

Dancing with cultural difference: Challenges, transformation and reflexivity in culturally pluralist dance education

Linda Ashley

ABSTRACT

In this article I describe aspects of an ethnographic inquiry in which I investigated the challenges faced by some New Zealand teachers when teaching about culturally different dances, an expectation of the Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000, 2007). Until relatively recently dance education in New Zealand emphasised Eurocentric creative dance, and teaching about culturally different dances presented new challenges for teachers. Some of the teachers, for instance, were challenged by their lack of skills in cultural dances other than creative dance. Transformative learning and developing a reflexive view of dances from different cultures are pedagogical concepts that underpin the ANZC and I position them as key to exploring some transformations that could inform teaching about dances contextually, in theory and practice, for both learners and teachers. My main aim in this article is to inform and support the development of an ethical and sustainable culturally pluralist pedagogy in which our responsibilities to the people whose dances we study are an important and timely concern (Ashley, 2012b). I also depict this topic as providing substantial potential for further research.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this article is to discuss aspects of my ethnographic inquiry into the challenges faced by some New Zealand teachers when teaching about culturally different dances. In this introduction, I present some general background to ethnographic inquiry and a brief overview of the methodology, data collection and analysis methods as used in this investigation. Key terms are then explained. A discussion about some of the challenges inherent in teaching about culturally different dances contextually, as voiced by the research participants, forms the greater part of this paper. I consider the question: What kind of transformations could be helpful when implementing culturally pluralist, ethical and sustainable dance education in the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (ANZC)? This question is timely in terms of developing pedagogy whereby dance education can respond to growing cultural diversity in New Zealand schools, as associated with increasing migrant diasporas, pluralist values and shifting socio-economic conditions.

From 2000, working within the context of New Zealand dance and dance education, I became interested in teaching dance from contextual perspectives because it was a standalone expectation of the inaugural ANZC. Before the ANZC, dance was likely to be the least familiar subject to many teachers, less familiar even than the other arts, specifically drama, music and the visual arts. Some teachers, however, would have skills and experience in teaching creative dance, a Eurocentric approach to making dance that has a close and longstanding association with dance education (Buck, 2003; Sansom, 2011). As I aim to reveal, teaching *about* a culturally diverse range of dances contextually holds theoretical and practical challenges for teachers that are different from the previous model of creative dance in which Eurocentric values and concepts prevail.

My research builds on the relatively recent wave of New Zealand research that has broadly been generated by the inaugural inclusion of dance in New Zealand's national arts curriculum (Barbour, 2004; Bolwell, 1998; Buck, 2003; Hong-Joe, 2002; Mane-Wheoki, 2003; Sansom, 2011; Thwaites, 2003). My study was significant in that it was a first to focus on researching teaching about dances from contextual perspectives and covered a wider geographical area and range of educational sectors than previous studies in New Zealand. I think it could be useful in providing insights into how the ANZC was being interpreted and implemented by the teachers in their work, but there are also aspects of the inquiry that may resonate with researchers in other countries where dance is an integral part of education. Internationally, such research and concerns have been building momentum (Dils, 2007; Foster, 2009; Hanna, 2002; Hanstein, 1990; Lansdale, 2008; Musil, 2010; Pugh McCutchen, 2006; Risner, 2010; Robinson & Domenici, 2010; Schwartz, 1991; Stinson, 2005).

METHODOLOGYⁱ

In choosing a style of ethnography that does not necessarily involve the traditional ethnographic strategy of “total immersion into specific communities” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 270), I selected an approach in which data is collected from a particular group who share a culture, looking at “slices of social life” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 270).

I collected empirical information in the form of slices of teaching and dancing lives, providing a means of examining research participants' thoughts about their teaching and their cultures in relation to the dance component of the ANZC. I collected data between 2004 and 2006 as shown in Table 1.

Date	Participants	Site of data collection	Role of researcher
2004	Teachers on an in-service dance education course.	During a video critique exercise that was part of the teachers' professional development. (Ashley, 2013)	Participant observer.
2004	Teachers on an in-service dance education course.	During a group planning/peer teaching assignment in which dance was taught from contextual perspectives.	Participant observer.
2005	Teachers in schools.	Questionnaire.	Designer of questionnaire.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialists in specific cultural dances; • Teachers from primary, intermediate and secondary schools; • Tertiary dance educators and professional developers. 	Four focus groups.	Moderator.

Table 1: Data collection summary

In keeping with grounded theory, I analysed data at each of the points of collection using continuous comparison and later triangulation (Charmaz, 2003; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). The resulting analytic-trail had a dual function. First, it provided a means to refine each stage of data collection. As one stage of data collection informed the next, it was possible to design a coherent overall process based on both the data collected and my experiences of that time. Second, it provided the building blocks from which to gradually construct substantive theory, as grounded in the data, and identify key themes in relation to the research question: What concerns, dilemmas and opportunities arise for teachers when teaching dance from a contextual perspective?

KEY TERMS

Cultural pluralism, with its emphasis on supporting cultures to maintain their identities, is one of the underpinnings of the ANZC. In the curriculum document, a list of cultures that all students should be given the opportunity to study during their school years includes Māori, Pakeha, Pacific Island, and international and global art forms, including those of North America and Asia. Teachers are seen as

being supportive facilitators who constructively engage in dialogue with the learners and treat different perspectives equitably. However, it is also recognised that:

Challenges facing curriculum practitioners include the analysis of how to understand self, gender, knowledge and culture and relationships in ways that do not involve hierarchical, linear or binary ways of thinking. (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 9)

Integral to such challenges, and providing a crucial thread in this paper, is the principle that making sense of the world is envisaged as part of a reflexive project, not merely as “self-consciousness but as the monitored character of the ongoing flow of social life” (Giddens, 1984, p. 3). I suggest, therefore, that the value of fostering understanding about dance contextually from a reflexive perspective lies in offering the possibility of understanding self as both different from and the same as others. Moreover, this understanding can be valuable for both teachers and learners.

Also, the arts curriculum positions learners as critical thinkers engaging in transformative learning. Transformative learning, albeit first conceived of from within adult education (Mezirow, 1981), highlights learners as capable of critical reflection and rational discourse, focusing on the students’ own life experience at first, and moving on to explore different worldviews. In this paper I draw attention to ways in which reflexivity and transformative learning can inform both learners and teachers as they embark on journeys in culturally pluralist dance education.

DISCUSSION—CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATIONS

In this section, I describe some of the challenges of implementing a pluralist dance education that teachers talked about in my ethnographic investigation. I synthesise the teachers’ voices with relevant literature in discussions about some transformations that could better inform and support teaching about culturally diverse dances.

Challenge 1—Pedagogical differences

For the teachers in my research, providing a culturally diverse range of dance seemed to represent either an exciting opportunity to enrich learning in dance, or a challenge in terms of the range of skills, knowledge and cultural literacies that

could be required. Some of the teachers saw themselves as lacking sufficient dance skills and cultural knowledge to provide a culturally inclusive range of dances in their schools. A popular strategy that they used to overcome this deficit was to invite guest specialists to teach. However, sometimes guest teachers led to a mismatch of pedagogical approaches as captured in this teacher's commentary: "As many specialists as possible ... but some don't know how to break it down for dancers and non-dancers." Another teacher commented that she preferred "experts who realise that they're not the be all and end all". She described how some guests did not actually teach but rather performed, and that this resulted in less experienced students being left out and becoming disaffected and embarrassed.

As suggested by Warburton (2008), a mismatch of pedagogical approaches is possible if teachers are chosen "based solely on an individual's dance experience and professional reputation. She is a famous dancer. He is a known choreographer" (p. 11). The teachers recognised such a mismatch when guest teachers, lacking inclusive teaching strategies for a range of abilities, experiences and interests, relied on the behaviourist and knowledge reproductive Command teaching style (Mosston, 1981). Although some of the teacher research participants recognised some benefits of the rote learning of steps, such as providing learners with age-appropriate skills and physical fitness, they saw a danger of it adversely affecting the learner's motivation to learn. There was also some feeling that Command-style teaching could override learning about dance contextually.

Recent research into teaching styles in physical education (Salvara, Jess, Abbott, & Bognar, 2006) goes some considerable way to affirm teachers' longstanding anecdotal observations about loss of confidence and interest when teaching relies on knowledge reproductive learning, as in copying and perfecting steps. Salvara et al. (2006) studied the learning of four different groups of 11-12-year-old boys and girls, and found a decrease in interest to learn in the group taught using Command style, emphasising repetitive learning of Greek folk dances and aerobics, aiming for improved skill and uniformity. Dance educators have also noted the possibility of learners becoming disinterested in dance when taught using rote learning of movement (Laban, 1960; Stinson, 1988).

Identifying a possible reason for the pedagogical differences, a teacher educator in a focus group commented, "teachers tend to teach dance in the way that they themselves were taught". Mackinlay (2001) also identifies that:

Generally teachers tend to apply the rules from their own discipline and culture in terms of how they manage, learn and impart types of knowledge. (p. 192)

The pedagogical background of visiting specialists can be informal education, where attendance is by choice; for example, some community groups and private studios. Often the teaching in these settings is aimed at rote learning of steps for dance performance, passing exams or competitions. Formal and informal education generally do not operate with the same power bases, ideologies, cultural values and aims.ⁱⁱ In some cultural settings, rote learning and Command-style teaching can hold ‘the power’, as revealed in the dance specialists’ focus group in Keneti Muaiaiva’s views on teaching Samoan dance:

In Samoan culture you SSHH! You’re not allowed to ... like it’s disrespectful. In saying that, they weren’t trying to keep the knowledge hidden away, and they weren’t trying to be mean. It was just the way that you show respect, by shutting up.

The situation becomes even more interesting when we consider research that drew attention to how western teachers viewed Command style as a teacher-centred approach, but Chinese teachers categorised it as student-centred, it being in the learners’ interests culturally to conform and reproduce knowledge (Cothran et al., 2005). This raises the challenging question that if we acknowledge the need for pedagogical pluralism, does culturally relevant or meaningful teaching require its reciprocal cultural pedagogy? This question is also raised by McFee (1992) and exemplified by teaching that I observed on the in-service course when Lulu, a Cook Island dance specialist and primary school teacher, insisted that a male teacher would be necessary to teach gender-specific, traditional dance vocabulary to boys. When we consider the possible intersections of such pedagogical differences, we could encounter transcultural mismatches in educational ideologies and cultural values; the very challenge that the teachers discussed in my inquiry.

Other data, however, shed light on what pluralist dance education could offer in terms of organising pedagogical differences to complement each other. On the in-service course, as teachers planned together in small groups for their peer teaching assessment, Lulu explained: “Before I started the course, I thought that the dancing would be very primitive, as I know it.” However, Lulu’s so-called ‘primitive’ Polynesian dancing, as she described it, is what the other teachers on

the course expressed admiration for as sophisticated and educationally relevant. The teachers in this group, working from their own strengths, divided up responsibilities, thus enabling the dance expert to use her skills and knowledge for the benefit of all. Tasks shared between the other teachers included producing resources, framing questions for a view and response activity, and writing up the planning using curriculum terms.

Some teachers noted that the group work made the task a productive part of their professional development, saying: “Working as a group was a little like planning in a syndicate”; an approach with which some primary and intermediate school teachers in New Zealand would be familiar. For these teachers, this transformative learning experience seemed to make real what a functional, pluralist dance education could offer in terms of equitable opportunity to teach about dance contextually for the teachers who are specialists in certain cultural dances and others who are not. The collaborative approach both supported the teachers’ professional development and revealed how such a strategy could offer helpful ideas for teachers when working with a visiting dance specialist.

I feel that it is insufficient to say that guest specialists’ input is not helpful because it clashes with liberal educational ideology, raising this question:

When implementating pluralist policy, as part of an inclusive pedagogy in learning about culturally different dances, what teaching strategies could dance educators develop to complement and transform guest specialists’ dance skills, without affecting transmission of cultural meanings and values?

[Transformation #1]

Challenge 2—Teaching about dance contextually as theory in practice

Many of the teachers in my study were not teaching dance contextually at all because they thought that it was too theoretical. In drawing some parallels between teaching dance contextually and anthropological understandings of dance, Hanna (2002) points out the importance of weaving together theory and practice. Understanding such a weave seemed to challenge some teachers when implementing the ANZC.

By way of contrast, this description, from the focus group for dance specialists, depicts a view of teaching dance in which the needs of the learners, the socio-historical and cultural significances of the dances co-exist, integrating theory *in practice*.

In teaching Tongan dance it's best to teach our ancient dance first. Firstly, it is so easy for the dancers no matter how you've danced before because it's a sitting dance, therefore your legs don't have to do movements, only the hands. You explain the dance and when the dances were introduced into Tonga ... actually it's a borrowed dance, our ancient dance, that's during the peak of our empire, the Tongan Empire. And we borrowed those dances and it marks a history, how Tonga at that time has been. Within that it gives the student a feel of what we're doing I think ... but they have that feeling of being dominated by a little kingdom and they come from somewhere else to bring their best food and they have to smile although they are colonised. Those kids will feel what it was like and that brings out the spontaneity in Tongan dance. This makes the emotions and I've noticed it works. (Niulala Helu)

By mention of the feelings that the dancing can evoke, as befitting a certain historical context, Helu's approach could, I suggest, stimulate transformational learning and critically reflexive thinking about others' dance as different *or* the same. Māori dance specialist, Valance Smith talked about how he had taught kapa haka when working with vulnerable young people, in attempts to address rising crime and suicide rates. Such personal narratives, ideologies and epistemologies of dance specialists could play a vital part in encouraging students to think reflexively about dance from contextual perspectives and about the people who are dancing.

At this juncture, juxtaposing the overwhelming response found in the data that teaching creative dance was dominant because it took less time, and was more practical, raises an important issue. The teachers were not teaching about creative dance contextually, inevitably requiring less theoretical content and saving them time.

By way of considering some of the possibilities for integrating theory in practice when teaching about creative/modern/contemporary dance, I turn to a group of early childhood teachers, on the in-service course, who selected to teach creative dance contextually for their peer teaching assessment. The group's prolonged discussion grappled with finding a culturally specific dance to teach about for assessment and provided two interesting outcomes. First, they overcame their perception of themselves as not having enough dance expertise. Second, they figured out how to teach creative dance contextually for very young children. Using photographs and video of the age-appropriate modern ballet *Still Life at the Penguin Café* (1987, choreographer, David Bentley for the Birmingham Royal Ballet), they

provided a contextually meaningful learning experience for very young learners who came to recognise movement as though they were an audience. The children then created their own dances, and the teachers drew attention to how their planning fulfilled the ANZC aim that students “come to appreciate that dance is firmly rooted in tradition and yet is constantly evolving to reflect changes in contemporary culture” (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 21).

It was the teachers’ transformational, reflexive thinking that solved the challenge of how to integrate teaching about Eurocentric socio-cultural concepts associated with creative dance into dancing for very young children. Such an outlook could also prove to be beneficial, in that placing the field of dance education itself under a theoretical lens as part of practical work could facilitate teachers to use the dance skills and knowledge they already possess to greater effect in their teaching about dance contextually.

Integrating theory alongside dancing could, therefore, support and inform teaching about dances contextually insofar as considering:

How can integrating dance specialists’ personal narratives and/or relevant cultural concepts into teaching *dancing*, develop reflexive, transformative learning, by which learners and teachers could be encouraged to make sense of their own and others’ dances? [Transformation #2]

Challenge 3—Tradition and innovation in danceⁱⁱⁱ

In my research, perspectives on tradition and innovation raised some interesting differences of opinion between the dance specialists and some of the teachers in schools. The dance specialists spent some considerable time discussing what they considered to be appropriate and inappropriate innovation in their traditions, as illustrated in this discussion:

Keneti Muaiava: “I don’t want that argument about: ‘Oh, oh, why are you borrowing from that other tradition?’ Learn what you’re talking about first before you question it.”

Niulala Helu: “Will you be touching on cultural motion? Like what we’ve been touching on is the borrowing of movement. There is this big, big motion within Polynesian society.”

Valance Smith: “But that’s how our action song came about, eh? Back in 1910 there was an exhibition down in Christchurch, and all these indigenous groups came along, and Māori were there, and some Pacific Island groups as well.

We didn't used to have uniform actions and then we saw a Cook Island group and a Tongan group perform. So we saw—all the visionaries of the time saw—uniform actions which very much portrayed the lyric, and so the very first action song for Māori was about the motion of ocean and the sharing of each other, y'know. That's important, not to be static and idle in time and space, but y'know evolving—survive, actually.”

Similarly, on the in-service course, I observed two primary school teachers teaching Tongan and Sāmoan dance based on their dance heritages as learnt within their own communities. They showed how they fused Tongan and Sāmoan hand gestures highlighting the subtle differences between the two styles, a practice of borrowing that Helu also alluded to in the focus group.

In describing his innovation process, Helu also referred to the importance of approval from elders, and Māori dance specialist Smith gave this description of his dance heritage as part of a living oral tradition that informed his teaching:

That's where the importance of our kaumatua, our old people, come in because they're really the policemen of our culture. That's not to say they're traditionalists, they're very much in tune with change and all that. But still change has got to come from somewhere.

In other traditional dances such as Ghanaian dance, the innovator is also recognised as needing to be knowledgeable about the “choreographic knowledge and craft [as] acquired through kinetic experiences gained from customary activities and behavioural patterns in the community” (Nii-Yartey, 2009, p. 260). From such perspectives, culturally informed and informative teaching is situated in dancing as part of a living oral heritage as possessed by dance specialists from life in their own communities.

Complementarily, it is suggested that traditional dances publicly display “the continuity of human experience, as successive generations re-present dancing” (Buckland, 2006, p. 15). Pre-European dance in the Pacific Islands has been traced in some anthropological studies such as those of Adrienne Kaeppler (1993). From drawings of Tongan dance made in 1784, Kaeppler used Labanotation to reconstruct certain rotations and positions of the arms, fingers and palm facings, emphasising that “these basic movements are essentially the same today as they were at the time of European contact” (p. 82). Even though the romantic notion that any singular, pre-modern traditional culture can be reconstructed, or even theoretically understood in any complete sense, has lost credibility in recent

decades, Buckland's depiction of traditional dance is captured in Kaepler's study. Registering the symbiotic coexistence of the new with the traditional, wherein the latter is not necessarily emphatically habitual, authoritative or pre-ordained, depicts tradition as both "transformation and recycling" (Kaepler, 2004, p. 310). However, a difficulty that could arise, I suggest, is in determining possible cultural differences as to how aspects of a dance are either recycled or transformed, by whom and why.

Concepts such as tradition and innovation, therefore, form another layer of theory that could challenge teachers. In their focus groups, school teachers used words such as "honouring", "authenticating", "respecting", and making sure to avoid "pilfering someone else's culture". However, indicative of the possibility for blurring teaching about dance contextually and innovation, it is noteworthy that every teacher in my investigation was including some creative dance activity when teaching culturally diverse dances contextually. The following conversation is the secondary teachers' focus group response to my request to discuss their teaching about dance contextually, and it hints at where the lines can become blurred:

Gill: "Year ten, modified down for year seven, worked on *kowhaiwhai* patterns [artwork painted on the rafters of Māori meeting houses] and looked at how we can work Māori dance movement in with those.... [Also] study of *tapa* cloths [patterned cloth made by Pacific Islanders from pounded bark] with Polynesian dance at year nine, and *kowhaiwhai* at year ten. *Kowhaiwhai* because I wanted to make sure there was a New Zealand element. Using New Zealand poetry, music."

Jo: "Well, the way I use *kowhaiwhai* is a way which is more about how it makes you feel inside. Actually make the exact move with your body and then find the feeling, so it's more a process.... But there is a bit of background there when we do give some understanding."

Gill: "Because my *kowhaiwhai* unit is a contemporary unit, but we borrow and it gets to that feel that dance does actually borrow from other places.... So the focus for the *kowhaiwhai* is of course haka, but what you're trying to teach them is how to use the space and how to make pathways. But you've given them that as a sort of context and allowed them to pull those other things in."

Jo: "For me it's fusion, and I'm not qualified to say what is traditional. I mean that's a whole other argument. 'What is traditional dance?' Um, it's

that whole thing that was talked about at the conference, of course. I use *tapa* and so it's definitely fusion, because I'm not focusing on the genre itself. I'm more focusing on what they can make up from the stimulus."

The flow of this conversation makes clear how the teachers gradually realised that, although the starting point was Māori or Polynesian visual art, there was little or no contextual study of Māori or Polynesian dance. Using Sāmoan visual art as a stimulus for creative dance or interculturally fusing haka movements with Eurocentric approaches to making dance, such as manipulating spatial pathways, is, arguably, quite different from innovation in Sāmoan dance or haka. Concerns, therefore, can arise about inappropriate appropriation in intercultural fusions—possibly resulting in detrimental effects on the lives of the dancers whose heritages have been borrowed, and on the actual dances (Ashley, 2012a, 2012b); raising the question of who is 'qualified' to discern what is traditional and appropriately innovative culturally.

When teachers face innovation in dances of which they have no or little cultural, physical or creative knowledge, unlike dance specialists such as Helu and Muaiaiva who were raised in specific oral traditions, they may need to give due consideration to how they are going to include and assess making new dance in their teaching of dance contextually, or if they need to do so. When tradition and change are viewed as co-existing, and culture is understood as being open both to human agency *and* communal values, culturally specific beliefs and opinions about creative process, I suggest, are at the heart of the matter, as much as the final dance product. It therefore seems likely that when making dance from another culture, innovation processes may not be understood without some knowledge of associated communally shared rules.

When creative dance, as hegemonic tradition, is active in educational settings, what might be the implications for dances from other cultures? Could a tendency to use a blanket approach to innovation result? As Grau (1992) argues, when minority cultures are colonised the outcomes could tilt the balance of power in favour of the dominant culture. I am concerned, and suggest that others should also be mindful, about hybridising the innovation *process* itself. I suggest that increasing understanding about how tradition and innovation in dance can be culturally different involves asking:

How can dance educators develop teaching about the traditional principles of innovation inherent within dance education itself alongside comparative

understanding of and respect for culturally different approaches to innovation? [Transformation #3]

Challenge 4—Follow the money

In the focus groups, the issue of money associated with providing culturally different dances was raised. The lack of money to pay for guest dance specialists was mentioned in comments such as: “Limited resources on video/CD and not enough money to be able to pay for guests,” and: “We chose people who agreed to come for free!” One of the secondary teachers, explained her budget situation as so:

I’m not keen on teaching Polynesian dancing because I don’t have the knowledge. I’m lucky—I’ve got a school that give me \$450 for guests to come in. That only equates to nine hours. Oh—that was for last year, this year they’ve upped it to \$700. So, I mean that’s giving me 14 hours of specialists at around \$50 an hour. This is enough because the kids only need a two-hour workshop.

The intermediate and primary school teachers also provided information about budgets for dance. As you can see from this discussion, these can vary:

Max: “\$2000, dance; \$2000 drama and another \$1500 for the kapa haka—large school.”

Anne: “Mine’s \$300. I did try and put in for \$2000, but they gave me \$150 and so I upped it to \$300.”

Brenda: “We have an activities budget for the class—parent paid.”

If teachers are depending on guest specialists to provide a range of culturally different dances, a combination of lack of dance expertise *and* money could present them with considerable challenges.

Financial issues were also discussed in the dance specialists’ focus group. Given the calculation that “kids only need a two-hour workshop” at \$50 an hour, a guest specialist is going to have a tough time making a viable living from a ‘teach-and-run’ strategy. The dance specialists’ concerns were about making a viable living from their cultural dance heritage, and they articulated these concerns in such remarks as this:

“I say just give the amount of time that you’re allocating to other dance genres.” (Keneti Muaiava).

Niulala Helu also drew attention to how difficult it is because “in a time of capitalism nobody has the time to be an artist to stay under his roof”. As they

discussed their fiscal problems, the dance specialists talked about the qualifications and experience that they considered appropriate. Valance Smith suggested “5000 hours” total immersion in a culture as providing sufficient experience from which to teach. This is important because an insider view may be surprisingly different. For instance, Smith explained why teaching dance could be one of the last things he would teach:

Unfortunately, a lot of what you’re going to teach is going to be based on stuff like this (*indicates the list of curriculum objectives*), but like I said, the dance would probably be one of the last things I would teach. When we’re trying to teach new students about Māori culture for the very first time we have a holistic approach to dance, which is the whole culture, and so, take *powhiri* [Māori welcome ceremony] as an example, being informed and uninformed of the correct procedures and *tikanga* [Māori guidelines on general behaviour and protocols] around the *marae*.

I am mindful that education can be “the ultimate human enterprise in its concern for and trafficking in the signs of culture” (Smith, 2005, p. 201). Furthermore, as Hoerder (2002) remarks: “the implementation of human rights will have to negotiate compromises in values, customs and legal codes from culture to culture” (p. 574). Working in the interests of social justice in dance education is likely to require compromises, especially if we acknowledge, as Giddens (1984) suggests, that equity involves consideration of proximity to resources because these engender empowerment to act and make any difference. Hence, scrutiny of financial provision may require developing a reflexive view of paying for what is taught in dance education and asking:

What compromises or developments in the current infrastructure of dance education financial distribution could be required to act out our social responsibilities to the people whose dances we study, especially if we consider that these dancers are vital in sustaining dance education as underpinned by pluralism? [Transformation #4]

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In scratching the surface of this complex and multi-layered topic, the transformations that I have suggested are deliberately worded as questions because they offer springboards for further inquiry, particularly in exploring how in

2013 teaching about dance contextually in New Zealand may, or may not, have developed.

I also propose that threading contextual clauses throughout the dance curriculum could help teachers to find the connections they need in order to implement its culturally pluralist intent. This proposal is based on the belief that some grasp of the theoretical, contextual aspects of a dance contributes to meaningful performance, dance making, interpretation or appreciation. Importantly, it could also draw particular attention to how to better

- understand the ideology of dance education as a whole, in that such understanding could be beneficial for learners in developing different, and one would hope, transformational understandings of what dance ‘is’ for diverse people and cultures;
- inform teachers as to how to integrate theory with dancing, thus avoiding a theory/practice dichotomy when teaching about dance contextually;
- understand the possibility that there are cultural differences that can appear when making dances and emphasise that innovation is not a context-free process;
- develop infrastructure and financial strategies to prevent marginalisation of some dances and dancers as ‘artistic’ from others as ‘cultural’.

In this paper, I described how the teachers on the in-service course engaged in transformative and reflexive thinking. I feel it is important to bring to notice that their thinking resulted from them being provided with sufficient time, support and resources to discuss their problems, as applicable to their own teaching, during the course; an exercise that could further inform teacher education (Ashley, 2013).

A reflexive perspective on dance education as an ideology and funded institutionalised employment, as located in New Zealand and internationally, could also be helpful for teachers in understanding their own classrooms, studios or schools as contexts in their own right. Reflecting on dance education from ‘within’ has potential to develop understanding about its differences from some other ways of teaching dance. It is this kind of critical thinking about what teachers are doing *by the teachers* that also exemplifies the notion of and potential for transformation from within dance education and could lead to the possibility for transformations such as those discussed in this paper, and others yet to be discovered.

Overall, I think that the tone of this article emphasises how, from within a culturally pluralist pedagogy, there is an ethical obligation to offer some cultural

and material refuge for the conservation of different dance heritages, and the dancers who dance them in dance education. In the interests of social equity for cultural difference in dance education, therefore, I would like to encourage dance educators to pick up from where my investigation left off and research possible strategies by which dance education can dance the reality of a sustainable and socially equitable pluralist pedagogy, acting out Hitchens' (2011) vision:

I affirm that the forces who regard pluralism as a virtue, “moderate” though that may make them sound, are far more profoundly revolutionary (and quite likely, over the long term, to make better anti-imperialists as well). (p. xviii)

REFERENCES

- Ashley, L. (2010). Teaching dance from contextual perspectives in the New Zealand Curriculum: Concerns, dilemmas and opportunities in theory and practice (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Auckland, New Zealand.
- Ashley, L. (2012a). Culturally different dances in the New Zealand arts curriculum: Understanding about fusion, tradition and making dances in context. *Te Kaharoa: The e-journal on Indigenous Pacific Issues*, 1(2), 96-138. Retrieved December 20, 2012, from <http://tekaharoa.com/index.php/tekaharoa/issue/view/17>
- Ashley, L. (2012b). *Dancing with difference: Culturally diverse dances in education*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Ashley, L. (2013). Connoisseurs' eyes on teaching dance from contextual perspectives. *New Zealand Journal of Research in Performing Arts and Education: Nga Mahi a Rehia*, 4. Retrieved May 3, 2013 from <http://www.drama.org.nz/?cat=280>
- Barbour, K. (2004). Embodied ways of knowing. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 10, 227-238.
- Bolwell, J. (1998). Into the light: An expanding vision of dance education. In S. B. Shapiro (Ed.), *Dance, power and difference* (pp. 75-95). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Buck, R. (2003). Teachers and dance in the classroom: “So do I need my tutu?” (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Buckland, T. J. (Ed.). (2006). *Dancing from past to present: Nation, culture, identities*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Charmaz, K. (2003). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed., pp. 249-91). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Cothran, D. J., Kulinna, P. H., Banville, D., Choi, E., Amade-Escot, C., MacPhail, A., Kirk, D. (2005). A cross-cultural investigation of the use of teaching styles. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 76(2), 193-201.
- Dils, A. (2007). Why dance literacy? *Journal of Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 5(2), 95-113.
- Foster, S. L. (Ed.). (2009). *Worlding dance*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. (1999). *The discovery of grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Grau, A. (1992). Intercultural research in the performing arts. *Dance Research Journal*, 10(3), 3-27.

- Hanna, J. L. (2002). Playing anthropologist in dance education. *Journal of Dance Education*, 2(3), 100-103.
- Hanstein, P. (1990). Educating for the future: A post-modern paradigm for dance education. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 62(2), 56-58.
- Hitchens, C. (2011). *Arguably*. Sydney, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Hoerder, D. (2002). *Cultures in contact: World migration in the second millennium*. London: Duke University Press.
- Hong-Joe, C. M. (2002). Developing dance literacy in the postmodern: An approach to curriculum (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Griffith University, QLD, Australia.
- Kaepler, A. L. (1993). *Poetry in motion: Studies of Tongan dance*. Tonga: Vava'u Press.
- Kaepler, A. L. (2004). Recycling tradition: A Hawaiian case study. *Dance Chronicle*, 27(3), 293-311.
- Laban, R. (1960). *The mastery of movement* (Rev. ed., L. Ullman, Ed.). London: Macdonald Evans.
- Lansdale, J. (Ed.). (2008). *Decentring dancing texts: The challenge of interpreting dances*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mackinlay, E. (2001). "Setting the stage": Learning indigenous women's music and dance in an Australian institution. In H. Reeves (Ed.), *Traditionalism and modernity in the music and dance of Oceania: Essays in honour of Barbara B. Smith* (pp. 179-195). Sydney: University of Sydney.
- McFee, G. (1992). *Understanding dance*. London: Routledge.
- Mane-Wheoki, J. (2003). Culturalisms and the arts curriculum. In M. G. Grierson & J. E. Mansfield (Eds.), *The arts in education: Critical perspectives from Aotearoa New Zealand* (pp. 81-91). Palmerston North, New Zealand: Dunmore.
- Mezirow, J. D. (1981). A critical theory of adult learning and education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 32(1), 3-24.
- Mosston, M. (1981). *Teaching physical education*. New York, NY: Benjamin Cummings.
- Musil, P.S. (2010). Perspectives on an expansive postsecondary dance. *Journal of Dance Education*, 10(4), 111-121.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (1999). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum: A background paper*. Retrieved November 22, 2007, from http://www.minedu.govt.nz/index.cfm?layout_document&document
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2000). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (12711). Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- New Zealand Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum* (32646). Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media.
- Nii-Yartey, F. (2009). Principles of African choreography: Some perspectives from Ghana. In J. Butterworth & L. Wildschut (Eds.), *Contemporary choreography: A critical reader* (pp. 254-268). London: Routledge.
- Pugh McCutchen, B. (2006). *Teaching dance as art in education*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Risner, D. (2010). Dance education matters: Rebuilding postsecondary dance education for twenty-first century relevance and resonance. *Journal of Dance Education*, 10(4), 95-110.
- Robinson, D. & Domenici, E. (2010). From inclusion to integration: Intercultural dialogue and contemporary university dance education, *Research in Dance Education*, 11(3), 213-221.
- Salvara, M. I., Jess, M., Abbott, A., & Bogner, J. (2006). A preliminary study to investigate the influence of different teaching styles on pupils' goal orientations in physical education. *European Physical Education Review*, 12(1), 51-74.
- Sansom, A. (2011). *Movement and dance in young children's lives: Crossing the divide*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Schwartz, P. (1991). Multicultural dance education in today's curriculum. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 62(2), 45-48.
- Smith, H. A. (2005). Peircian theory, psychosemiotics, and education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 37(2), 191-206.
- Stinson, S. (1988). *Dance for young children: Finding the magic in movement*. Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.
- Stinson, S. (2005). Why are we doing this? *Journal of Dance Education*, 5(3), 82-89.

- Thwaites, T. (2003). Multiliteracies: A new paradigm for arts education. In T. Thwaites (Ed.), *ACE Papers: Working Papers from the Auckland College of Education* (pp. 14-29). Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland College of Education.
- Warburton, E. C. (2008). Beyond steps: The need for pedagogical knowledge in dance. *Journal of Dance Education*, 8(1), 7-12.

ⁱ The reader could supplement this brief overview by referring to the full thesis (Ashley, 2010).

ⁱⁱ Formal settings are taken here to include primary, intermediate and secondary schools, as well as university programmes, but exclude dance in informal education as situated in private studios, dance for recreation in community settings, the context of professional training, or liturgical/ritual contexts.

ⁱⁱⁱ I would like to draw the reader's attention to the fuller version of this argument presented in my recent publication Ashley (2012b).