.	The student became aware of the areas that she indicated due to the bodily presence of the teacher. The element of touch appeared secondary to the awareness of the teacher's bodily indication.	Often the student's response was to adjust alignment subtly toward the teacher's desired result.
October 7	The teacher demonstrated subtly with her upper body and touched her own ribs to indicate the adjustment/feeling that the students needed to apply.	The students imitated the feeling.	Whether or not it was physically manifested, the students comprehended the application of the concept.
October 7	While performing the <i>port de bras</i> within the <i>ronds de jambe</i> exercise, the teacher captured the attention of the students with her animated demonstration.	The students danced with the teacher.	Many students were affected by the demonstration, particularly when performing the <i>port de bras</i> a second time. They took on the teacher's quality.
November 17	The teacher placed her down turned hands (parallel to the floor) beside the student's hip joints to indicate the level pelvis. She either did not touch them at all, or touched them very lightly.	The students turned their focus inward in response.	Often no external physical change occurred. However, it was obvious that the non-verbal communication drew the students' focus toward the alignment of the pelvis and hip joints.
November 18	The teacher stepped forward onto one leg in <i>arabesque</i> and told the students to take the risk of moving in one piece. She told them to be stacked, referring to the alignment of their bones.	The students mirrored her movement.	The students did not imitate the teacher exactly; rather they experimented with their own bodies and attempted to produce the requested transfer of weight.

<sup>45</sup> Note: Three examples for each category were chosen from each visit.

November 19	Throughout the research period the teacher's clear demonstration of the opposition of lift and lower was accompanied by two sounds that reflected her body movement.	When the teacher used the higher tone the students lifted in their bodies either through rising on <i>demi-pointe</i> or engaging certain muscle groups that she has specified. Alternately, in reaction to the lower tone the students responded by sinking into their <i>plié</i> .	The students have reflected her tone of voice and movement in the quality of their movement.
February 17	For one student, Truman, the teacher used her upper body for physical indication of the second side of the back/spiral in <i>pirouettes</i> .	Truman attempted the adjustment.	The concept was understood although not completely applied.
February 17	The students, even at the <i>barre</i> , were always kinesthetically aware of the teacher. She made a gesture and said <i>coupé</i> . However, this was not the correct movement at the time.	The class reacted to the choreographically incorrect cue by becoming unsure and creating their own exercises and timing.	The class continued dancing, all doing different movements and timing. The teacher did not stop the exercise and apologized between sides reviewing the combination.
February 18	The teacher used her body to indicate the use/spiral upstage of the back in <i>effacé</i> when traveling from the corner.	The students danced with the teacher.	All of the students attempted to apply the feeling.

### Teacher Insights as Discussed in Interviews

The teacher actively participated in the interview process by attending the interview prepared with thoughtful and detailed answers to questions and topics that I had emailed prior to our meetings. The first meeting took place at the school. We began the interview in a common area, but within the first five minutes we had to move to the staff room as a tour of the school was taking place and the group chose the original meeting place to stop for an information session. The staff room was a good space for audio-recording because it was quiet. The first interview was 30 minutes in length and the teacher systematically described her dancing, teaching and development of ITD. The

second interview lasted about 30 minutes and took place in a crowded coffee shop. Audio-recording was impossible with the noise level, also the informal atmosphere of the café did not lend itself to a formal interview. Therefore, I took notes and expanded on them immediately following the interview. The third interview took place in the staff room and was audio-recorded. The information from the three interviews is categorized into themes beginning with the teacher's early teaching experience, followed by the development of her pedagogical practices, and finally the current communication with her students.

### The Conscious Transition from Dancer to Teacher

During the first interview, the teacher explained that as a dancer she had multiple injuries and was always “working through some sort of problem with my spine” or that she was “spraining [her] ankles all the time” (10 Oct 2014). However, she recalls that in France there was no physiotherapy available for dancers. She stated, “so everything I was doing was by myself, trying to figure out how to manage with little bits of information here and there, from this or that person, and trying to figure out what I needed to do for my body in order to get it on stage at night” (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). The teacher stated that she did not have good training as a dancer. She trained in New York City with well-known teachers. However, she said, “...you know that's not going to give you anatomical information. It was square, good, straight-on training if you knew what you were doing. You just go in there and do it; so you could just do it and it's a very nice class and that's what I had as training” (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). The teacher recalls how she felt when she first began teaching. She explained:

So when I first started teaching, my objective was very, very thorough and probably very meticulous. I wouldn't let anybody tuck under that was my huge thing because of all the back injuries that I had. So I had a lot of things about the back that I knew from myself, but no anatomical thing [information] to back that up, other than I knew you needed a curve in your spine and that you could not take that away, and that I had done that for years and had twisted my vertebrae around in the other direction, and thus sprained my ankles all the time. (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014)

In addition to her awareness of types of injuries that could be sustained from not working in a safe way, the teacher was conscious of how her training had psychologically affected her. She stated:

...I was very vigilant about the dancers not [tucking under] and what I was most concerned about when I first starting dancing, and still am actually, is the vocabulary and the words that people use. I decided when I started teaching that I would throw out all of those negative words that I had been trained with, ever single one of them and replace them with something else. So, um, yeah that was very, very conscious, I was going to take care of the dancers and not beat them up. (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014)

She recalled the transition from dancing to teaching clearly. She stated that in her position as ballet mistress for Ballet Hispanico when she heard herself saying something that her teachers had said to her as a student, she would stop herself and clarify or retract the words. She explained that she went through the process of finding the correct words to communicate feedback. She explained that she had to “figure out how [she] was going to give feedback and corrections. That was a very conscious thing” (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014).

In the second interview in November, the teacher discussed one mentor that made a great impact on her development as a teacher. When she was teaching at L'École Supérieure de Ballet du Québec in Montreal for three years, she recalled how she would be able to look at her pedagogical strategies for the day, month and year. This would enable her to develop the student all year and then the student would move on to the next

teacher the following year. Her mentor was an older man by the time she knew him (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014) and he would lie down on a mat at lunch while she sat beside him. He would talk to her about teaching. He asked her one day if she would like to know how he thinks about teaching and he brought out a cardboard folding file. When he laid it out, it covered a large table. Not having correction fluid at the time, he had pieces of paper stuck on top of other pieces. He told her that he would change things, and alter things, and that he had spent 15 years on this plan. Regarding the teaching of *pirouettes*, her mentor asked her: “You know, you always give them a preparation that they can do?” She recalled how that was all he had to say because he knew that she would then challenge herself to give them different preparations for *pirouettes*. She stated that she would not be the teacher she is today without her mentor; he was “pedagogical and logical.” She stated, “I teach nothing like him mind you, his lack of the upper body gave the dancers other problems. I knew him in a different way than other people because he was a grandfather by the time he came to Montreal” (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). This statement refers to the large number of former professional ballet students and dancers, in multiple countries, that the teacher has come across who do not remember her mentor kindly because of some of his traditional teaching strategies.

### The Roots of ITD: Recognizing Individuality

When the S2 teacher stopped dancing professionally due to chronic injury, she became the ballet mistress for Ballet Hispanico in New York City; she then taught for three years at L'École Supérieure de Ballet du Quebec in Montreal before becoming Interim Artistic Director for one year. She had been at the S2 school for 17 years,

beginning in 1998 (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). The teacher explained that upon arriving at the S2 school, she was badly injured and decided to take some Alexander Technique sessions from a colleague. She stated that these sessions “changed her life” because she had never been exposed to this type of somatic work (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). A few years later she began to work with Irene Dowd, who was preparing to teach a teacher’s seminar at Canada’s National Ballet School and the S2 teacher was invited to attend. The teacher discovered that she was unable to incorporate the work into her ballet classes for a few years, until she began to isolate certain concepts and decided on the words to use to communicate those concepts. The teacher explained how she wanted the students to connect the somatic practices with ballet technique, despite their initial feeling that ballet technique and somatic practices have opposing physical requirements. She has since created a method of preparation termed IMAGE TECH for Dancers (ITD). This approach incorporates Alexander Technique (as she learned it from a colleague at the S2 school), as well as the work of Irene Dowd. When describing her rationale for the creation of ITD, the teacher stated:

...if you put the sensation in your body, your body will remember it. Somebody talks to you about imagery and this and that and the other thing, it is like in one ear and right out the other. If you don’t feel it, physically feel it, you cannot do it, especially when you are trying to stand up, weight bearing. So the whole thing with IMAGE TECH was really to put Irene and [Alexander] work together [while] weight-bearing. (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014)

The teacher explained that with her “private students”<sup>46</sup> she developed ITD and often taught students with “really difficult bodies” for dance (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). She produced material working with private students that, after repetition, the students could practice themselves. As the teacher explained in the above quotation, the novelty of

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<sup>46</sup> Private students are students that the teacher works with outside of her job at the school.



ITD was putting Alexander Technique and Dowd's material together while weight bearing. She progressed from parallel to turned out and then linked it to the ballet class.

When describing why she felt this integration of techniques was necessary, she stated:

But what really was the biggest impetus, especially with Alexander, is that the dancers could *not* do that in a ballet class, because for them one [Alexander] was a 'don't do', like literally to let go and allow the head to float up and all the imagination but no muscle [use]. And the other [ballet], you're supposed to lift up and *tendu*, and lift your leg, and support your core, and so on, and the freshmen, they just couldn't make the connection between Irene on the floor, Alexander sitting, lying down or even standing; but a 'non-do' thing and then a ballet class. They just couldn't connect the dots and so that became my mission. And that was the beginning of all of this. (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014)

Although ITD is becoming an established vocabulary within her teaching practice, while discussing areas of her pedagogy that continue to evolve, the teacher explained, "I change all the time and I learn every day, I try to find new ways to explain things, not everyone understands the same way, whether it is imagery, exercises, words..." (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). The teacher continued to describe how her strategies are deliberate. She stated, "I am doing this on purpose, it's not just random, it's a very conscious thing to address every single person and their individual situation. Of course the bigger the class the harder that is and the shorter the class the harder that is" (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). The teacher was referring to the ballet classes at the school being too short to work with that number of students individually. The year prior to this research being conducted, the students had begun to ask for private lessons in ITD and this caused the school to restrict the use of the system within classes; presumably, in order that the curriculum, including traditional ballet vocabulary and class structure, remain intact. The director admitted to being skeptical about the integration of somatic

practice in the ballet classes. His concern was that it would stop the dancers' movement and/or slow the pace of the class.

The teacher's goal was not intuitively to maintain a fast pace to her class, or to get to the *grand allegro* section everyday. However, she felt that she had to push through the class and was criticized for not getting to big jumps (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014).

As she explained below, her goal was to teach the students to self-correct and the process is different for every student. She stated:

I want them [Ballet 1 students] to be autonomous with their bodies, I want them to be able to self-correct by the end of a year with me and I only have them twice a week. So that's why I am so intense about it, because they don't have that for the rest of the week and they don't have that any other year. The women may have me for two years twice a week [Ballet 1, followed by *Pointe 2*], but the men will only have me twice a week for one year. And that's it, so I want them to be autonomous, I don't want them to need me to do it. I want them to have felt it in their bodies and be able to say "AH!" and use all the tools. So really autonomy is the goal. (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014)

To facilitate a process by which the students are patient and attentive enough to perform *barre* for an hour, while maintaining an internal focus on applying the concepts individually, the teacher moved them away from the *barre* "almost every other exercise" (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). She explained that she does not give any corrections during which the students are just listening to her; they have to move while she talks.

We had a conversation about different styles of learning physical movement, which demonstrated the teacher's interest in individual coaching. The teacher explained that the director had discussed a well-known choreographer in one of the faculty meetings. The choreographer was having the dancers in his company attempt to learn his choreography without moving. He wanted the dancers to "use their brain instead of their bodies" to learn choreography (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014). The teacher gave

examples of different teaching and learning styles and I added my observation that her students often imitated her hand gestures, but rarely her full body demonstrations. For example, when the dancers were at the *barre* and the teacher demonstrated full out, the dancers often watched attentively then performed the exercise with the music. However, when that teacher demonstrated a *barre* exercise with her hands, most of the dancers mimicked with the use of their hands (Field notes 10 Oct 2014).

It was the teacher's awareness of individual learning, as well as her philosophy that ballet technique can and should be adapted to the body performing it, that led to her development of ITD. She stated that the over-rotation of the feet for the capacity of the individual dancer is a strategy that she will never employ. However, she felt that many people believe that it is 180 degree rotation when standing in positions of the feet, that makes "classical ballet" traditional and pure (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). She explained:

...somebody Classical would argue that this [ITD] can get the same shape and the same movements, the same qualities, but the lower half I'm just not going to do it, I am a wreck because of [forcing turn out], I'm not going to do that to anybody...for sure it [ITD] would give people their maximum rotation and all those things, but that extra thing that makes classical ballet classical ballet for a lot of people ...I think where the IMAGE TECH doesn't lend, I don't want to say not lend itself to ballet, but where it won't necessarily go, I can't go to pushing the heel back in fifth, pushing the toes back in fifth. So the base, whatever they are doing with their legs and feet will never look like it, I'm not going to do that. (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014)

It is her acceptance of the individual physical capabilities of the students that she said had prompted students who came to the program and were placed in higher levels of ballet to request individual sessions with her regarding specific issues. For example, one male dancer was placed in a higher level of ballet, but requested coaching for *cou-de-pied* (Personal interview 18 Feb 2015). In discussing the intersection of gender and the

practice of ITD, the teacher explained that many of the male dancers were interested in private coaching and that the student interest was not gender-specific. She suggested that the reason the *Pointe 2* class seemed to grasp the work more effectively was the length of time that they had been practicing ITD and the frequency per week, as some of the dancers took her class four days per week in their first-year and some were taking it four days per week during the current year.

### Student Perspectives Resulting from Email Interviews

The students' experiences within the classes made up half of the student-teacher communication and in a student-centered pedagogy their voices were particularly important to the progression of the teaching strategies and the achievement of learning outcomes. Within the research period, I emailed the students multiple times reminding them that their voices were important to this project. I explained that ultimately, I could not contextualize the student-teacher communication without their feedback. Four students responded generously to the interview questions and they all seemed pleased to be asked for their opinions. For example, Tara wrote, "Thank you for taking such an interest in the students' opinions" (Email correspondence 9 June 2015). This statement acknowledges that the students may perceive my persistent interest in the student experience to be a unique fixation, regardless of whether or not that is in fact the case. The topics that emerged from the student interviews included: comments regarding the somatic approach taken in ballet class, the students' personal applications and extension of the concepts facilitated by the teacher, their relationship to their bodies in relation to ballet, as well as the use of ITD in recovery from injury.

## Engaging in a Somatic Approach to Ballet

The students recognized and voiced how the teacher worked in a different way than past teachers or with whom they presently train at the school. Serena stated, “In [the teacher’s] ballet class I feel that her instruction is at such a high level of mind-body connection [that] it demands your complete commitment, openness, and *internal focus* (Email interview 8 June 2015). Sara recognized the communicative qualities of the class and stated:

[The teacher’s] ballet class is a special class in the way that information is given and received. [The teacher] offers a somatic approach to getting specific results in the body with focuses on alignment, energetic lines of energy, whole-body integration, presence, energetic oppositions, dynamic ranges of the body, and more. Receiving the information is all up to the student as it takes a heightened internal focus to apply the concepts. (Email interview 3 June 2015)

Due to the requirement of internal focus and heightened self-awareness, the teacher recognized that some of the students were not completely committed to her method and “many of them” would “never do it again” after they left her class (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014).

It was the teacher’s strategy of allowing the dancer to approach the work from their personal perspective, and within their physical capabilities, that resonated with multiple students who participated in email interviews. The student interviews reflected an appreciation for the teacher’s ability to allow them to be “unique artists” and dance within their bodies’ physical capacities rather than striving for an external ideal. Serena stated:

She doesn’t view her students’ bodies as objects that need to be fixed and molded into perfection, instead she sees each one of us as unique artists and gives to us valuable tools (concepts, visual imagery) to add to our tool belt to help us become the best dancers that we can be... [The teacher] recognizes

that each student has a unique build with various degrees of limitations and hyper mobility. Instead of disregarding this, she helps each individual strengthen their hyper mobility and improve their limitations, not by forcing ballet's ideal standards and technique, but by allowing each dancer to find their own way to this ideal technique through their exploration of her concepts...each dancer is the sculptor of their own unique body, and it is through the medium of her instruction and concepts that we have been able to work towards and find ballet's ideal technique. (Email interview 8 June 2015)

Serena's insight into the need for balance between stretching and strengthening in her training stems partly from the school's comprehensive conditioning program, as well as the teacher's communication regarding anatomical concepts.

The students were asked if the teacher's anatomical and somatic approach altered their relationship to ballet. The replies held common themes including the students' new found empowerment and confidence when performing in ballet classes. Tara stated:

Now that I know what muscles I need to engage, or relax, or elongate when I am moving, I could truly close my eyes and establish a properly aligned shape. That factor has shifted my mindset of ballet, from being a genre of dance that only looks "beautiful" from the front, where the mirror tells me I look pretty; to a genre of dance that feels full bodied, and takes up space in all directions, where "beautiful" means confident and powerful. (Email interview 9 June 2015)

Another aspect of the method that appealed to the students was the idea that anatomically-based ballet training could facilitate success, efficiency of movement and improved technique in other forms of dance, as well as improve the dancer's capacity for choreography. Jennifer explained:

It has really opened my eyes to the way my body works and has given me so many methods to get myself ready for other classes, rehearsals, shows, etc. Instead of approaching the class with the idea that we are trying to become ballet dancers, she teaches how we can use ballet to prepare our body for contemporary work. This is freeing in the sense that you do not have to try to make yourself look like a ballet dancer, but can instead find your method to accomplish the movement. (Email interview 1 June 2015)

This shift from the demands of the external aesthetic of ballet to an internal focus and motivation was experienced and appreciated by all of the students who responded to the email interview. As Jennifer explained, the students felt free to manipulate and adapt the concepts as needed (Email interview 1 June 2014).

Sara explained how her own perception of her body had changed as a result of the teacher's approach. Her perspective on ballet technique shifted when she began to apply the teacher's concepts. She stated:

I now think of ballet as a sort of systematic approach to energy and alignment. I used to think that I did not have the "ballet body" and therefore, that I would never be able to do ballet well. That is a completely false statement. Ballet is a functional organization of the body. When I apply [the teacher's] concepts my body feels good and I feel connected in ways that allows more freedom in my body. This is a real freedom; ballerinas are miraculous for the amount of freedom they can attain while simultaneously being in check with their alignment and energy throughout their bodies... Allowing myself to experience the creative headspace during a ballet class and beyond has heightened my enjoyment and curiosity of dance. (Email interview 3 June 2015)

Sara's ideas that ballet is both a "functional organization of the body," and a "systematic approach to energy and alignment," are complex and multifaceted notions that were explored within the teacher's classes.

#### Individual Application and Extension of Concepts

The students recognized the strength of the teacher's ability to individually correct them and adapt her concepts to their bodies. Tara explained that she respected and "loved" how the teacher's concepts were constantly being re-invented and "even changed" by both their adaptation to, and application by individual students (Email

interview 9 June 2015). Tara explained how the teacher consistently tailored her corrections to the individual dancer. She stated:

The way that [the teacher] corrects her students is very informative to both her and the student involved. She formulates a correction for a student by analyzing his/her body type, how he/she responds to constructive criticism, what his/her intentions are for that class, and also what he/she is aspiring to in the future. Because of this, her corrections are extremely personal. (Email interview 9 June 2015)

In the above comment, the notion that the student is informing the teacher, demonstrates the teacher's openness, adaptability and willingness to learn from the students in her classes. This quality was apparent and present in all of the observed classes.

The students who responded to the email interview questions discussed their personal application of the teacher's concepts. Serena and Sara have both developed pre-class rituals based on the work. Serena explained that the following routine took her five seconds to perform, and she developed it from multiple concepts that she learned over the year. She stated that she "borrowed" some images to create this ritual (Email interview 8 June 2015). Serena explained:

Before stepping into my first 5th position of the day I use my hands to help guide me through this imagery:

- (1) I stand in *plié* on back foot in 1st position
- (2) I flex my other foot in *coupé devant* and close it into 5th position and stretch both legs down into the floor
- (3) pulling my hands together at low abdominals into a combined fist—whilst I lift and imagine a small sphere forming in my visceral centre
- (4) from this gathered fist, I use my thumbs to pull down into a triangle toward my hip flexors—whilst sending my energy down from my hip flexors through my legs and feet and passed the studio's floor
- (5) I repeat the 4th step behind me, creating 3 dimensional tripod/tree

(Email interview 8 June 2015)

This comment demonstrates how Serena physically and mentally adapted ITD to prepare herself to perform each day.



In her email interview, Sara included a list of the lessons she has learned from the teacher's classes. She explained:

[The teacher's] class has taught me:

- ease into a ballet class by getting in tune with what your body feels like that day
- the application of concepts and achievement may take time, it is about repetition and checking back in with those images in your body. If you can feel a concept working in your body, you can recreate that feeling.
- there is no need to strenuously push your body into positions that it does not easily go.
- all bodies function differently
- IT IS A NEVER ENDING RESEARCH! (Email interview 3 June 2015)

The above examples of the influence that the teacher's class had on the students reflects the teacher's goal of developing autonomous students, who can self-correct and leave "with a suitcase" full of information to use in their future careers.

#### ITD as a Tool for Rehabilitation and/or Postural Correction

The teacher developed ITD in response to her own injuries and weaknesses as a dancer. Therefore, it is relevant to note that the students also found the technique useful when dealing with injury, as well as with chronic conditions that affected their dance technique. For example, Tara revealed that she had dealt with scoliosis all of her life and there were concepts that helped her to better negotiate her ballet technique. Tara explained:

The ideas that involve the torso in relation to back gestures work really well for me. I have dealt with pretty severe scoliosis my whole life, so back gestures were always confusing and challenging to me. [The teacher's] concepts of opposition in the torso and back leg helped me to understand the directions that happen inside and outside my body while creating those shapes. (Email interview 9 June 2015)

Gaining a better understanding of their dancing bodies was a theme of the email interviews and in this case resulted in Tara feeling able to deal with a chronic physical situation.

Although Jennifer did not have a chronic condition, she dealt with “various injuries” while at the school. She revealed that she met with the teacher privately for coaching regarding different “tools” that would help her to recover from, and prevent, injury (Email interview 1 June 2015). Jennifer explained that she had “hyperextended knees and a hypermobile frame” and that the teacher taught her “vital tools to maintain alignment and prevent injury” (Email interview 1 June 2015). Similarly, Sara sustained two injuries while at the school and stated that since applying the teacher’s concepts she had been “injury free” and she felt she had “less daily strain” on her body (Email interview 3 June 2015). Additionally, Sara explained, “Specifically, my knees, feet, and back now have much better alignment and control than I had before taking [the teacher’s] class. [She] has helped me tremendously with my hyper-mobile joints that have been troublesome in the past” (Email interview 3 June 2015). All of these examples illustrate the success that the teacher has had in realizing her goals for ITD.

#### Difficulties with the Application of ITD

The teacher expressed frustration when discussing her position opposite ballet teachers who are taking different approaches to ballet technique. She understood that the application of her concepts was difficult when the students were faced with alternative modes of ballet instruction that did not lend themselves to the internal focus that her approach warrants. She explained that with the exception of the men’s teacher, no one

else was asking for “any in depth work” (Personal interview 18 Feb 2015). Serena echoed the teacher’s concerns as she described her first year at the school. She stated:

My first year in training with [the teacher] was a little frustrating. I had another ballet teacher during the same year that focused on different aspects of ballet. I always tried to apply [the teacher's] concepts in the other class, but oftentimes, I struggled to reach the places I could get to in [the teacher's] classes. This place that I could reach in [the teacher’s] class [included] a sensitivity to my body that allowed me to easily control my body and therefore, have much more confidence. (Email interview 3 June 2015)

Serena’s comment reflects the teacher’s realization that the students had to be patient with themselves in her class in order to facilitate the internal focus needed to apply the concepts. The teacher explained that she had to teach the new students to focus and endure the longer more internally focused *barre* work, which resulted in her strategies of taking *barre* exercises into the centre as well as having the students perform corrections as she gave them (Personal interview 10 Oct 2014).

Another challenge to the successful application of the anatomical concepts and imagery was students’ misunderstanding of the anatomical cues. Tara explained:

One of [the teacher’s] concepts that has not worked for me is the idea of the Sartorius coming forward and up (to help turnout). Unfortunately, I think that I took that concept too far and began to underuse my deep outward rotators...I just misunderstood that the Sartorius comes forward AS WELL AS the deep outward rotators engage: they are partners. (Email interview 9 June 2015)

In this case the student realized her misinterpretation. However, it stands to question how many other dancers misunderstood the concepts or could not grasp the vocabulary at all.

#### Discussion: Moments of Presence and Absence

I experienced many moments at this school when I was fully present in the experience of music, dance and collaboration between students and teacher. However,

simultaneously I was absent as I did not consciously exist in these moments of becoming engrossed and involved in the class. These moments are part of my kinesthetic reaction as a dancer and teacher. My field notes recorded how I suddenly realized that I had disappeared into the class. I wrote, “my entire being was joy” and there “was not any other way that I could have been more joyful than when I was lost in the experience of hearing the haunting music and feeling the beautiful movement” (Field notes 8 Oct 2014). I wrote, “this class makes me want to dance” (Field notes 17 Nov 2014). The freedom that the dancers experienced in applying ballet to their own bodies made me feel as though I could stand up each day and join the class without being noticed as an outsider. The sense of inclusivity and acceptance was overwhelming to me. I have never experienced a ballet class in which I had not felt judged. Even in the last few years, as an experienced dancer and teacher, when I took classes I always felt as though I was being watched and judged. That is not to say that I was being judged harshly; however, my experience contrasts with the atmosphere that was facilitated by the S2 teacher’s ability to make ballet accessible to, and comfortable for, her students.

One captivating exercise that the teacher used in all classes (in all three sessions) was *attitude* swings taken into the centre during the *barre* portion of the class. After performing *attitude* swings at the *barre*, the students moved to face the mirror and performed them in the centre. The arms came up across their chest in opposition to the lifted leg, which may have originated with the teacher’s application of somatic practices and/or images. This pattern was established before I arrived. The music stopped after the set exercise, with the dancers having finished with their leg in *attitude derrière*. In silence the dancers slowly and thoughtfully performed *ronds de jambes en dedans* with the lifted

leg *en attitude* to then transfer their weight to step forward and repeat on the other side. The dancers moved in silence and at their own pace. When they arrived at the mirror, they did not stop but repeated the exercise in reverse to travel backwards; when they ran out of space they took time to balance while waiting for their classmates to finish the exercise. The internal focus that came from the application of somatic practice, coupled with the visual feedback from the mirror made the experience intense for me as an observer. The dancers were dually engaged in internal and external focus. As an observer, I was captivated and fully involved in the work; I was sitting very still and experiencing the moment almost as though I was performing. This involvement in the performance happened often during this exercise and I began to look forward to it each day.

### Kinesthetic Dialogue and Horizontal Mentoring

In my last interview with the S2 teacher on February 18, 2015, I spoke more than usual because I was communicating some of the information that I had gathered over the year. The following is one of my closing statements to the teacher:

This is the thing that I am putting my finger on in terms of the work you are doing with the women. The IMAGE TECH allows them to have it [ballet] as a somatic practice rather than an external “I have to do this” superficiality: I am doing this from my inside out and today. I was so impressed by the fact that they are all working within themselves, but they all have a uniform look. Not that that is important, but from a Classical ballet standpoint it is interesting that you are actually *achieving* that by having them work from the inside out.

However, despite what I consider unique and progressive modes of student-teacher communication that resulted in my observations of a ballet aesthetic that was somewhat uniform, the teacher’s desire to make the students autonomous and give them tools to self correct actually limited the kinesthetic dialogue.

The kinesthetic dialogue may have been limited because the teacher did not attempt to project her style onto the students as she wanted them to develop their own ways of moving. She did not want the students all trained to achieve a traditional aesthetic; rather she wanted independent dancers who work with their bodies in a safe and efficient way regardless of the appearance of uniformity. It appears that ballet's demand to conform to codified technique and style fosters the type of kinesthetic dialogue that this research was conceived to explore. There were moments in S2 that demonstrated the corporeal connection. However, the majority of moments of kinesthetic collaboration were based on tactile, verbal and visual cues rather than strictly gesture or movement cues.

This observation brings into question the efficacy of vertical mentoring versus horizontal mentoring as educational methods in a classical dance form. Sally Ness defines classical dance forms as, "tradition-bound, technically developed, and hierarchically institutionalized varieties of dance" (13). Furthermore, in their study, Keinänen and Gardner explain that Balanchine wanted to pass on his style in its "purest unchanged form" through vertical mentoring, which they associate with classical ballet (175). Similarly, Serena explained that other ballet teachers' corrections were "more like demands," while this teacher adapts to the student's individual body and allows them to be unique artists (Email interview 8 June 2015). Therefore, the S2 teacher adopted horizontal mentoring in a traditionally vertical domain. It appeared that the kinesthetic dialogue in this study was restricted by the teacher's unimposing approach to the student's stylistic development. The teacher's goals of autonomy and individual artistry limited the student-teacher corporeal communication, as she allowed them to have an

internal focus rather than influencing them from an external aesthetic.

There was an incident however, that illustrated that the teacher was not immune to the perfectionism of years of training as a principal dancer. After the last class in the November session, the teacher expressed her frustration at the situation in which she had unexpectedly taught a class including students who had never heard her concepts. Despite my perception that the class had been a resounding success, the teacher was upset.

Unfortunately we did not get to discuss her disappointment further. At the time, I felt that I had observed the familiar perfectionist viewpoint of a professional dancer, and I did clearly see how the new students did not grasp much of the communication the teacher was attempting. However, I felt that I had observed a class in which the teacher had performed brilliantly by creating a cohesive class, despite varying degrees of student understanding. Additionally, the students had worked diligently and accomplished some of the new technical concepts. The teacher's discontent with the situation was something I would have liked to explore further. This situation demonstrated the resistance that the teacher felt existed toward somatic practice in ballet. She was more demanding and autocratic in this class than I witnessed at any other time in the observation period and that changed the dynamic of the class, moving it away from her stated philosophy and daily pedagogy.

### Limbo

Limbo is a term that the teacher used to describe the "in between state" that a dancer experienced when they were moving without being clear about their intention, direction or focus. The teacher would tell the dancers not to be in limbo in movements

such as a *temps lié* through fourth position to *arabesque*. She wanted them to move with intention and transfer their weight fully. She spoke about stacking the bones and not allowing themselves to be in limbo. She encouraged them to put the bones into alignment right away in order to facilitate balance. She often mentioned the supporting leg and hip, but without reference to engaging muscles (Field notes 18 Nov 2014).

I questioned the teacher on her use of images relating to bones and being in limbo because I felt that in the November session the students were not engaging their muscles as actively as they could. My field notes stated, “Does the bone focus take the focus away from muscular engagement too much?” (18 Nov 2014). This was accompanied by an example of a student transferring weight well onto a completely parallel supporting leg with no deep rotation in the hip (18 Nov 2014). I also found that the students in the Ballet 1 class were lacking ballet positions that had cohesiveness within their whole body. Their limbs were disconnected from the position as a whole. For example, in an *arabesque* they were unaware of the arms in relation to the legs, the arms were “being sent” from the back but not into a specific place in relation to their body.

I asked the teacher if she ever incorporated eye-line or directional advice for the placement of the arms to help facilitate a more balletic position? She replied that she taught in layers and this was one of the initial layers of the foundation and that the muscles came later in her plan. She explained that eventually more balletic positions would be reached. This realization of balletic positions and aesthetic was evident in the *Pointe 2* class, as discussed in the above excerpt from my field notes. During that class, I was fully aware of the efficacy of the teacher’s method in developing a class of dancers



who looked similar yet trained from a somatic practice that facilitates individual application of balletic technique.

### Summary

Similar to Chapter 4, the guiding research questions facilitated the recording and reporting of multiple aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication. Despite the S1 and S2 teachers creating seemingly disparate atmospheres, the students in both studies perceived the teachers' modes of communication to be as effective. In this chapter, the research questions were addressed using the same framework as S1. The first research question regarding what type of verbal and non-verbal communication was observed in this study, was answered by the reporting of extensive data within two categories: tactile cues and teaching strategies, and language and kinesthetic dialogue. The second question addressing moments that illustrate kinesthetic dialogue within the pedagogy was addressed through the report of observed classes, as well as through information listed in Table 17. Examples of Kinesthetic Dialogue, on p. 171. As in the previous chapter, these examples of kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue and finally kinesthetic collaboration address the third question regarding the triggering of the body memory of the students. In Chapter 6, the *a priori themes* present in the data of both studies are reported, including mentoring relationships, common strategies of the teachers such as anatomical concepts and motivation, as well as the teachers' contrasting modes of tactile and verbal communication.

## **Chapter 6: Further Findings**

This chapter contains findings across S1 and S2 based on the data collected, critical insights into ballet pedagogy, my professional experience, as well as my personal kinesthetic reactions to the student-teacher communication. Within the studies two overarching pedagogical themes were identified regarding the manifestation of the student-teacher relationship in the ballet studio environments. The themes were: the application of traditional pedagogical strategies with their accompanying ideologies, and the incorporation of innovative techniques that facilitated a progressive approach to learning ballet technique. These *a priori* themes found in the literature were explored in Chapter 2. Their applicability to the results from both environments allows for comparisons and contrasts to be made between the two studies. First, the mentoring relationships are considered in relation to recent literature, and then common strategies of the teachers are considered including anatomical concepts and motivation. Finally, the teachers' contrasting modes of tactile and verbal communication are reported.

### **Traditional and Innovative Pedagogical Strategies**

Scholars have traced the genealogy of certain explanatory phrases and pedagogical strategies employed in ballet back to the 1800s, and in many environments these same phrases and strategies are perpetuated today (DeVonyar, 2002; Jackson, 2005; Ritenburg, 2010). This language may be useful in achieving a desired traditional ballet aesthetic; however, these traditional methods do not necessarily consider the individual body and/or individualized learning processes (Jackson, 2005; Ritenburg, 2010; Wilmerding and Krasnow, 2011). Many new innovations are being implemented into ballet pedagogy to

allow for students' inner authority and to reduce their reliance on teacher feedback. Some of these innovations include somatic practices and biological perspectives (anatomical knowledge) being introduced in ballet classes (Burnidge, 2012; Kirk, 2014). The results in each study do not fit neatly into one or the other delineated areas of pedagogy. In the studies, ballet's codified vocabulary and established ideal aesthetic provided a baseline for the technical expectations and proposed learning outcomes for the students. The traditions of ballet training established an underlying common expectation for their work ethic as it relates to a professional career in dance. The common goal of producing professional dancers resulted in many similar teaching strategies and expectations of student performance, regardless of observable contrasts in the teachers' teaching philosophies.

One of the areas in which pedagogical results were disparate regarded the teachers' mentoring styles. Data from the study indicate that the S1 teacher fostered a vertical mentoring style as described by Keinänen and Gardner (2004). Gretchen Alterowitz is a ballet teacher moving toward a democratic pedagogy and she explains that ballet's patriarchal roots influence traditional pedagogical strategies, which 20<sup>th</sup> century teachers are critiquing in hopes of altering their trajectory. She explains:

A common theme among these critiques is that authoritarian practices and beliefs tend to be passed down between generations of dance educators. As much as traditional ballet classes teach specific movement vocabulary, body alignment and coordination, they also engage in and impart an ideology that influences teaching, relationships, movement style, appearance and aesthetic values. (10)

Ballet is the primary focus of the S1 school, which has a long history of producing professional international ballet dancers. Therefore, the ideology transmitted through traditional pedagogy, as well as ballet's aesthetic norms, were more prevalent in the S1 school than in the S2 school which focuses on training

professional contemporary dancers. The S1 teacher admitted that he teaches the way he was taught (Personal interview 13 Nov 2014). However, he also expressed that he was actively looking to evolve as a teacher. It is well documented that “teachers’ beliefs derive directly from personal experiences in a subject. These beliefs have been shown to influence how teachers structure tasks and interact with learners” (Warburton 10).

The S2 teacher had undeniable democratic and egalitarian pedagogical values stemming from her use of somatic practices, which mirrored Keinänen and Gardner’s definition of horizontal mentoring. Additionally, although the inclusion of somatic practice in ballet has sufficient psychological benefits to warrant its addition, it also has the potential to change not *what* is taught in dance but *how* it is taught (Burnidge 37). The S2 teacher began her teaching career by consciously rejecting methods that had been used within her own training in order to move toward an egalitarian approach. She fostered the students’ autonomy and inner authority through their use of inner focus and proprioception as learning tools.

Having unintentionally observed a male teacher who was teaching men and a female teacher who was teaching women *en pointe*, I assumed that conventional expectations of ballet’s long established gender roles would enter this discussion. However, the teachers’ approaches proved to be more gender neutral than expected. Both teachers were observed teaching men and women and despite gender differences the dancers performed the same exercises, including jumps traditionally for men, and all dancers were given similar feedback. This gender neutrality was possibly grounded by the teachers’ common application of anatomical knowledge. In both studies, the teachers

approached the work with the same attitude, whether they taught classes that included both male and female students, or whether they taught classes consisting of all male dancers or all female dancers. The suggestion of performing masculine and feminine movement was never observed in either study. The requested artistry in both studies referred to the dancers' personal embodiment of the work rather than the dancers projecting a more masculine or feminine performance of the movement.

During approximately six of eleven observed S1 classes, the teacher had a female student participating in the male class<sup>47</sup> and I did not observe any noticeable changes in the teacher's demeanor or pedagogical strategies. The female student was attending the class due to her recovery from hip surgery. The teacher corrected her at the *barre* with the same strategies he used with the male students, with the exception of the overtly physical tactile correction. The teacher touched her firmly, and he was as insistent about her applying corrections as he was with the male students. I did not note any overt changes in his teaching when the female student was present and she reacted to his methods with a calm acceptance and diligent work ethic. Although likely the same age as the male dancers, the female dancer was technically stronger than her male counterparts. In approximately half of the five classes I observed, she executed the men's class *en pointe*, including turns and *adage* in the center, despite not being allowed to execute jumps full out.

Similarly, a gender neutral attitude was observed at the S2 school as the teacher taught both Ballet 1 (12 male and 12 female dancers) and *Pointe 2* (approximately 20 female dancers) during all three visits, she did not change her approach to suit the gender

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<sup>47</sup> The female student who was present in the first week of observing signed an informed consent form. However, she was not present in the other two sessions and did not participate in the focus group or survey. A second female student was observed for only one class and did not sign a consent form.

of the students. When questioned about the higher expectations for the understanding of concepts in the all female *Pointe 2* class, the teacher explained that they had had more time with the work and some of the dancers took her class four days per week. As mentioned in the S2 results the teacher's perspective on the gender neutrality of ITD was clear. She found an equal number of male and female dancers requested private coaching in ITD even if the male dancers had never taken her class (Chapter 5, p. 179).

Aspects fostered within the student-teacher relationship communicate ideologies. Therefore, although I did not witness a change in teacher behaviors when approaching students of the opposite sex, ideological implications of their communication was at times gendered. For example, the S1 teacher fostered competition between the male dancers without necessarily being conscious of how his teaching strategies affected the dancers. One example is discussed in the results (Chapter 4, p. 139). This example cites the teacher's abandonment of his approach to having each student recite the choreography of the upcoming evaluation class exercises in favour of asking the two dancers who had thus far been the most successful at remembering the choreography. The other dancers, when flustered, had remained composed but they blushed and they reverted to silent stillness when they could not show the exercise. This is reflective of the patriarchal tradition of competition serving as a pedagogical tool (Stinson 1998).

In contrast, the S2 teacher often displayed a feminist and democratic ideology. For example, she had the dancers work in partners to feel the application of her concepts. As explained in Chapter 5 (p.169), while developing the theme of anchor points, the teacher suggested that the students sense their sit bones underneath them when transferring from one supporting leg to the other, as well as during a *fouetté* movement from *arabesque* to

*effacé* with the leg *devant*. She had the dancers work in pairs and one dancer executed this *fouetté* while being pulled by their partner. The students gave each other feedback regarding the internal feeling of coming upright that was grounded in their image of the anchors being underneath them. This type of peer-to-peer communication and subsequent learning and personal exploration shifts the power dynamics in the classroom, disrupting the conventional teacher-student hierarchy, and demonstrating a democratic teaching philosophy. This type of teaching aligns with feminist ideologies. Additionally, the reinforcement of cultural expectations of silence and passivity for women (Stinson 1998, 28) was disproven in another aspect of the research. Both teachers encouraged verbal communication during class. However, the female dancers (S2) asked more questions and gave more responses than the male dancers (S1). This observation is directly linked to the teaching philosophy. The role of silence is discussed in Chapter 7.

#### Interpretations of Embodied Communication

Upon reflection and interpretation of the data, the contrasts in the atmosphere of the two environments as well as the differences in the student-teacher relationships emerged as themes. There were contrasts in the physical properties of the studios in each study and as Ann Cooper-Albright explains, “often the very architectural conditions of the room help to determine the social dynamic of the bodies that inhabit that space” (251). This statement proved true as I reflected on my kinesthetic reaction to the experiences of observing the classes in each location. The S1 building was bright and new, having opened in 2005. It was cool in the studios and the air circulated well, which was in stark contrast to the S2 studios that are in an older building and were warm with little air

movement. I was often cold during the S1 classes and needed a shawl to avoid shivering, whereas in the S2 classes, I was always warm and I learned to wear sleeveless shirts to be comfortable. The S1 studios smelled clean and fresh while the S2 studios smelled familiar and comforting. For instance, in the S2 studio the scent of the medicated rub applied to sore muscles and the smell of dance shoes made me feel completely at home. In the more formal setting at the S1 school, I felt like an audience member despite my welcomed inclusion both in the studios and on stage. Most of the time at the S2 school, I felt that I could either have taught the class, or participated as a dancer as I felt at ease in the atmosphere. My field notes recorded how I perceived the students' similar yet contrasting situations. I wrote these notes at the S2 school after having observed the previous week at S1. I stated:

The sterile studio in [S1] created a formality and coldness that led to the difficult atmosphere, whereas here [S2] there is warmth created by the humanity and reality of carrying your backpack and street shoes. [Here it is] the reality of a dancing life, not the ethereal world of classical ballet brought into the studio, but the reality of bodies in training and lives put on hold to do that training. These dancers live this dance life the same way [as the students in S1], rather with a grounded reality that the dancers at [S1] don't have yet; they [S1 students] are still dreaming of companies and solos, whereas the [S2 students] deal in training their bodies to be artists anywhere. (Field notes 17 Nov 2014)

Despite my perceptions of the contrasting atmospheres of the studio environments, the formal feel of the classes while they were in progress was very similar, as was the respect shown for the teachers. In both studies, the teacher and the students had little contact with one another outside of the studio, and virtually no contact outside of the school environment during the time that they were in the student-teacher relationship. The exceptions to this norm were the S2 students who requested private coaching to help them apply the somatic practices for improved alignment or injury recovery. However,



my impression was that the teacher was not fulfilling as many coaching requests as she had in past years due to a controversy regarding the introduction of somatic practice in the ballet curriculum.

I perceived the personal relationships cultivated in the studio to be different in each study. At the S1 school, I felt that the relationship reflected that of a father mentoring a son, and at the S2 school the relationship appeared to be a collegial mentorship. The differing relationships could have been due to factors such as student ages and the teachers' philosophical differences. Principal dancer Edward Villella states in his book, *Prodigal Son: Dancing For Balanchine in a World of Pain and Magic*, that he approached his interactions with Balanchine with "trepidation," and he felt that he was "like a stepchild trying to please the great father who had no use at all for his inadequacies" (77). This passage reflected my perception of the young men trying to please the S1 teacher. In contrast, the S2 teacher cultivated a more egalitarian pedagogy and there was a reciprocal learning relationship in which the teacher was not afraid to adapt and change her strategies, anatomical concepts and images when a student offered information that facilitated collaboration. As her students discussed in interviews, the teacher individually adapted her concepts. The students stated that she learned from their individual applications of her work, mirroring the somatic approach that "honors and gives voice to the holistic knowledge and individuality of each student, reforming the model of 'teacher as all knowing' " (Burnidge 40). The idea that both the teacher and the students are learning in the interaction generally creates an egalitarian approach to pedagogy that requires a certain amount of confidence on the part of the teacher. I recognized the teacher's unique relationship to her students and her distinct pedagogy

from the first observation class when the teacher immediately used the concepts of directing energy and anatomical images to internally focus the students' attention.

My personal reaction to the S1 communication and traditional student-teacher dynamic shifted during the course of the research as I became more informed by the perspectives of the participants. The hierarchical relationship of the teacher and the students, coupled with the teacher's admitted need for a high level of respect within the studio, influenced my perception of the physical stature of the teacher. My initial reaction to the power relationship in the S1 studio was the impression that the teacher was taller than the students. The S1 teacher had a commanding and demanding presence. On the fourth observation day in the first session, he stood behind one of the dancers at the *barre*. From my perspective at the front of the room, I could see that the student was a few inches taller than the teacher and I was stunned. With all of the notes and observations that I was so diligently recording, the teacher's strong presence and the respect that he commanded gave me the impression that he was larger in stature than the students.

My impression may have been influenced by the teacher's postures. For instance, when the teacher sat to observe the class, he often leaned back and his feet were often spread wide. Sometimes he would rest his arm along the back of an adjacent chair. These expansive postures are reflective of power. Huang et al. define power as, "asymmetric control over valued resources in social relationships" and they explain "power is determined in any given situation by interpersonal relationships," with a source of legitimate power coming from "an individual's role or rank within an organizational hierarchy" (95). By this definition, the teacher had legitimate power, which added to the

already asymmetrical power imbalance of the student-teacher relationship. This overt power imbalance added to my initial discomfort in observing the classes.

In both studies the teachers found that when attempting verbal dialogue with the class, the students were quiet and they did not readily volunteer to engage in group discussions.<sup>48</sup> Although it was a possibility that the students were incapable of answering the questions, as an observer I felt that they were stopped by unidentified factors. I wonder if etiquette engrained through years of ballet training, as well as multiple teachers requiring younger students to be silent during training, was difficult for the students to overcome in their current environments. As Johnston suggests, in traditional ballet training “conformity and obedience of the student are valued over open communication. Discussion between teacher and student, or among students, is actively discouraged” (3). Additionally, when students train in commercial dance studios prior to attending these schools, the teacher’s time with the students is often limited and the teacher faces pressure to meet client expectations regarding their children’s progress. Therefore, commercial studio environments are rarely conducive to verbal dialogue during class time, which leaves the students unable to respond to open communication without feeling restricted by their lack of experience. Although these teachers encouraged students to respond, it was hard to define the factors that limited the students’ willingness to participate.

The perceived pressure of speaking out in a traditionally silent studio environment was a factor that I felt played a role in the students’ hesitation; they might have believed that their voices would assume equal status to that of the teacher. Additionally, the pressure of contributing to the discussion effectively or “correctly” seemed to limit the

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<sup>48</sup> This comparison applied to the S2 Ballet 1 class, who were closer in age to the S1 students.

student response. The students were in a performative atmosphere and they were highly motivated to succeed in their participation regardless of whether the task was physical or intellectual. In the S1 class, it seemed that the students' comprehension of the teacher's English or accent might have been a factor in the students' hesitation to speak out. I often felt that some, or most, of the young men did not understand what the teacher was asking. However, that may not have been the case and I unfortunately did not have the opportunity to explore verbal communication/miscommunication in depth.

### Common Strategies for Technical Development

The common goal of producing professional dancers fostered multiple similarities in the teachers' expectations. First, this section discusses similarities in anatomical concepts and cueing as both teachers had worked with neuromuscular retrainer Irene Dowd. The use of anatomical references added a humanizing element to the classes that the traditional class resists due to normalizing aesthetics. Second, this section look at how the traditional class is subject to the motivation/aspiration to achieve ballet vocabulary despite participants' physical constraints, or the extent to which the teacher has a comprehensive understanding of the human body. However, these teachers had anatomical knowledge and actively sought to avoid student injury. Secondly, this section discusses the teachers' common expectations of the students. Due to their long careers as principal dancers, both teachers expected that the students would embark on independent study for self-improvement. The teachers were disappointed when they perceived student progress was delayed due to a lack of engagement in the learning process. Finally, this section addresses examples of how the teachers intuitively dealt with channeling the

students' attention through pedagogical strategies that maintained the students' concentration, thereby facilitating learning.

### Anatomical Concepts and Cueing

The teachers used anatomical concepts to adapt ballet's established and accepted aesthetic to individual bodies. Although the aesthetic requirements and results differed in each study, many of the cues the teachers used were the same. For instance, to achieve a uniform look to the S1 class during an *attitude* position in the centre, the teacher used anatomical and kinesthetic cues.<sup>49</sup> The dancers applied the advice, which resulted in the execution of very similar ideal ballet positions. Kinesthetic cues included prompts to feel the spiral the upper back or focus on the push from the supporting leg to *posé* over the supporting foot when balancing on *demi-pointe*. In S2, similar cues facilitated the achievement of balance in *attitude*. In S2 the *attitude* position/line was adapted to the physical capabilities of the dancers rather than in response to the external ideal aesthetic. Despite the same anatomical cues being applied in both situations, the results were dramatically different from an external perspective. The S1 class physically achieved a uniform look, which approached an ideal ballet position, but the advice did not facilitate solid/sustained balance for the dancers. In contrast, the S2 students achieved balance in *attitude* while the position/line was adapted to various physical capabilities, therefore the class did not have a uniform appearance.

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<sup>49</sup> Kinesthetic cues are kinesthetic communication based on physical movements, gestures and demonstration that affect the quality and or technical execution of the dancer's movement. Kinesthetic cues draw on the body memory of the student, often generated through small gestures by the teacher that facilitate an understanding of complex technique learned over many hours of training. For example, in the previously mentioned anecdote regarding my kinesthetic dialogue with students, the gesture toward my ribs to indicate the spiral in *arabesque* prompted the students to engage their entire body in a complex position, which held the quality of movement/spiral despite being an ending/static position for the exercise.

The use of neutral pelvic alignment is another example of an anatomical principle used by both teachers. They insisted on neutral pelvic alignment being central to success in dance. In one session, the S1 teacher began his class with parallel press-ups, alternating feet, in order to separate the legs from the pelvis. He had the dancers look in the mirror after this exercise to see if they were able to facilitate the physical manifestation of the crease in their hips by relaxing tension, and/or not gripping their hip flexors. He communicated that the placement of the pelvis was the key and once the alignment was correct that the technique would be easier (Field notes 10 Nov 2014). The S2 teacher used the same principles of neutral pelvic alignment and separating the legs from the torso with the addition of imagery to facilitate their application. Tara explained:

Her concepts of "weighted legs" and "legs going into the ground" have also really helped me. I have struggled with separating my torso from my legs, as I always just grip all of my muscles and then cannot move the two separately. Those concepts about the legs have completely transformed my relationship with the ground, and the way I use my *port de bras* with legwork. (Email interview 9 June 2015)

Additionally, a recurring anatomical image<sup>50</sup> within both studies was the use of the visceral sphere. This concept is drawn from the work of Irene Dowd. The visceral sphere is a dynamic image that provides dancers with a sense of movement while engaging abdominal muscles, an action which theoretically avoids the dancer holding tension. The dancer imagines a ball in their pelvis and they can narrow, squeeze or rotate the ball as required. The visceral sphere is a concept used in relation to engaging the abdominal

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<sup>50</sup> Dance scientists Donna Krasnow and Virginia Wilmerding state, "anatomical imagery uses specific anatomical terminology, but it is presented in a metaphorical sense" (271). For example, in S2 the teacher asked students to feel their leg (femur) "in its home," referring to the placement of the leg in the hip socket and meaning that the leg does not change the neutral alignment of the pelvis when it is lifted to the front or side.

muscles for postural alignment, rotating the pelvis into neutral alignment, or achieving the pelvic alignment required for the performance of positions including *arabesque* and/or *attitude*.

Students in both studies used tactile cues to increase self-awareness while they were dancing. Unlike the S2 students, it was not until the final S1 observation session in June that the students employed this tactic. Initially, I observed one S1 student placing his hand on top of his shoulder in the same way that a very young student might do to facilitate focus on the body and legs without having to concentrate on the arm(s). Instinctively, I knew that the student was cueing his upper back in some way. He later explained how this position helped him release tension in his upper back (see focus group discussion in chapter four). The contrast of this somatic cue in the formal studio was surprising after two sessions without seeing this approach, and this additional learning strategy allowed the comparison to the self-correction in the S2 classes. As the S1 dancers explained in their focus group, they used personal tactile correction to cue formerly communicated technical advice. The S1 teacher did not object to this mode of personal correction, which was also surprising to me as an observer. I expected the teacher to ask the dancers to conform to the performance of the exercises without altering the arms by correcting themselves. However, the teacher was open to the dancers' personal strategies and this was demonstrative of him moving away from traditional training practices.

## Motivation and Preparation for Performance

Despite their pedagogical differences and some contrasting communication strategies, the teachers had a shared expectation that the students would work independently and “do their homework.” This common expectation of intrinsic motivation appeared to stem from the teachers’ professional training and long successful dance careers. Ballet training and performance appeared to have imposed this expectation onto the teachers and they imposed the same presumption onto their students. It appeared that neither of them consciously employed this strategy of expecting students to work between classes to assimilate information, concepts and exercises; rather it was an expectation that the teachers openly associated with ballet training as an unspoken assumption. The teachers expected the students to take an active and central role in their own technical development because that was what they believed was required to be a dancer.

The teachers shared with me anecdotal information in which they referred to the concept of the students “doing their homework.” In their teaching careers, they were both impressed with specific students who took the initiative between classes to learn, adapt and embody concepts and exercises. The S1 teacher stated that, in all his years at the school, there was only one student that he felt was intellectual in his approach to his training. The teacher stated that this intellectual approach was “talent” (Personal interview 13 Nov 2014). He explained that the student was still at the school and another teacher was “enjoying him” (Personal interview 13 Nov 2014). Similarly, the S2 teacher spoke about a student that she admired because the student did her “homework.” She explained that the student went away from the private lesson and subsequently returned



having obviously thought about and applied the concepts (Personal interview 14 Nov 2014). The teacher stated, “as a student you have to put in time and concentration” (Personal interview 14 Nov 2014).

Another expectation in both studies was the students’ maintenance of consistent concentration and unwavering attention to learning during class. However, both teachers felt that the students’ attention was divided between the present class and external influences. The S1 teacher explained that sometimes he would look around and he felt that the dancers were just not engaged with what he was saying (Personal interview 13 Nov 2014). Similarly, the S2 teacher felt that the students were waiting for her class to be over so they could attend the “fun classes” (Personal interview 19 Nov 2014). These negative assessments of student participation reveal the teachers’ desire to engage with their students and to facilitate optimal learning and technical development.

Despite the teachers’ concerns regarding student attention, the dedication of the students in pursuing these highly structured programs of study, confirmed by the data from student responses, demonstrate that the students were highly self-motivated. This arguably made the external pressure I observed from the teachers regarding student evaluations redundant. However, in both studies the teachers used this tactic. As the dancers learned choreography and struggled to remember the exercises, the S1 teacher mentioned the evaluation class several times, adding emphasis to its importance. In an interview, the S2 teacher stated that she had previously given the students a “lecture” to motivate them prior to their written evaluations (19 Nov 2014). In the lecture, she told the students that some of them had not grasped the previously introduced concepts, but that she would be moving to the next theme regardless. This was meant to motivate the

students by informing them that they were not meeting expectations and she felt that this tactic had been successful. Subsequently, I observed the S2 teacher using the already completed written evaluations as further motivation by telling the students that they were not dancing as they had prior to her writing the evaluations. She felt they had reverted to performing in a “superficial” way. The scope of this study did not extend to hearing how individual students react to pressure from an external evaluation of their work. However, in her study of female ballet students, Claire Wootten explained that when a student was motivated by negative feedback, the student found agency through working harder to prove a teacher wrong. Regardless of how they felt personally, the students in Wootten’s study felt that it was important to maintain a professional relationship to sustain the respect in the student-teacher relationship (32).

In all observed classes, students in both studies worked to improve their technique in response to external and internal motivation and maintained a respectful relationship with the teachers. However, one subtle act of resistance outside of the S1 class was revealed in the focus group conversation, as well as in the students’ survey comments. The S1 students referred to their teacher by a shortened version of his surname. During one of the conversations, a student clarified for me to whom they were referring with the nickname. My first reaction upon hearing it voiced (without hesitation) in conversation was to hide a smile. They were not shy about using his nickname with me and it did not appear disrespectful. I interpreted this nickname as a way for the students to humanize the teacher and to possibly resist their feelings of oppression due to the overt power imbalance within the student-teacher relationship. Upon reflection, I realized that the students’ resistance to accepting the teacher as untouchable delighted me. His

humanization through the use of an informal and familiar name appeared to empower the students. The nickname appeared to facilitate the teacher becoming one of the group regardless of his status in their lives and the otherwise asymmetrical power relation.

In the article, “The Many Faces of Nicknames” (1990), Holland undertakes a literature review and states that in addition to illuminating the “functions of nicknames in various cultures, available literature sometimes provocatively hints at the complex and systematic nature among the interrelations of those varying functions and their social environments” (261). If indeed the dancers’ use of a nickname for their teacher is related to issues of status, social control or power, then Holland states a nickname can “serve as a mechanism by which a child can render more manageable those who have power over him,” as can a college student by using nicknames in a similar function for faculty (Holland 261). Holland states that nickname practices can “afford great insight into world view and social dynamics...” (261). Certainly, the use of a nickname for the S1 teacher provided me with insight into how the dancers possibly cope with their daily relationships while living and learning in a closed environment.

The S2 teacher asked the students to call her by her first name. However, when I was within hearing distance, the Ballet 1 students addressed her formally with the use of her surname. For example, when one student was late returning from a break between the *barre* and the centre he apologized formally using her surname. This instance prompted me to inquire what the teacher required. The formal use of her surname seemed to be in contrast to her teaching philosophy, as well as with the relationships that she was attempting to foster with the students. She stated that, although she preferred the students to address her by her first name, it rarely happened. During the *Pointe 2* class, students

also addressed the teacher formally. However, in the email interviews they all addressed the teacher by her first name. I believe this was prompted by my use of the teacher's first name in the interview questions. This could be considered an example of the students' institutionalized behaviour and their recognition of the power imbalance between student and teacher regardless of the teacher attempting to alter their perspective of, and response to, that relationship.

In both studies, the teachers paid special attention to the students' preparedness to perform an exercise. Although explained in contrasting ways, the messages from the teachers were essentially the same. They encouraged the students to be prepared to start each exercise in an attentive, internally focused and physically aware state. The S1 teacher demanded that the students be ready before he asked for the music and insisted that they did not fidget when they stopped between *barre* exercises to correct an aspect of the performance. The S2 teacher suggested that the *Pointe 2* dancers signal to their bodies that they are prepared to go *en pointe* by achieving physical and mental readiness or step into fifth position in a physically aware state. Ultimately, interference in the dancers' attention can negatively affect their performance.

Attention can be defined as "a concentrated mental activity," that can be selective, divisible, shiftable, sustainable and/or limited (Krasnow 98). The training observed in both studies addressed all these aspects of attention. First, the students were required at varying times to select one concept to focus on and/or one source of information including the teacher's corrections, their own proprioception, or visual feedback from the mirror. Additionally, the students' attention was at times divided between sources of information. For example, at times the students would be focused on both the teacher's

bodily communication and the music to achieve desired musicality. The teachers also shifted the students' attention in a variety of ways including shifting attention from images to visual feedback or from musicality to technical execution. More often in the S1 class, the teacher sustained the students attention, having them focus on one aspect of their training for an extended period of time. Finally, the teachers both understood that the students' attention was limited and I never observed the teachers asking for an excessive number of corrections or concepts at one time. The teachers intuitively dealt with the concept of attention in relation to motor learning, which created sound pedagogy in both cases.

#### Contrasting Methods of Communication: Tactile and Verbal Feedback

Although the teachers' pedagogical goals aligned, it was obvious from our first meetings that the teachers had divergent means of communication in professional relationships. The S1 teacher was reserved and quiet, which left me hoping that he would not feel burdened by my presence. In contrast, the first day we met, the S2 teacher offered to have me join her class for the week and hugged me good-bye. The S1 teacher instructed me to dismiss the students from the focus groups at a specific time in all three meetings, whereas the S2 teacher offered me unlimited access to the students via email and asked me to speak freely to them on our final day. As discussed below, the contrasting communication during classes was apparent in the physical and verbal feedback given to the students, which subsequently influenced the students' perceptions of their own technical progress and application of artistry.

## Tactile Student-Teacher Relationship

Physical contact with the students is a topic that the teachers in both studies brought to my attention as an area in which they felt conflicted. Both teachers explained that they had been advised by the schools to be aware of how they touched the students. In the observed classes, the teachers used contrasting qualities when they physically corrected the students. The S1 teacher was deliberate, strong and physical with his adjustments to the young men. The S2 teacher used a light touch, sometimes just above the skin to bring awareness to the areas that the students needed to become conscious of in order to adjust their positions or apply concepts. In her contextualization of touch in its role as a means of transmission in Japanese dance, Hahn explains:

Touch is polysemous. Contact signifies a range of intention, depending on the quality of touch, the emotional content, if any, and where on the body one is touched and by whom or what... Touch is political. Tactile encounters signal actions of information flow and control. (102)

As mentioned in this quote, the potential for touch to be used as a control mechanism was observed as the S1 teacher controlled the students' physical performance of the positions or movements to conform to the balletic ideal. The S2 teacher provided guidance for the students to individually adapt the positions and movements to achieve the ideal position.

A comparable example of the teachers' contrasting tactile communication occurred when the observation sessions for the studies ran consecutively in November 2014. I observed the S1 teacher physically correct *grand battement à la second* and the following week I observed the same technical correction given by the S2 teacher. To correct the alignment, placement and execution, the S1 teacher held the student's leg in second and strongly adjusted his hip and pelvis to be aligned to his satisfaction. He instructed the student to release tension, which resulted in the students mistakenly relaxing his

abdominal muscles rather than isolating and relaxing his hip flexors. The teacher firmly struck his stomach to indicate the mistake. In this situation, I attributed the physicality of the corrections to the male ballet culture, which I was observing as an outsider. I attributed my discomfort to my positionality as a feminist teacher. However, as noted in Chapter 4, one of the students wrote on the survey that he felt the physical corrections could be “abusive” or perhaps just a “bit rough sometimes” (Focus group, 15 Dec 2014). The dancers accepted this treatment and obviously they had not complained to the school, otherwise I assume the physical corrections would have ceased by my final observation session in June. In contrast, one of the women in the S2 class was given the same technical correction when performing *grand battement à la second*. The teacher spent time attempting to direct the energy of the movement as well as the positioning of the pelvis and hip through verbal and kinesthetic communication (hand gestures), as well as light touch (Field notes 18 Nov 2014).

During the action of the *grand battement*, both teachers requested that the student release tension in their hip to allow for the movement of the joint. In addition to the discrepancy in their modes of tactile correction, the teachers’ instructions regarding the implementation of the cue to “release tension” also differed. Generally during this cue, I did not hear the S1 teacher suggest how the students could release the tension in their bodies. However, in conversation, the S1 students appeared to have individualized understanding of how tension manifests itself in their bodies and they discussed personal strategies for releasing that tension (see focus group discussion in Chapter 4). This was their response to the teacher insisting that they release the tension, but not necessarily offering strategies to implement the correction. Generally in dance training students

rarely “think about *not* doing” (Nettl-Foil and Vanier 11). The teacher is asking the students to achieve his correction by “not doing” and this is a complex concept for dancers training in traditional ballet classes.

As a bridge to this idea of “not doing”, the S2 teacher approached tension as a quality that could be transferred to areas of the body to engage muscles or stabilize areas to improve technique or ease of movement. For example, the S2 teacher suggested that to free the shoulder joint the student can take the tension that they feel and apply it to engage muscles in their back to support their spine (Field notes 18 Nov 2014). This strategy was an adaptation for dancers who were used to solving technical issues by actively engaging muscles. Both teachers are acting on the principle of releasing muscles that are causing misalignment and/or difficulty allowing freedom of movement. As I observed in both studies, the concept of releasing tension was challenging to all of the dancers and appeared to contradict their instinct to change the movement through engagement of muscles rather than allowing freedom in the joints.

As previously discussed, in both studies the teachers used touch as a prevalent means of communication with the students. The S1 teacher’s use of touch in the traditional style of ballet pedagogy, which included the teacher moving the student into positions to teach them placement and/or alignment, might be interpreted as transmitting information in a “banking” method. Hahn explains that in Japanese dance this is the way that touch is used. She states:

Touch is both an active and a passive engagement. A person actively touches and/or is passively touched by an object or person. Although varieties of relationships exist, generally teachers (as transmitters) actively touch, and students passively receive the tactile information. (110)



In some aspects the S1 teacher's use of touch contrasts with the reciprocal use of touch by the S2 teacher, as the S1 students were put into positions or firmly adjusted. As one student admitted on the survey, "...I have to find out how to make the correction for myself. When my teacher puts me in the position, I find it hard to apply the position later" (Focus group, 15 Dec 2014). Similarly, Serena stated that some former teachers had left her reliant on their touch to find the position again when they corrected her aggressively (Email interview 8 June 2015). This use of touch to "deposit" the information into the student is a traditional method and both of these students found it ineffective. The efficacy of the reciprocal use of touch is exemplified by the S2 teacher as a means to facilitate the students' ability to find the required positions themselves.

#### Verbal Communication

The content and tone of the verbal dialogue in the studies was highly divergent. My field notes state, "I could say that [S1 teacher] is actually the type of teacher that [S2 teacher] is consciously trying not to be" (16 Nov 2014). This was written in response to my own discomfort with the tone of some of the S1 teacher's corrections and his lectures regarding the dancers taking responsibility for their development. The teachers rarely raised their voices above the music and almost never gave corrections during the performance of centre exercises. The S1 teacher pointedly disagreed with teachers who run "around the room, screaming, jumping, sweating" and who enthusiastically encourage their students by their own expenditure of energy (see teacher interview section in Chapter 4). The S1 teacher prefers quiet and focused work. The S2 teacher generally watched centre exercises from the back of the room to observe the energy of

the students and she offered suggestions before the students repeated the exercise (see teacher interview section in Chapter 5).

However, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the students felt the teachers' presence while they were dancing, and in both studies there were examples of the students' performances being affected negatively by the teachers' gestures and/or incorrect choreographic cues accompanied by a verbal cue. It was obvious as an observer that the students remained hyperaware of the teachers' presence and feedback while they danced in the centre, despite minimal interruptions by the teachers during their performances. In one instance, the S1 students were stopped in their performance when they reacted to the teacher's gesture and unimpressed sound by becoming unfocused and unsure. In a similar situation, the S2 students were allowed to continue with their improvised choreography when miscued by the teacher. The teacher then corrected the timing and clarified her misdirection prior to the students repeating the exercise.

Despite their similar teaching strategies, during the performance of the exercises the class atmosphere differed as the dancers worked independently on corrections between exercises in the centre. For example, between exercises the S1 teacher demanded specific nuances and, as one of the dancer's stated, it felt as though "the teacher wanted it done one way" (Focus group, 15 Dec 2014). The S1 teacher was either quiet while they worked or demanded a detail from a specific student. He rarely gave general corrections to be applied by all of the students in the same way. For instance, when the students were working independently, the teacher chose one student to work with individually while they all practiced. In contrast, between exercises the S2 class explored movement and allowed their bodies to move into the positions and steps. The S2 teacher explained that

one of her strategies to keep the students engaged was to give general corrections while they practiced so that the students were not standing still while she offered information. Ultimately, this contrast of the S1 teacher relentlessly demanding specific details from individuals versus the S2 teacher allowing and exploring movement with the group could be the difference between training future principal dancers for ballet companies and training contemporary dancers. However, whether or not student career paths were the defining factor in the divergent pedagogical methods, the two different strategies both facilitated the sound and successful execution of ballet vocabulary.

These differing approaches to training and the resultant atmosphere appeared to have varying consequences in relation to the dancers' perceptions of their own artistry. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the students' perspectives in both studies varied regarding their use of artistry. Four of the six S1 students felt that the teacher required artistry in technique class, one student felt that he wanted the movement done one particular way and another student felt that the dancers could not bring artistry to movements that they did not have the technique to perform (Table 12 Survey #1, p. 133). Despite a few of the S1 students questioning their conscious application of artistry to technique, as an observer, I witnessed moments of exquisite artistry among many hours of focused technical work. The embodied artistry was always present in these highly skilled dancers, with or without their conscious application of personal intention for the movement. I observed that their artistry revealed itself naturally. The S2 students explained that they felt artistic freedom through the individual application of the teacher's images and concepts (see student interview section Chapter 5). The idea that the students had to re-invent the application of the concepts daily gave them the freedom to create

new relationships to the images and concepts every time they returned to class. The dancers' application of personal artistry to codified technique was built into the class through this strategy.

## Summary

Interpretation of data revealed that the *a priori* pedagogical themes of tradition and innovation were present in both studies. Each teacher demonstrated aspects of tradition including class structure and content as well as expectations for a rigorous work ethic. The teachers shared common teaching strategies including anatomical concepts and motivation. However, the contrasting mentoring styles fostered differing interpersonal relationships and the teachers had disparate means of tactile and verbal communication. The discussion in Chapter 7 summarizes the findings of both studies, highlights the efficacy of kinesthetic dialogue in the transmission of embodied knowledge and offers projections for future research.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

### Introduction

The purpose of the dissertation was to explore how an embodied student-teacher relationship manifests in the ballet studio, highlighting whether kinesthetic dialogue facilitates the transfer of embodied knowledge. The two studies yielded results that had common and contrasting modes of student-teacher communication. In investigating this complex relationship, multiple modes of communication were observed and reported.

The reported results from each study reflect the three guiding questions, which were:

1) What combination of verbal and non-verbal communication is observed between the teacher and the students in each environment? 2) Do instances within this communication illustrate the pedagogical tool of kinesthetic dialogue? 3) Do moments within this pedagogical dialogue appear to trigger previously developed body memory in the students, based on their reactions to instructions, as well as in their performance of the material? These driving questions provided a guide to ensure a thorough exploration of the embodied student-teacher relationship.

In both studies, the first research question regarding the type of verbal and non-verbal communication that was observed in the studio was answered through the reporting, categorization and analysis of extensive qualitative data. From the data, multiple tables were created containing detailed descriptions of class structure, general class themes, and various modes of student-teacher interaction. The themes that identified the student-teacher communication data included: tactile cues, teaching strategies, language and kinesthetic dialogue. Of these themes the only *a priori* theme was kinesthetic dialogue, the other three categories emerged from the data. The second

research question addressing moments that illustrate kinesthetic dialogue within the pedagogy was addressed through class observation reports based on field notes and observation chart data, as well as through information listed in Tables 11 and 17 (Examples of Kinesthetic Dialogue on pages 111 and 171). The examples of kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue and finally kinesthetic collaboration address the third research question regarding the triggering of the body memory of the students.

In this chapter, a discussion of kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue, and kinesthetic collaboration reveals their roles in ballet pedagogy. In order to effectively contextualize these concepts and facilitate the discussion of the presence of kinesthetic dialogue in the studies, related terms as defined in the introduction are included in the footnotes of this chapter. The examples of body memory present to facilitate the students' physical response to a gesture from the teacher were evident in the results and are discussed as part of the kinesthetic collaboration phase of the communication. However, body memory must be further explored in future studies on kinesthetic collaboration as the student takes the information transmitted in kinesthetic dialogue to create kinesthetic collaboration and apply it in the future.

### Summary of Findings

In S1 the data revealed that the student-teacher communication consisted of a vertical mentoring style, which facilitated a silent, focused atmosphere. The studio was cool, clean and clear of clutter with the students in uniform striving for *corps de ballet* precision in their formations and choreography. The exploration of verbal and non-verbal student-teacher communication revealed both teacher and students agreed that the

teacher's strength was in individual correction, whereas his communication with the students as a group did not always facilitate student understanding of concepts. Results for student-teacher communication included the teacher's use of firm touch and teaching strategies such as use of the mirror and verbal cues. Many instances of kinesthetic dialogue were present in this study and those moments were often facilitated by silence as well as the students' body memory of the technical aspect or feeling that the teacher was demanding at the time. The question of kinesthetic dialogue being facilitated through body memory was addressed in results showing that a gesture from the teacher did elicit a full body response and adjustment from the dancer (Table 11. Examples of Kinesthetic Dialogue, p. 111).

The S2 data revealed that the teacher employed a horizontal mentoring style that fostered inner authority in the students resulting in an internal focus. The studio was warm, cluttered and smelled of various performance related factors such as medicated rub and well-used dance shoes. The dancers danced wherever they chose to stand and the teacher often watched from behind the dancers during centre practice. The exploration of verbal and non-verbal student-teacher communication revealed both teacher and students agreed that the teacher's strengths were in adapting her individual corrections and concepts to the individual students' bodies, as well as allowing the students to feel like unique artists as opposed to objectified bodies. The difficulties in communication stemmed from the misinterpretation of anatomical information and the inability or unwillingness of students to apply the concepts in other classes. Kinesthetic dialogue was present in the study. However, the teacher's reliance on touch as well as verbal cues diminished the presence of kinesthetic dialogue as it is a non-verbal, non-tactile cue.

Body memory in relation to kinesthetic dialogue was present in the reported examples on Table 17 on page 171. However, body memory in relation to this teaching situation would be better explored in a future study regarding integration of somatic practice in ballet and the lasting implications for students.

After the analysis of the studies individually in Chapters 4 and 5, the interpretation of data across both studies revealed the *a priori* pedagogical themes of tradition and innovation. In Chapter 6, the data across both studies was reported including how each teacher demonstrated aspects of tradition including class structure and content as well as expectations for a rigorous work ethic. Results showed how the teachers shared common teaching including anatomical concepts and motivation. However, it was observed that their contrasting mentoring styles fostered differing interpersonal relationships. The teachers also had disparate means of tactile and verbal communication. Despite the S1 and S2 teachers creating seemingly dissimilar atmospheres, the students in both studies perceived the teachers' modes of communication as effective.

### Kinesthetic Communication: Dialogue and Collaboration

The exploration of a kinesthetic student-teacher relationship shifts the pedagogical analysis of the embodied learning situation “away from the demanding chatter of word-thoughts to the subtleties of somatic sensation” (Sklar, 2008, 114).

Kinesthetic advice<sup>51</sup>, kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue and finally

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<sup>51</sup> The term kinesthetic advice is used to refer to directions, instructions or suggestions made by the teacher that apply to how a movement should feel. Kinesthetic advice produces the desired aesthetic result through somatic sensation, as well as facilitating an internal focus for the dancers, which increases their proprioception of the movement. For example, if I ask a student to repeat a movement while attempting to feel like they are very heavy and sinking into the ground, I have affected not only how they proprioceive their movement, that is to say experience their kinesthesia, but I have also likely changed the aesthetic quality of their movement.



kinesthetic collaboration have specific roles within this research that was conducted in a kinesthetic culture. To begin, I discuss and speculate on the relationships between these concepts within the learning situation. Following the discussion of the interrelationship of the concepts, the use of kinesthetic dialogue is compared to the pedagogical tools of touch and imagery. Finally, to bring to life the theoretical suppositions, examples of kinesthetic dialogue from the studies are discussed and compared. The conclusions offered regarding these pedagogical tools generate ideas for future research and implementation.

Kinesthetic communication<sup>52</sup> is essential to any kinesthetic culture;<sup>53</sup> drawing attention to this mode of communication has the potential to alter or influence future approaches to the transmission of embodied knowledge. Kinesthetic communication is a one-way transmission from the teacher to the students and can involve gesture or movement. For the purpose of this research, kinesthetic communication is defined as one-way because there were multiple examples during the studies in which the teachers communicated information but received no external response from the students. Without student engagement there is no dialogue. However, there is communication on the part of the teacher as they convey the information, regardless of whether it is accepted by the students.

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<sup>52</sup> Kinesthetic communication refers to bodily communication including gesture or movement. This communication is a result of the teacher responding to student performance. It includes the teacher actively communicating to the students. Subsequently, kinesthetic dialogue results when the student independently responds to the kinesthetic communication, which means the student is actively engaged in the learning situation. The student and teacher enter into kinesthetic collaboration when the student adapts the movement to their own body.

<sup>53</sup> Anthropologist Jaida Kim Samudra explains that researchers studying kinesthetic cultures such as dance, martial arts, soldiers and athletes emphasize the physical self, consequently the research “is not only of the body but also from the body” (666).

The term kinesthetic dialogue<sup>54</sup> was developed to promote a more informed application of a communication method that is performed intuitively in ballet pedagogy. It is relevant to note that kinesthetic dialogue includes gestures and facial expressions as well as full body movement. Ballet pedagogy traditionally excludes verbal dialogue with the exception of specific questions that are considered relevant to the execution of codified technique including choreography, musicality or special orientation. Therefore, I consider kinesthetic dialogue to be a result of both the silence imposed on, or requested of, the students as well as their need to respond to the teacher's kinesthetic communication, which is beyond words because it is embodied.

The kinesthetic collaboration<sup>55</sup> between teacher and student facilitates the transfer of knowledge and the adaptation of the advice to the individual body of the student. Kinesthetic dialogue can exist without kinesthetic collaboration, as the dialogue may not produce a change in the movement or knowledge base of the students, either immediately or in the future. Kinesthetic collaboration can be considered a liminal phase as the finished product has not yet evolved from the collaboration. Additionally, the movement may become part of the dancer's repertoire immediately or may take time and practice to incorporate into their embodied knowledge base. If the student is not in the presence of, or performing directly for the teacher the next time they perform the movement, then the results of the kinesthetic collaboration has become the property of the student and that movement/information can be transferred to various situations with other teachers or

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<sup>54</sup> I use the term kinesthetic dialogue in reference to both parties responding empathetically to both internal and external stimuli to produce a change in the student's movement, which subsequently results in what I term kinesthetic collaboration. I developed the term kinesthetic dialogue based on my observations of the corporeal communication that occurs between teacher and student in order for them to engage in the learning process of a kinesthetic practice.

<sup>55</sup> Kinesthetic collaboration refers to an experience resulting from a partnership based on empathy affecting both teacher and student. Kinesthetic collaboration facilitates the transmission of bodily knowledge to produce a desired aesthetically pleasing result.

choreographers. When the student performs the movement, or uses the information, resultant of the previously experienced kinesthetic collaboration then they have embodied this communication and the kinesthetic collaboration is extended beyond the immediate studio experience.

### Kinesthetic Dialogue: Examples of A Unique Pedagogical Tool

When comparing kinesthetic dialogue to other pedagogical strategies included in kinesthetic and/or verbal communication, the essential difference is the reciprocal and responsive relationship between the teacher and the student. In kinesthetic and verbal communication, the teacher is often actively transmitting information and the student is often passively accepting it. In contrast, during kinesthetic dialogue (as in verbal dialogue), both parties are active in the transmission of, and response to, information. Kinesthetic dialogue requires the active participation and engagement of the student while taking the kinesthetic communication of the teacher and applying it to their body. There is a physical reaction to, and individual application of, information rather than a one-way transfer with no active response from the receiver. As described above, the kinesthetic collaboration that results from the dialogue is taken further when the students, either immediately or in subsequent classes, integrate the results of the kinesthetic dialogue into their motor repertoire.

Kinesthetic dialogue facilitated kinesthetic collaboration differently in each study and for each individual student. For the S1 teacher the transfer of stylistic nuances gleaned from years of training and further embodied from years of repertoire, created a student-teacher dynamic in which he consistently held a certain amount of control over

the movements of the students while they were performing. They were hyper-aware of his movement, facial expression and audible sounds he made. In the words of Hahn, "...the body-to-body transfer of artistic expression was enchanting to me" (79). I felt that the teacher dialogued with the students using his physicality including his sense of stage presence, as well as by adjusting his posture or through a definite turn of his head. When this communication occurred the students physically responded. During these moments, I felt that I witnessed the kinesthetic dialogue that I originally experienced in my own classes, which resulted in the conception and foundation of this research.

For the S2 teacher, the intersection of images and physiology created a specialized communication in which the students were aware of her feedback while they were internally focused on applying her concepts, images and executing the vocabulary. The S2 teacher's methods were based on creating dialogue in all modes of communication, which limited the examples of kinesthetic dialogue as defined in this project. This was because the reciprocal student-teacher relationship was spread across multiple modes of communication rather than being solely revealed in the use of kinesthetic dialogue. The teacher was not trying to impose her style on the students in the same way as the S1 teacher. The kinesthetic dialogue was limited in S2 by verbal communication being central to individualized learning of the somatic techniques, and providing anatomical imagery for the students, as they did not look to the teacher for stylistic or technical guidance; rather they used their own artistry to perform the movements.

In both studies kinesthetic dialogue often occurred in silence. The S1 teacher often stopped speaking when he was engaged in kinesthetic dialogue

because he was dancing or demonstrating. Similarly, the S2 teacher's most prominent example of kinesthetic dialogue was her gesture toward her rib cage as she indicated the motion of spiral in the upper back in opposition to a gesturing leg in various contexts, this often occurred when she stopped talking. It was during these silent moments that I was most affected by the communication that occurred and I felt at times that the silence itself facilitated a kinesthetic connection that would not have been as effective had the teacher been talking. My field notes often state "beautiful 'kin' moment" and these highlights were usually during silence.

In Chapters 4 and 5, there are tables that report examples of kinesthetic dialogue for each study. The three examples begin with instances of kinesthetic communication, which prompted a kinesthetic response, which resulted in kinesthetic dialogue. When the kinesthetic dialogue prompted a change in the execution of movement, the instance then became an example of kinesthetic collaboration (Tables 11 and 17, p. 110 and 171). The examples from both studies feature the teachers' physical performance to communicate to the students, prior to the students responding. All of the examples on the S1 chart are kinesthetic communication, which was often facilitated with a kinesthetic cue (short form of the communication). The S2 chart includes two examples of kinesthetic communication augmented by light/indicated touch and sound to accompany demonstration. In both studies, it was the students' reactions that turned these kinesthetic communications into dialogue as they physically reacted to the communication. In turn, kinesthetic collaboration resulted as the students internalized the information for immediate performance. Kinesthetic collaboration may have layers that are not reflected in the data from the studies, as the results of the observed collaboration become the

property of the student as they move forward in their training with various teachers, directors and choreographers. The issue of the transferability of skills acquired during kinesthetic collaboration in ballet class is the basis for a future study.

## Conclusion and Future Research

*I want to hang on to the bittersweet moment when I realized today, when I was leaving the [S1 school], and when I left [the S2 school] on the last Friday, that it is over. It was such a remarkable, thrilling experience to be permitted to watch and learn from these amazing people. I feel conflicted about the experiences ending, but now it is time to respect the participants and those experiences and write... (Field notes 4 June 2015)*

This research is an extension of my life's work as a dance educator. Ultimately, an understanding of kinesthetic dialogue can facilitate the conscious application of a reciprocal mode of kinesthetic communication that ballet teachers have intuitively employed for centuries. The fieldwork experiences that facilitated this research altered my preconceived expectations of the results. I realized on the first observation day at the S2 school that I would have to adapt to the experiences in real-time and not allow myself to limit my research and subsequent results by what I thought I needed to report or record. This openness changed the direction of the research as I decided to record the vast amount, and various modes of, communication within each study.

## The Role of Silence in Dialogue

One element of communication used in both studies was silence. As mentioned above, I consider kinesthetic dialogue to be a result of both the silence imposed on, or requested of, the students as well as their need to respond to the teacher's kinesthetic communication, which is beyond words because it is embodied. Although I am exploring

the integration of verbal dialogue in my own ballet pedagogy, I was surprised by the effective use of silence in both studies, which allowed the students personal space and time to explore their own proprioception. In contrast, I understood the teachers' disappointment at the students' silence during attempted verbal dialogue (discussion) regarding the students' personal perspectives, technique and/or anatomical concepts.

Ros Ollin's article "Silent Pedagogy and Rethinking Classroom Practice: Structuring Teaching Through Silence Rather Than Talk" discusses the Western bias toward talk in classrooms being representative of learning, which is directly oppositional to the perpetuated enforcement of student silence as a mode of learning in traditional ballet pedagogy. However, the following quote applies to my observation in both studio environments. Ollin states:

Although an immediate association with silence might be one which relates the concept to an absence or lack of something, the term 'silence' can act as a signifier for a number of different states. . . In view of its highly symbolic and communicative importance, an interesting question is why silence does not feature more in academic writings on human communication and culture. One reason for it may be . . . the concept resisting definition and frequently used in a metaphoric rather than literal sense. (266)

As indicated by the above quote, the observed silences held various modes of learning. In both studies, I eventually perceived the silence that occurred when the dancers were physically working to be positive. The dancers were learning about, and proprioceiving, their movement without external interruption. I initially viewed the silence that met questions posed by the S1 teacher, or that occurred during his lectures regarding personal responsibility and improvement, as negative because I assumed that the lack of communication in these moments indicated an absence of learning. This reaction is in accordance with Ollin's perspective that teachers are uncomfortable with silence because

of their perception of their role as facilitators of learning, and it is the teacher's association of silence with negative factors (timidity, fear, embarrassment) that creates the teacher's discomfort (267). Both teachers were overtly unhappy with the silence that met their verbal questions and both teachers were observed encouraging dialogue without receiving verbal replies from the students. The S2 teacher used silence less frequently than the S1 teacher and with more delineated purpose. When the dancers were silently working on a concept they were given time to internally focus and the teacher overtly directed their focus to their own somatic sensations before these silent sessions. More frequently, the S1 teacher supported the students' silent work with his own silence. However, both teachers watched centre practice in silence and gave feedback after the dancers had finished the exercise. This gave the dancers the opportunity to have inner dialogue and a dialogue with the music, the space and their fellow dancers.

In relation to her study with children and dialogue in dance education, Eeva Antilla states, "I discovered that silence is a central concept in dialogue, since silence denotes listening" (51). Motivated by the incorporation of various modes of dialogue, my own application of silence in ballet classes has been positive. I explained to the students (in simple terms) that I wanted to give them to space to establish their own perspectives on their movement and find out what feels comfortable, or perhaps uncomfortable while they clearly hear the music being played by the accompanist. Antilla states, "silence makes it easier to receive signals from within the body; it makes dialogue with one's body, music, and the sound environment possible; and it helps establish dialogue with others" (52). I began to explore the notion that my voice needed to be absent (at times) in order for the silence to be filled with the students' own inner dialogue. This has been one



of the most significant shifts in my own pedagogical practices, as I had previously been focused on giving the students a literal voice in the classroom, but not necessarily an internal voice facilitated by silence. I realized that it might not be possible for my students to establish inner authority and autonomy if I was consistently verbally telling them to do so, and offering feedback from my perspective rather than allowing them to form their own perception of the movement.

Additionally, upon embarking on these studies, I had not expected to be exposed to somatic practice and imagery in such an in-depth and subsequently all consuming way. My resultant research regarding Alexander Technique has served to inform my teaching practices in unexpected and welcome ways. I have incorporated some of the Alexander principles into my classes, especially with advanced dancers who hold tension or manifest stress in certain areas of their body and/or performance. I have incorporated some of the concepts from S2 into my classes including the shoulders and the legs “being in their home.” I have always referred to anatomical images and functional anatomy in my classes and now I have begun to add images that augment the anatomical references. I ask the students to internally focus and take time to feel the movement. This is often a new approach for most dancers in a commercial dance studio environment, which tends to be a product driven environment where the internal process is not a priority for most teachers.

### Professional Development for Teachers

Through teacher education, the evolution of dance pedagogy will be facilitated by a heightened awareness of formerly embedded pedagogical tools such as kinesthetic

dialogue. Kinesthetic dialogue has the potential to lead to kinesthetic collaboration between teacher and student resulting in new movement/information that may subsequently be transferred to other learning situations. In this research, silence in the dance studio often facilitated kinesthetic dialogue. Therefore, as discussed above, embracing and explaining silence to students as potentially constructive rather than uncomfortable and oppressive may facilitate a more informed physical communication between teacher and student. Ultimately, sound ballet pedagogy results from both teacher and students' active engagement in the process of teaching and learning.

Preliminary guidelines for teachers to implement this pedagogical tool begin with their interest in professional development, which requires an active engagement in self-reflection. First, the teacher must become conscious of student reaction to their kinesthetic communication (demonstration) or kinesthetic cues (gestures/smaller movements). Second, they must realize how their kinesthetic communication affects the students' movement. Third, teachers must question the efficacy of their kinesthetic communication, as well as reflect on what it is they want to communicate with their demonstration. Each studio situation offers variables that make it impossible to suggest at what age kinesthetic dialogue begins to be effective. However, generally once a student has developed a movement vocabulary that allows them to incorporate technical suggestions, as well as artistry and/or stylistic nuance, then kinesthetic communication is likely readily received and may result in kinesthetic dialogue. Younger dancers without the benefit of years of training with its amassed movement vocabulary and knowledge of ballet technique, may not be ready to respond to a teacher's kinesthetic communication by engaging in kinesthetic dialogue. These suggestions are preliminary ideas regarding

how teachers might become aware of an area of pedagogy that has been embedded in the kinesthetic culture of ballet. This realization of the relationship of kinesthetic dialogue to one's present teaching practices provokes the questions of when in the spectrum of ballet training does this response occur in students? As well as whether kinesthetic dialogue is present in commercial dance studios or if it correlates predominantly to conservatory style training?

The observation chart is a tool that has aided in my own self-reflection and is a potentially valuable asset in teacher education (Table 2. Class Observation Chart, p. 61). The categories of demonstration and communication listed on the observation chart illuminate the modes used to disseminate information and this consciousness allows for pedagogical awareness and subsequent teacher improvement. If used as an evaluation/feedback tool while observing teachers, the chart can give the participants information which will heighten awareness of habitual practices that maybe excluding some learners. If the teacher expands their pedagogy to include varied modes of communication, the likelihood of facilitating more individualized learning increases creating a more effective learning environment.

#### Future Considerations: Artistry Versus Stylistic Nuance

The limited number of participants affected the applicability of the research to the broader field of ballet education. However, the delimitation of using a small number of elite dancers allowed for the students' voices to be individually heard rather than combined together in faceless numerical data or statistics. Therefore, the results are not generalizations regarding ballet education; rather the data consists of insights that may

fuel future projects. Dancers have traditionally been silenced by their modes of training and perhaps have not had the opportunity to discuss their personal journeys through, and experiences in, dance education. This project allowed the students' voices to be heard and measured equally against that of their teacher, augmented by direct observations by the researcher. In this research the student voice is the literal verbal representation of the students in the written research. Metaphorically, the presence of the student voice in these studies was not considered, however, this affords an avenue for future analysis.

In consideration of the questions driving the research, it has been demonstrated that the combination of physical and verbal communication within each study included kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue, kinesthetic advice, tactile feedback and verbal feedback, as well as imagery. The question regarding body memory was observed during the students' responses to kinesthetic communication; they demonstrated application of previously developed body memory to engage in kinesthetic dialogue, which was apparent in both studies. A gesture from the teacher would change the entire execution of a movement. For example, a gesture from the S1 teacher toward his abdominal muscles changed a student's alignment in the air during an *assemblée*, in turn, increasing the stability and alignment of the landing.

Although the teachers used various and sometimes divergent teaching strategies, they both employed kinesthetic dialogue as it is defined in this research. One remaining question regarding kinesthetic dialogue pertains to its dependence on the style of ballet being taught. Does kinesthetic dialogue exist more prevalently in styles of ballet in which the students are required to adopt the nuances as they have been performed in the past and are embodied in the teacher? For example, in S1 the teacher was transferring years of

embodied Vaganova style. Alternately, when I teach Cecchetti syllabus classes as a means of preparing students for examinations, I insist on the movements of the head and *port de bras* reflecting the style that I am demonstrating. In contrast, the S2 teacher allowed the students to apply ballet technique to their bodies and did not insist on class uniformity, specific heads, *port de bras*, or a specific style. Furthermore, is kinesthetic dialogue somewhat dependent on the teacher's philosophy? For example, in these studies a more authoritative approach to transference of embodied knowledge created more evidence of kinesthetic dialogue, as the S1 teacher was more insistent on the conformity of the students, both to a group uniformity, as well as to stylistic nuances matching his perceptions of the correct positions.

Another avenue for future consideration is the definition and role of artistry in kinesthetic dialogue. The transmission of the S1 teacher's long-established style (with its specific nuances) brought the question of artistry into focus. I noted that the teacher was demanding artistry and that the students recognized that they had the opportunity to add artistry, but this term was not defined or teased out to its fullest potential in this dissertation. Future research questions include: Is kinesthetic dialogue limited to either technique or artistry, or can it be used to communicate both simultaneously? What is the difference between artistry and stylistic nuance? Do the teacher and/or the students interpret artistry and style differently from one another? Is artistry within prescribed codified technique derived from inner authority rather than kinesthetically passed on from teacher to student? Is kinesthetic advice regarding how the movement should feel aimed at producing artistry or limited to the transmission of technical skill?

The S1 teacher demanded artistry daily without defining what that meant and in one instance he told a student that he would always be in the corps because he was not using his artistry to communicate with the audience. I was left wondering how the student would know how to satisfy this criterion. However, in class, in focus groups and on surveys the S1 students appeared to understand the term artistry. In contrast, the S2 teacher allowed the students to individually feel and explore the movement. The inner authority fostered by somatic practice created the feeling for the students that the teacher was treating them as “unique artists.” Is artistry in this case defined as self-expression, and if so, how does self-expression relate to traditional ballet roles?

As a result of kinesthetic dialogue, the students’ changes in movement manifested during the kinesthetic collaboration, which was witnessed, recorded and discussed in this research have the potential to transfer to other learning situations. The student embodies the new movement, information and kinesthetic awareness/feeling and carries it forward into their training. Awareness of this aspect of transferability of the new skill is a topic for future study that has the potential to affect the teaching and learning of dance skills. Pedagogical development stems from the investigation of learning strategies, and if kinesthetic dialogue is brought into the consciousness of teachers and students, it could prove to be effective.

Kinesthetic communication, kinesthetic dialogue and kinesthetic collaboration occurred regularly in these studies and their elucidation has the potential to create more sound and effective pedagogical strategies in ballet training. Kinesthetic dialogue was conceptualized out of my own conscious acceptance that this type of communication existed in my own classes. Evidence found in these studies supports the existence of

kinesthetic dialogue. This research indicates that bringing ballet's well-established pedagogical tools to consciousness has the potential to create more effective learning situations. When teachers begin to reflect on, analyze and strategically choose moments of kinesthetic communication, the efficacy of the dialogue will be maximized. With conscious application, kinesthetic dialogue has the potential to facilitate transmission of embodied knowledge for generations to come.

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## **Appendix A: S1 Selected Teacher Interview Questions**

### **November 13, 2014**

- 1) Why did you have some of the boys last year and not others?
- 2) Beginning with the boys that you have had for 2 years, does this change the relationship that you have to them? Do you feel like they have a better grasp on your expectations?
- 3) Do you feel like sometimes they don't understand what you are asking for, even though they are trying to achieve something physically, how do you know if they really understand?
- 4) The alignment of the pelvis is key (as you said) are the boys getting any additional coaching to try to achieve the alignment that you want?
- 5) What is your main objective right now with this group of students?
- 6) What do you feel is effective in your teaching?
- 7) What do you feel you are still working on within your teaching?
- 8) Thinking about how your teaching has changed from when you first began, when did you first begin to incorporate anatomical work into your teaching?

### **January 20, 2015**

The following questions were emailed to the teacher the week prior to the meeting:

- 1) I would really like to hear about your training as a dancer and specifically what (or who) you feel influenced you in your own teaching. Maybe include examples or a particular teacher you had during your career, or at school, whom you feel influenced how you teach now.
- 2) Looking at your teaching, how do you feel it has changed over the years?
- 3) What areas of your teaching do you see evolving or changing into the future?

## **Appendix B: S2 Selected Teacher Interview Questions**

### **Interview 1: October 10, 2014**

The following questions contain some of the main topics of the first conversation with the teacher:

- 1) How did you begin to develop your teaching method (Image Tech) and why?
- 2) I know that they work with [your colleague], I wonder if they could request coaching with you for Image Tech?
- 3) Do you feel that you are able to give the students enough information to go forward in their careers and apply image tech?
- 4) How has your approach changed over the years? Have you always had similar threads running through, like the anatomy?
- 5) Do you feel, not resistance from [the school] but from the freshman sometimes?

### **Interview 2: November 19, 2014**

This is a section of an email to the S2 teacher in preparation for her interview the following day:

Just to preview the conversation for the paper, I would love to hear what you feel is working effectively with the students (or most of them) and where you feel you might continue to evolve in your approach. How recent are your concepts of "being in your house" and "putting a brain in front of it" and perhaps you can expand on how they came about? ... Also, when you begin with your "checklist" how did you develop this initiation for your class and do you change it over time or vary it to include concepts from the current classes? (This seems to ground them and allow them to focus on themselves). (personal email 18 Nov 2014)

### **Interview 3: February 20, 2015**

The following questions were emailed to the teacher prior to the interview:

- 1) What do you think are the factors that allow the women in second year to embody your concepts?
- 2) Do factors like gender or experience affect their understanding of/ interest in your concepts or their connection to the material?
- 3) This year (2014/15), have you made changes to further facilitate the application of your work by all of the students (Ballet 1 and Pointe 2)?
- 4) What concepts/ images/ approaches or ideas, if any, have developed over this year to help the student connect to the material?
- 5) Do you think that going forward these changes/developments will continue to evolve?

## Appendix C: S1 Surveys

Anonymous Survey #1

December 15, 2014

NO ONE AT [the school] WILL SEE THIS.  
NO ONE WILL KNOW WHO WROTE THIS.

1) During ballet class do you feel comfortable asking your teacher to explain further if you do not understand a correction or suggestion?

Yes                  No

2) Do you think of your personal corrections between ballet classes?

Yes                  No

3) Do you feel that your ballet classes demand artistry and performance quality in addition to technique?

Yes                  No

4) When I observed in November, do you think that my presence in your class changed things in any way?

Yes                  No

If yes, can you suggest what you felt changed?

---

---

Thank you!!

Please email me any further thoughts☺

1) Are you comfortable when you are being given an individual correction in this class?

YES NO SOMETIMES

2) Have you asked for ballet coaching to grasp a concept, or work on corrections, from this class?

YES NO

3) Are you happy when you are dancing in this class?

YES NO SOMETIMES

4) What is/are the *most* effective modes of correction you received in this class?

Touch Verbal Metaphors  
Demonstration Being left alone to work (Silence)

5) What is/are the *least* effective modes of correction your received in this class?

Touch Verbal Metaphors  
Demonstration Being left alone to work (Silence)

FEEL FREE TO ADD THOUGHTS ON THE BACK...

## **Appendix D: S1 Selected Focus Group Questions**

### **December 15, 2014**

- 1) What were the expectations of this class and where they explained to you when you began working with the teacher?
- 2) Is this class different than other classes you have taken and how?
- 3) Did you find that in other years the technique class had the same contrast to the other classes that this one does?
- 4) I have noticed that you get a lot of individual corrections and attention... Sometimes you get lots of corrections and then the next day you get nothing... I think you are used to that by now, but when that first started was that different? Were you surprised or do you have any opinion on that strategy?

### **June 3-4, 2015**

#### Part 1:

- 1) I was thinking about what I wanted you to talk to me about today, but then this happened, and I thought we might as well talk about this. How did you feel today having surprise guests?
- 2) At the end of the conversation I asked them to think about their own practice of internalizing corrections and we would speak the next day...

#### Part 2:

- 1) Yesterday you acknowledged the release of tension that [your teacher] is trying to achieve with you. How hard is it to release tension in this environment and still feel like you are working?
- 2) I noticed that you were doing more touching (self-correction)...where does your personal tactile cuing come from?
- 3) What is the dancer's clinic?

## Appendix E: S2 Survey

CONFIDENTIAL SURVEY for Tanya's paper (none of this will be shared with anyone)

November 2014

1) Had you experienced Alexander Technique prior to meeting [the teacher] at [The School]?

Yes            No

2) In technique classes outside of [the teacher's], do you apply/practice Alexander Technique, Image Tech or other concepts that [the teacher] establishes with her students?

Yes            No

3) If given the option, would you sign up for coaching classes with [the teacher] for Image Tech?

Yes            No

4) Do you feel that this somatic (internal/anatomical) way of working in your classes with [the teacher] has strengthened your overall technique?

Yes            No

5) Will you continue to apply these concepts to your work after you are finished your current training with [the teacher]?

Yes            No

Please add your **email address** for further communication for Tanya's project:

---

Please return this to Tanya or [administrative assistant].

THANK YOU! ☺

## Appendix F: S2 Email Interview Questions

Hello,

Thank you so much for providing your email addresses and volunteering to take the survey for my paper.

Any information that you send me is very useful in creating a well-rounded picture of [the teacher's] teaching, as well as your experiences in her classes applying her concepts.

I would greatly appreciate if you would consider, and then respond to, the following 4 questions. You can respond in an email or attach a file. You can choose to answer as many questions as you wish.

I really appreciate your participation.

Thank you very much!

Best,

Tanya

- 1) How do you feel about the way you are taught and corrected in [the teacher's] ballet class? Are these elements different than other classes?
- 2) What factors have allowed you to go deeper or feel comfortable applying [the teacher's] concepts? (Address issues such as the amount of time with the work, atmosphere of certain classes, personal interest in applying the concepts, personal successes with the concepts etc.)
- 3) Have [the teacher's] concepts changed your relationship to ballet, to your body or to your performance of choreography? If so, can you explain how or why?
- 4) Are there ideas that you feel really work for you and are there ideas that you feel really don't work for you? If possible give some examples.
- 5) Please feel free to add anything else you feel is relevant, none of this will be attached to your name (it is all anonymous).

**Appendix G: Class Observation Chart (left page)**

**Initial demonstration** and/or explanation of exercises (add details if needed).

Page \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ School/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF EXERCISE	NO PHYSICAL DEMO <b>OR</b> STUDENTS ALREADY KNEW THE CHOREO (indicate below)	PARTIAL PHYSICAL DEMO (some feet and/or hands and/or upper body- indicate below)	FULL PHYSICAL DEMO (to best of teacher's ability- not necessarily the entire length of exercise)	TEACHER SITTING OR STANDING?	HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE MARKING	HOW MANY ARE WATCHING IN STILLNESS?



Class Observation Chart (right page)

Observation of communication DURING the performance:

Page \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ School/Class: \_\_\_\_\_

General verbal guidance for choreo cueing (S2 this was for concept cueing)	Dancing together Kinesthetic Comm. Reference in notes & explain, could be cueing...	General verbal with no physical cue/mov' t	General verbal with physical cue/ movement (what kind?)	General Verbal followed by Individ. tactile	Individ. verbal with no physical cue or mov't	Individ Tactile in silence	Individ Tactile with verbal cues

Observation of communication BEFROE OR AFTER the performance while rehearsing:

**Appendix H-** Letters of Informed Consent

**Informed Consent Form: Teacher at S1 School**

Ballet Pedagogy as Kinesthetic Collaboration:

Exploring Kinesthetic Dialogue Within an Embodied Student-Teacher Relationship

**Researcher name:** Tanya Berg, Doctoral Candidate in Dance Studies at York University

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Graduate Program in Dance:** (416) 736-5137

The purpose of this research is to explore the communication between students and teachers in ballet classes.

Your participation will include the observations of your ballet classes and the completion of personal interviews depending on your availability. The length of time that it will take to complete the interviews may vary. However the estimated time commitment per session is 20-30 minutes, 3-4 times in the academic school year.

The benefits of this research include an expanded perspective and awareness of communication within the student-teacher relationship.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous, and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you may have with the researcher or influence the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future. You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Interview transcripts/audio files will not have indentifying information attached. The data will be securely stored for 5 years, under password protection, and then erased. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. Results will be reported in a dissertation, which includes an oral defense. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Kaneff Tower, York University by telephone: 416-736-59-14 or email: [ore@yorku.ca](mailto:ore@yorku.ca). This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics Guidelines.

**Legal rights and signatures:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in “Ballet Pedagogy as Kinesthetic Collaboration: Exploring Kinesthetic Dialogue Within an Embodied Student-Teacher Relationship”, conducted by Tanya Berg. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

**Participant Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Principle Investigator Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Informed Consent Form (S1 Students 16 years of age and above)**

**Ballet Pedagogy as Kinesthetic Collaboration:**

Exploring Kinesthetic Dialogue Within an Embodied Student-Teacher Relationship  
**Researcher name:** Tanya Berg, Doctoral Candidate in Dance Studies at York University  
**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Graduate Program in Dance:** (416) 736-5137

The purpose of this research is to explore the communication between students and teachers in ballet classes.

Your participation will include the observation of your ballet classes, as well as the completion personal interviews and/or focus group conversations. The length of time that it will take to complete the interviews/focus groups may vary. However, the estimated time commitment per session is 20 minutes, 1-4 times in the academic school year.

The benefits of this research include dialogue and critical self-reflection that may positively inform your training and performance.

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and anonymous, and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you may have with the researcher or influence the nature of your relationship with York University or [The School] either now, or in the future. You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher, York University, [The School] or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

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**Participant Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Principal Investigator Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Informed Consent Form: Teacher at S1 School (*italicized information was added by the School*)**

**Ballet Pedagogy as Kinesthetic Collaboration:**

Exploring Kinesthetic Dialogue Within an Embodied Student-Teacher Relationship  
**Researcher name:** Tanya Berg, Doctoral Candidate in Dance Studies at York University  
**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Graduate Program in Dance:** (416) 736-5137

The purpose of this research is to explore the communication between students and teachers in ballet classes.

Your participation will include the observations of your ballet classes and the completion of personal interviews depending on your availability. *It will not involve any photography or video recording.* The length of time that it will take to complete the interviews may vary. However the estimated time commitment per session is 20-30 minutes, 3-4 times in the academic school year.

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*Results will be reported in a dissertation, which includes an oral defense.* Interview transcripts/audio files *the dissertation itself and any other related materials* will not include identifying information *for the participant or the School.* *The transcripts/audio files and any other information collected from [The School] will only be used for purposes of the dissertation and for no other purpose.* The data will be securely stored for 5 years, under password protection, and then erased. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Kaneff Tower, York University by telephone: 416-736-59-14 or email: [ore@yorku.ca](mailto:ore@yorku.ca). This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics Guidelines.

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**Participant Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Principle Investigator Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Informed Consent Form: Student at S2 School**

Ballet Pedagogy as Kinesthetic Collaboration:  
Exploring Kinesthetic Dialogue Within an Embodied Student-Teacher Relationship

**Researcher name:** Tanya Berg, Doctoral Candidate in Dance Studies at York University

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Graduate Program in Dance:** (416) 736-5137

The purpose of this research is to explore the communication between students and teachers in ballet classes.

Your participation will include the observation of your ballet classes, as well as the completion of email or personal interviews and/or focus group conversations depending on your availability. *It will not involve any photography or video recording.* The length of time that it will take to complete the interviews may vary. However, the estimated time commitment per session is 20 minutes, 1-4 times in the academic school year.

The benefits of this research include dialogue and critical self-reflection that may positively inform your training and performance.

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I \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in “Ballet Pedagogy as Kinesthetic Collaboration: Exploring Kinesthetic Dialogue Within an Embodied Student-Teacher Relationship”, conducted by Tanya Berg. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

**Participant Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal Investigator Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_