HANDLE WITH CARE: A PEDAGOGICAL THEORY OF TOUCH

IN TEACHING DANCE TECHNIQUE

BASED ON FOUR CASE STUDIES

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BY

ROBIN LATSHAW COLLEN, B.A., M.S., C.M.A.

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To the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Robin Latshaw Collen
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Technique Based on Four Case Studies." I have examined this dissertation for
form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the
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Penelope Hanstein, Ph.D.
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Maisie S. Kashka, Ph.D. (Nursing)

Mary Williford-Shade, M.F.A. (Dance)

Penelope Hanstein, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Dance

Accepted:

Dean of Graduate Studies
and Research

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ABSTRACT

Handle with Care: A Pedagogical Theory of Touch in Teaching Dance Technique
Based on Four Case Studies

Robin Latshaw Collen

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The purpose of this study was to investigate how human touch may be used within a modern dance technique class to facilitate effective teaching and learning. This inquiry was based on two initial assumptions: (a) touch is an effective teaching and learning tool for modern dance, and (b) a modern dance technique class defines its own culture within which pedagogical touch can be a natural and integral experience.

Two qualitative traditions of inquiry were used: the phenomenological study and the multiple case study. Fieldwork took place at four institutions of higher education. Methodology centered on interviews, participant observation, and questionnaires. Memos were written from transcribed interviews, questionnaires, and videotaped observations. A list of relevant coding categories of emergent themes was developed. Nel Noddings' theory of care in moral education was used as an initial framework for a theory models approach to analysis and interpretation of the data. Laban Movement Analysis was used as an analytical tool.

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The effective use of touch requires teachers to acknowledge their own philosophies of teaching and learning, and to recognize the importance of students' backgrounds with touch and dance. In this context teachers develop environments for learning through touch. Teachers mentor touch, enabling students to fully engage in the learning process as touchers and touchees. Teachers develop methods for integrating touch into the flow of their classes. An emphasis on student-to-student-touch experiences engages students in tactile dialogue, providing students with practice in caring, paying attention, remaining flexible, cultivating relationships, searching for appropriate responses, and kinesthetic empathy.

A pedagogical theory of touch was developed. Three core constructs are: (a) the inside/outside nature of dancing, and of learning movement; (b) the importance of student histories; and (c) the significance of intentional touch. The necessity for teachers to account for these foundational elements to insure the effective use of touch, was stressed.

Meta-dance Practice is a teaching and learning theory which was developed in this study. This theory—which describes and explains touch-based teaching and learning experiences that move beyond dance technique—resides within the paradigm of constructivist learning and embodies themes of moral education.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Handle with care" is a useful metaphorical admonition to all teachers, of any subject matter, with any age group of students. For dance teachers who include touch in their pedagogy, this metaphorical idea becomes concrete as well. Consider the following scenario: A male teacher of modern dance technique approaches a female student, stands behind her, places his hands on the student's shoulders, molds his hands around the bones and musculature, presses down firmly, and then lightly and swiftly swipes his fingertips laterally across the student's upper back. During this event a substantial amount of information is communicated. Without a word being uttered, the non-verbal behavior might be translated as: "You are an important member of this class. I have noticed you. I care about you. I'd like you to release the tension in your shoulders. Widen your upper back rather than pinching your scapulae together. I understand that you are tense because you are learning something brand new. You have a myriad of choices for movement in your shoulders. I'd like to help you feel that you can choose to be released. Change is good. Remember to breathe. When we touch another person, we should do so with respect."

An effective use of touch requires a teacher to understand the complexity of tactile interactions, and to create a learning environment which is conducive to the use of touch. Requisite for such an environment is a teacher's (a) ability to touch with clear intent, (b) acknowledgement of the student's background, and

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(c) understanding that dancing—and learning movement— involve both inner processes and outer manifestations. If one reads the above description and substitutes a female teacher and a male student—or a teacher and student of the same sex—the complexity of touch becomes even clearer.

<div style="text-align:center">The Use of Touch to Facilitate Learning</div>

This study—in its broadest application—investigated human touch and the possibility for human beings, through touching and being touched, to become more aware of themselves and others. While this may read as a utopian vision, it is actually undergirded by very practical and hands-on experiences— literally. The settings for this study were modern dance technique classes in four colleges in the United States. The subjects were dance teachers and their students. Through this study it has come to light that human touch among teachers and students in a modern dance class has the potential to teach students not only how to develop into better dancers, but into enriched, multi-dimensional human beings—*moral* human beings. We shall come to better understand the use of the word 'moral' through a discussion on moral education. This inquiry determined that human touch informs individual dance education <u>and</u> personal development.

In this document there is substantial discussion about *what else* besides dance is taught through the use of touch in a modern dance class. It is important to note, however, that despite the frequent reference to *what else*, all learning which includes and goes <u>beyond</u> dance technique occurs <u>because</u> of dance. This learning potential is inherent <u>within</u> dance. The authenticity of the pedagogy of this study's teacher participants—and of this research and theory—is grounded

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in dancing, dance-teaching, and dance-making. The dancing body houses our aesthetic intentions and ideas. It informs—and is informed by—our experiences. Sondra Horton Fraleigh (1987) notes that dance—movement detached from instrumental usefulness—has an aesthetic intent and is an inroad to knowledge of oneself. Fraleigh writes,

> We dance to become acquainted with that which cannot be known by any other means—to find out what can be known through the body as a mental, physical, spiritual whole. Thus we acquire a kind of knowledge we might designate as *experiential*. Indeed, we commonly speak of skill in dance as a form of knowledge and also speak of kinesthetic intelligence as an aspect of skillful dancing. But dance involves more than just *knowing how* to do a movement. It also involves knowing how to express the aesthetic intent of the movement and how to create aesthetic movement imagery. All of these forms of knowing how are forms of bodily lived (experiential) knowledge. As such, they are avenues for self-knowledge. (p. 26)

At the outset of this study I proceeded to uncover, through the words and actions of students and teachers, how touch helps students learn to dance. The research was based on two assumptions: (a) touch is an effective teaching and learning tool for modern dance and (b) a modern dance technique class defines its own culture within which pedagogical touch can be a natural and integral experience. These assumptions were based on discussions with, and observations of eight dance teachers—four from a pilot study and four from this current study—and from my own experiences as a teacher.

I began my research by asking the following questions which functioned as a blueprint for data gathering and analysis:

1. What is the role and significance of touch as a kind of human interaction and type of dialogue?

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2. What is the purpose of touch in modern dance education?

3. How does touch affect the student's ability to learn the functional and expressive elements of dance?

4. How do various touch relationships affect the learning process?

5. How do teachers deal with the limitations of touch as a teaching strategy, its appropriateness or inappropriateness, and students' comfort/discomfort with it?

6. What issues regarding gender, perceived hierarchical status, and culture should be considered when teaching dance through touch?

7. What are the types of touch, and their functions, which may be used in a modern dance class?

8. How can the theories regarding the use of touch move beyond knowledge which is tacit, innate, or second-nature to inform pedagogical practice in the modern dance class?

The data revealed a plethora of information on the *how* of touch. But, again, what loomed even larger than *how* was *what else*—what else besides dance was being taught and learned through touch. **Meta-dance practice** is a term which I have devised to describe dance teaching and learning which goes beyond, transcends, and is more comprehensive than only developing the technically proficient dance performer.

What also became clear was that pedagogical touch and meta-dance practice fit within the educational paradigm of *constructivism*. In its most basic sense, constructivism, according to Bradford S. Woods and P. Karen Murphy (2002) is an educational theory that ". . . adheres to a belief that individual

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constructions of knowledge and the environmental variables that mold these constructions should be the true objects of epistemology" (p. 49). The authors note that constructivist theory is not just one idea. It involves variations—or sub-genres: (a) *Social constructivism* proposes that interpersonal relations—versus intrapersonal cognitive creation—is the most viable explanation of knowledge construction (p. 51); (b) *Situated cognition* ". . . is grounded in the experiential cornerstone of constructivism [focusing on] . . . the significance of the temporal relation of humankind to the perceptible environment [and that] . . . *instance* is essence (p. 52); and (c) *Radical constructivism* is the most extreme version—denying a singular reality—in which adherents believe "the creation of knowledge structures is situated solely in the minds of the individual. . ." and that these structures can never be accurately communicated (p. 52).

Kathryn Alesandrini and Linda Larson (2002) propose five basic tenets to constructivism: (a) Learning results from exploration and discovery, (b) learning is a community activity facilitated by shared inquiry, (c) learning occurs during the constructivist process, (d) learning results from participation in authentic activities, and (e) outcomes of constructivist activities are unique and varied (pp. 118-119). Each of these precepts is germane to the effective use of touch in teaching dance.

Time is an important principle of constructivism noted in the literature which is particularly pertinent to the application of touch in teaching dance. Integrating touch into a dance class is time consuming and—when conscientiously applied—can indeed be <u>well worth</u> the time. Paul Vermette (2001) writes, "When students are given time to explore interesting and relevant

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problems they can create meaningful connections and reach higher standards"
(Vermette et al., p. 89).

Returning to the concept of meta-dance practice, an explanation
regarding the word 'practice' is necessary. In the world of dance, dancers
practice their art by participating in any number of activities including
performing, studying, choreographing, improvising, and teaching. Dance
practice has a number of meanings. It is the application or performance of one's
knowledge of, or in, dance. It is one's method of performing, studying,
choreographing, improvising, or teaching dance. It is also simply the doing—the
exercise of the profession—of dance, just as one would practice law or medicine.
That a dancer has studied or performed with a particular teacher implies both
the style of teaching and the body of material absorbed by the student.

For example, if a dancer has practiced her or his art with modern dancer,
Murray Louis, I—as a teacher, and a former student at the Nikolais/Louis
studio—understand at least some of what was entailed in the technique classes.
Classes include such elements as dancing to live drumming, and particular types
of floor sequences. I also surmise that Louis has fostered—and this dancer has
gained—a keen awareness of space, and the ability to move lightly, suddenly,
and make rapid directional changes; the dancer probably also has an
appreciation for improvisation and composition, as well as technique. All of
these elements comprise, in part, Murray Louis's teaching practice, and the
student's learning (and potentially) performing practice. With this in mind,
meta-dance practice refers to both what is taught and what is learned in a
modern dance technique class.

I started this research with a 'near' focus—on touch. As I began to understand and interpret the data, I ventured 'far'—attempting to comprehend touch in the larger educational context in which it was revealing itself. This led to an investigation of moral education, and its historical significance in dance education. The information herein is an interplay of near/far, and inside/outside. It unravels (a) some of what can be understood about how touch informs sensation and awareness of the moving body, and (b) the ways in which such awareness is manifested in performance, and in one's overall education.

Pedagogical touch has the potential to provide dancers with educational experiences which reach beyond their skill development in dance, and contribute to their growth in other areas. According to Richard Kraus, Sarah Chapman Hilsendager, and Brenda Dixon (1991), during the period between the 1930s and the 1950s dance in education was situated primarily within the field of physical education and was expected to contribute to a number of areas of a student's growth including "personal-social development" (p. 309). However, within the context of physical education, dance was stressed less as an art form than as a way to guide students to become more fully functional—personally and as a part of society. This is not the case today. Currently, in colleges and universities, dance students have the opportunity to develop high levels of aesthetic expressivity and technical virtuosity, as well as neuromuscular awareness and interpersonal/intrapersonal skills. Using Howard Gardner's (1993) definitions, "interpersonal intelligence" is the ability to understand other people and to be able to work with them; "intrapersonal intelligence" is the capacity to form an accurate model of oneself and use it to operate effectively in life (p. 9).

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Some teachers of modern dance technique, indeed, address the 'moral education' and 'meta-dance' (beyond dance) aspects of their teaching to their students. They often raise issues of responsibility, care, spirituality, and receptivity. Moral education is a concept of educational philosophy which stresses the importance of a student's growth as a human being in tandem with the acquisition of knowledge in particular subject areas. Modern dance teachers may or may not be aware of this other level of education they are providing. However, when they invite their students to touch each other in class to facilitate learning—based on my interactions with teachers and students—meta-dance practice is taking place.

The idea of dance education teaching more than dance is not a new one. What is new, however, is exploring this through the vehicle of touch. Dance educator, Margaret H'Doubler (1940/1962) included the following as benefits of dance experiences: self-knowledge, self-direction, security, and the ability to make choices. H'Doubler writes:

> Dance in education does not exist just for the pleasure of dancing, but through creative effort in giving aesthetic forms to significant experience it is hoped students will develop their creative power and in turn improve themselves as persons . . . [Dance] is a means of becoming sensitive to quality values in one's environment . . . [values that] can be observed in nature and human relations. (p. xxvi)

Moral Education

Meta-dance practice and moral education share a number of important themes and goals including (a) "wide-awakeness" (Greene, 1978), (b) self understanding, (c) autonomy, (d) respect for others, (e) acceptance of responsibility for one's choices, (f) the ability to revise/transform a situation,

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(g) a sense of care for people, and (h) open dialogue. Moral education is a complex concept about which to speak or write. The word *moral* is weighted heavily with a sense of criticism about what the 'other' is doing versus what 'we' are doing: wrong versus right. People on all sides of political and religious issues such as health care, welfare, and abortion claim to be taking the only morally correct stand. In public education religious freedom is a primary value; this may lead some educators to champion a stand which they believe to be value-neutral. For example, a friend recently told me that her child's preschool chose not to display any holiday ornamentation during the month of December (or any other time of year) in order to avoid inculcating the students with the values of Christianity, Judaism, or another faith. This may actually be to the detriment of children's opportunities to learn tolerance and understanding of other people—two commonly held principles of moral education.

According to John Snarey (1992) all teachers, by virtue of who they are, display their values. Snarey notes that even when moral values are not highly objectified, they are still part of an unspoken, or even unintentional moral curriculum. He states that, since value neutrality is a fallacy, ". . . educators and policymakers do have a legitimate role in moral education" (p. 856). Our understanding of meta-dance practice can be assisted through the descriptions of moral education by a number of educational philosophers who reveal how the two fields share numerous goals or outcomes.

The German word, *Bildung* describes the idea of education providing more than knowledge of the particular subject matter. Bildung, according to Frederick Beiser (1998) signifies two processes—learning and personal growth.

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For the early German Romantics (in the 19th century) education was considered in high esteem and a part of the general process of self-realization. Bildung refers to an approach to education in which ". . . learning is taken to be constitutive of personal development, as part and parcel of how we become a human being in general and a specific individual in particular" (p. 286). Rudolf Laban was central to the German modern dance and dance education movements during the first half of the twentieth century. He also stressed the importance of self-knowledge. Self-understanding was foundational to Laban's belief in the value of the human experience of movement. For Laban, the art of movement enables humans to begin to take the first steps toward fulfilling ". . . their natural purpose, and understanding the reason for . . . [their] . . . very existence" (Thornton, 1971, p. 30).

Howard Gardner has also grappled with the concepts of morality and moral intelligence. He conceptualizes an intelligence as ". . . a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (1999, pp. 33-34). The original seven intelligences which he delineated were musical, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (Gardner, 1983). Each of these—to greater or lesser degrees—plays a role in meta-dance practice. Gardner (1999) has since extended his list to include a naturalist intelligence and, in part, a spiritual/existential intelligence. However, he states that he is not willing to include a moral intelligence. For Gardner, 'moral' is not an intelligence, but it is ". . . about the kind of person one has developed to be . . . Morality is . . . a statement about personality,

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individuality, will, character. . ." (1999, p. 77). Whether there exists a moral intelligence or not, what is central to the idea of a moral realm—for Gardner and for meta-dance practice—is a sense of personal agency and a consciousness about how one relates towards others.

Maxine Greene (1978) associates a moral life with freedom and autonomy, and the ability to be aware of, and take responsibility for one's choices (p. 155). She uses Alfred Schutz's term *wide-awakeness* to describe a type of awareness in which one can attend fully to life (p. 42). Wide-awakeness is expressed through self understanding—knowing your preferences and being able to reflect on them (p. 153). The importance of understanding oneself and other people is also noted by David N. Aspin (1991) who justifies music education, in part because it develops personal autonomy, well informed judgments, and respect for others (p. 221). John Dewey, (as cited in Winn, 1959) describes morals as dealing with all activity into which alternative possibilities enter. Dewey writes, "All moral judgment is experimental and subject to revision" (p. 86). Greene extends Dewey's idea of revising, stating that the ability to make choices hinges on breaking the notion that the world is finished and predefined (p. 155).

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1997) address the concept of *moral imperatives* as seen through a constructivist world view. Constructivism is a paradigm in which a situation must be contextualized in all its aspects in order to be understood as a whole; these aspects include the experiences which participants bring to a situation. The authors stress an approach to morality which is orientated around *responsibility*. They also note that, for constructivists, a caring response is a moral response. A moral attitude is one which involves

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not only care, but also an affinity for people in the world (p. 149). The authors offer a style of moral education, a way of teaching through a constructivist frame termed *connected teaching*. Connected teaching provides an environment in which participants nurture each other, where dialogue between students and teachers is encouraged, and where public dialogue replaces a sense of secrecy about knowledge (p. 149).

Patricia Hill Collins (1993) indirectly approaches the issue of moral education in her proposal of an Afrocentric feminist epistemology. This paradigm might prompt a teacher or student to ask, "If education is the process of realizing knowledge, should we not closely scrutinize just exactly what makes something a true or false knowledge claim?" She states that within the Eurocentric masculinist knowledge-validation process, the scholar making the claim must convince an academic community controlled by white men that a particular claim is justified. She writes, "Black women are more likely to choose an alternative epistemology for assessing knowledge claims, one using different standards that are consistent with Black women's criteria for substantiated knowledge and with our criteria for methodological adequacy" (p. 95). The parameters of her Afrocentric feminist epistemology include (a) concrete experience as a criterion of meaning; (b) the use of dialogue to assess knowledge claims; (c) the ethic of caring, an emphasis of which is individual uniqueness; and (d) the ethic of personal accountability. Each of these is a constituent of tactile interaction in a dance class, and of meta-dance practice.

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The Ethic of Care and Meta-Dance Practice

Nel Noddings's (1984, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2002) work focuses on the *ethic of care* as the key to moral education. She writes, "The primary aim of every educational institution and of every educational effort must be the maintenance and enhancement of caring" (1984, p. 172). According to Noddings, moral education from the perspective of care contains four major components: *modeling, dialogue, practice*, and *confirmation* (1998, p. 190). Each of these four elements—as Noddings applies them to the growth of students as carers and cared-fors—directly relates to the growth of dancers as touchers and those being touched (*touchees*). Noddings's theory of the ethic of care has provided an ideal lens through which to explore meta-dance practice and touch. However, it has ultimately inspired the creation of a <u>new</u> theory which modifies and augments some of Noddings's ideas to more clearly represent and frame the use of touch between dance teachers and students.

Mentoring

This theme has evolved from Noddings's concept of modeling. Modern dance teachers mentor touch behavior primarily in two ways. First, they do so when they touch themselves. For example, a teacher may place one hand on each side of her own head, guide her head forward in a curving action to show students where in the body a movement should initiate. Teacher-self-touch magnifies and amplifies what teachers hope to convey to students. It shows students how they can touch themselves to receive proprioceptive feedback— sensory information in one's body about muscle contraction, tension, stretch, and joint position (Fitt, 1996, p. 268). Second, teachers mentor touch behavior when

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they touch a student. This demonstrates to all students how to enter another person's kinesphere and create a tactile relationship that is respectful and conveys/receives useful information. (*Kinesphere*, a term from Laban Movement Analysis, is commonly defined as the distance an individual can reach into the space around the body without taking a step. Other terms used are *personal space* and *personal bubble*.) Effective mentoring requires teachers to be sensitive to issues of gender, power, and empowerment.

Tactile Dialogue

Developed from Noddings's concepts of dialogue and confirmation, tactile dialogue is central to an integrated use of touch in a modern dance technique class. It may occur through teacher-to-student-touch, student-to-teacher-touch, and student-to-student-touch. Tactile dialogue is a complex engagement involving meaning-making through multiple layers, simultaneously. For the purposes of this study, these layers include: (a) an attitude of care, (b) acts of paying attention, (c) a search for appropriate responses, (d) a flexible approach, (e) the cultivation of relationships,

(f) confirmation, and (g) kinesthetic empathy.

Application

This concept is an evolution of Noddings's notion of practice. Teachers have a myriad of choices regarding how to put touch into practice in their classes. If modern dance teachers want their students to learn from touching and being touched, and to develop skill and sensitivity for further hands-on work, students need the time for practicing touch, and reflecting on that practice. Teachers continually seek a balance between giving their students enough time

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with a touch experience to gain its full benefit, and maintaining the momentum and continuity of the class. There is no fixed way in which this works. Teachers have choices such as (a) maintaining the same partner or switching partners; (b) providing a brief or a long period for tactile problem solving and verbal debriefing; (c) touching a moving partner or touching during stillness, and (d) using student-self-touch, student-to-student-touch, student-to-teacher-touch, or teacher-to-student-touch to accomplish particular goals.

Touch in the Modern Dance Technique Class

The primary concern in teaching or learning in a modern dance technique class is *technique*. Very simply put, technique is a two-fold idea. Technique teaches the body to perform certain actions properly and safely, such as balances, turns, and leaps. However, until the dancer 'owns' the technique and can freely use it (or not), the expressive and aesthetic consequences of it will not be fully realized. For a number of reasons, the modern dance technique class is an ideal environment in which to use touch as a teaching and learning tool. One reason is that modern dance classes are highly varied in content and format. This variety depends in part on the teacher's background and interests, the experience level of the students, and the time frame for the class. There is opportunity for experimentation with touch experiences in a modern dance class.

This is not to say that touch is necessarily avoided or abandoned in the teaching of other styles of dance. Indeed, touch is used in the teaching of other dance forms such as ballet (Moss & Leopold, 1999), classical Japanese dance (Hahn, 1996), Skinner Releasing Technique (Skura, 1990), contact improvisation (Novak, 1988), and Balinese dance (de Zoete & Spies, 1973), to name a few.

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However, modern dance was borne out of an experimental sensibility, and it maintains an inherent flexibility suited for the use of touch. According to Marcia Siegel (as cited in Preston-Dunlop, 1995) modern dance has been developing through a tradition which discards established requirements of form; each choreographic work involves establishing new principles and makes its own form via ". . . resistance to the past, its response to the present, [and] its constant redefining of the idea of dance. . ." (p. 17). Modern dance is continually redefining itself, on stage and in the way teachers approach their work with students. As teachers have refined and redefined what it means to teach modern dance technique they have incorporated other movement arts including yoga, martial arts, and a variety of body therapies.

The Influence of Somatics

One of the primary ways in which touch has become an integral tool of modern dance pedagogy for many teachers is through the influence of somatics. Somatics is a field of study in which one uses the direct experience of one's own body—perceiving the body from a *first person perspective*—as a central inroad to awareness and to healing (Lichlyter, 1999, p. 4; Johnson, D. H., 1997, pp. 9-10). Modern dancers have gravitated towards a mélange of somatics practices which utilize hands-on work. Two of the systems which have informed the work of the teacher participants in this study are *Bartenieff Fundamentals* and *Body-Mind Centering*.

Bartenieff Fundamentals, developed by Irmgard Bartenieff is described by Peggy Hackney (1998) as ". . . an approach to basic body training that deals with

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patterning connections in the body according to principles of efficient movement functioning within a context which encourages personal expression and full psychophysical involvement" (p. 31). The practice of Bartenieff Fundamentals gives participants an awareness of the multiple possibilities and options they have for making changes in their movement style and range. For example, a teacher of Bartenieff Fundamentals can use touch to transfer knowledge by (a) molding around a student's body to convey a three-dimensional shape, (b) holding and guiding an arm in a pathway to find range of motion in the shoulder joint, (c) placing a hand on the sternum to encourage a quality of yielding, and (d) revealing the relationship between bony landmarks. Considering bony landmarks, in particular, a teacher might use touch to 'encourage' the greater trochanter of the femur to move closer to the ischial tuberosity of the pelvis to facilitate outward rotation of the thigh.

Body-Mind Centering (BMC), developed by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen is an approach to movement analysis and reeducation which has been brought into the dance technique class. This somatics system includes a highly detailed theory and practice of touch. Cohen's work is useful for dancers in a multitude of ways including repatterning movement habits as well as facilitating awareness of breathing, movement initiation, and movement qualities. Cohen writes,

> When we touch someone, they touch us equally. The subtle interplay between body and mind can be experienced clearly through touching others. . . In hands-on work, through touching in different rhythms, through placement of attention within specific layers of the body, through following existing lines of force and suggesting new ones, and through

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changes in the pressure and quality of our touch, we come into harmony
with the different tissues and their associated qualities of mind. (1993,
p. 6)

Movement/dance educators and somatics practitioners have taken their
studies of Bartenieff Fundamentals, Body-Mind Centering, and other systems in
new directions. They have developed their own theories and practices for
hands-on work. Irene Dowd is one such practitioner. Profoundly influenced by
her teacher, Dr. Lulu E. Sweigard (Dowd, 1995), she has developed detailed
descriptions and practices of the use of touch to facilitate movement. She works
with diverse populations, including dancers, athletes, and musicians. Dowd
(1994) writes about the importance of a toucher's intent. When she puts her
hands on the surface of a person's body Dowd engages in a highly specific and
purposeful movement communication between herself and the other person;
this, she terms, "intentional touch" (p. 48). Dowd's focus on intention is
particularly germane to the notion that only when we touch with clear intention
can we gain the comfort and trust of the person we are touching.

When used effectively in the context of somatics practices and meta-dance
practice, touching is never a thoughtless, random act. A few of the common
theoretical underpinnings of the practices of Bartenieff Fundamentals, Body-
Mind Centering, and touch in a dance class include (a) the importance of active
involvement of both the toucher and the touchee—although to be 'active' may
entail any degree of stillness or movement, (b) the cognitive element which
works in tandem with the tactile/intuitive element, (c) the flexibility of approach,
(d) the importance of relationship, and (e) the need for a clear intent to motivate
actions in the relationship.

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The Studio is Not Your Average Classroom:

Contexting Touch in the Culture of the Modern Dance Class

Before proceeding, a clarification of the use of the word *culture* is in order. Culture consists of our language and symbols, including the languages and symbols of dance. It entails the ways in which we create products—both practical and artistic. Culture determines how we live our lives as individuals and function within, and as societies; it is the framework for our beliefs and values. Students and teachers engage in the cultural life of the modern dance class through such activities as touching, moving, dancing, speaking, observing, critiquing, improvising, performing and reflecting—on the past, present, and future.

There are very few situations in most college classes during which students would be asked to touch each other in order to facilitate the learning process. However, a touch-inclusive modern dance studio and a non-touching classroom environment frequently share an important approach to learning. Cooperative learning and cooperative problem-solving—which are particularly prevalent during student-to-student touch activities—can occur in both the classroom and the studio. In the context of classroom experience, cooperative learning involves (a) working in peer groups, (b) participating in discussion and debate, and (c) reciprocal teaching. Joanna Dunlap and R. Scott Grabinger (1996) write that through cooperative learning ". . . students are more willing to take on the additional risk required to tackle complex, ill-structured, authentic problems

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when they have the support of others in the cooperative group" (p. 68). There is a parallel situation in the modern dance class. This study has revealed that, in problem solving, some dance students feel freer to experiment and make mistakes when touching a student partner than they do when working one-on-one with the teacher. In classrooms where students are encouraged to work cooperatively in small groups by moving their desks or chairs into close proximity, to touch one another would rarely be appropriate. This is not true for a modern dance technique class.

A modern dance class creates a culture by establishing its own rules for appropriate behavior and decorum. Within the context of a technique class in which touch is an established part of the teacher's pedagogy, what may otherwise be considered an unwarranted intimate distance becomes the only practical distance. For Edward T. Hall (1969) *intimate distance*—which ranges from actually touching to about eighteen inches—is that of ". . . love-making and wrestling, comforting and protecting [and the possibility for] physical involvement is uppermost in the awareness of both persons" (p. 117). However, during a modern dance class, <u>physical involvement for the purposes of gaining skills as a dancer</u> is what remains uppermost in the awareness of both persons.

A modern dance student might respond negatively to being touched outside the studio, but this attitude can change significantly inside the studio. Conscientious teachers, like those I encountered in this study, encourage the development of a dance class culture in which a comfortable use of touch is

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possible. Teachers create a tone, an atmosphere in which touching is not only

acceptable, but—for many students—considered to be essential for learning.

This tone is set in a number of ways, through (a) a teacher's method of initially

introducing the concept of touch as part of the class, (b) a teacher's

understanding that touch may affect a student's emotional response, (c) a

teacher's manner of moving toward and entering into a student's kinesphere,

(d) a teacher's sensitivity to issues such as gender and empowerment, and (e) a

teacher's choice of words which will accompany a touch interaction.

A matter-of-fact manner—one which clearly indicates the pedagogical

(not casual) nature of touch—contributes to the culture. This matter-of-factness

needs to be balanced with a sensitivity to the emotional potential of touching and

being touched. Ashley Montagu (1978) explains that touch in and of itself may

not be an emotion, but its sensory elements induce the neural, glandular,

muscular, and mental changes which we call emotion. We do not experience

touch simply as a physical modality—sensation—but affectively, as emotion

(p. 103). Sensitivity regarding how to approach a student is also a necessity. Is

the approach calm, swift, or abrupt? Does it startle the student or is the student

prepared to be touched? Teachers learn to 'read' the readiness of a student

through the student's facial expression and posture, adapting their methods of

touching, accordingly. Teachers can also develop a culture for touch through

their choice of words which they speak—prior to, during, or after the touch

event. Words should be chosen which encourage and clarify, rather than confuse

the touch experience.

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The comfortable and integral use of touch in dance class culture is demonstrated by not only the fact that touch is allowed at all, but by the particular areas on the body which one is invited to touch, or allows to be touched. Despite the unique culture of a modern dance class, it may take some time for a student to find a level of comfort when asked to touch (or be touched on) regions of the body which are typically considered off limits to anyone but a lover, spouse or doctor. Stanley Jones and Elaine Yarbrough (1985) researched the cultural meanings of touch behaviors in everyday interactions. They recognized the intricacy of human adult response to touch, writing, "It seems reasonable to assume that as the child grows older, the impulse to touch and be touched is increasingly funneled through a complex cultural code for tactile behavior" (p. 20).

Although Jones and Yarbrough (1985) describe touch behaviors outside the unique context of a modern dance class, their work bears noting. Modern dance students do not simply shed all of their cultural mores when they enter the dance studio; they bring their personal histories/narratives with them. A student's response to touch is influenced by gender and sexual orientation—of both the student and teacher—as well as the student's attitudes/biases/ background with such issues as homosexuality, hierarchical relationships between men and women, and sexual abuse.

Jones and Yarbrough (1985) distinguished two general regions of the body in relation to touch: *non-vulnerable body parts* and *vulnerable body parts*. Through

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their observations of everyday interactions they surmised the relative closeness and status between people involved in touch events. Their results showed that non-vulnerable body parts—hands, arms, shoulders, and upper back—were accessible to touch for persons of any degree of acquaintance. Vulnerable body parts—head, neck, torso, lower back, buttocks, legs, and feet—were touched almost exclusively in *close* relationships (p. 36). Within the culture of a college modern dance class, vulnerable and non-vulnerable body parts are touched.

Dee Oseroff-Varnell (1998) researched the role of communication in the socialization process at a secondary school for the performing arts. She examined the way communication functions to reduce the feeling of uncertainty in new students ". . . both through the overt agenda as well as the implied messages in the hidden curriculum" (p. 102). Regarding tactile communication she states,

> The medium of dance naturally invites more physical contact than many other types of expression, and this was evident between dance teachers and students and among students themselves, especially directed towards . . . vulnerable body parts (head, neck, torso, lower back, buttocks, legs, and feet). (p. 111)

She noted that integral to being a dance student was an unspoken acceptance of physical contact. This acceptance was marked by an attitude of inclusiveness toward students in the dance school—by teachers and other students. Besides the touching which was used as a part of dance instruction to correct alignment or position, there was a notable use of touch outside of the teaching situation among dance students and teachers. For example, teachers

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hugged students, patted them on the back, or touched them on the shoulder or waist as they talked (p. 111).

Oseroff-Varnell's (1998) study raises important issues about the socialization process which goes on in school settings. First, the use of touch within a dance class has the potential to develop a positive rapport among students, and between students and teachers. This, in turn, can make students more receptive to learning. Second, it brings to light the importance of a teacher's clarity of intent when using touch. This is an obvious point when considering that any teacher's instructions need to be clear to be understood. But also, a teacher's choices in the dance studio—including the appropriateness of her or his touch—create an imprint on the students which they carry outside the studio into their complex socialization experiences. Mary Seereiter, one of the teacher participants in my research remarked that when touching students in the studio, ". . . if your intent is clear then the appropriateness of your touch is going to be clear."

As noted, a certain kind of bonding and rapport develops between students, and between student and teacher as a result of touch. This was evident at all four of the research sites. The rapport may or may not translate outside the modern dance class. However, student participants reported that during the course of the class itself there exists an understanding among the participants that the studio is a safe environment in which to touch, and that touch facilitates learning. In certain dance classes, an act as potentially sensitive or embarrassing as touching a partner's ischial tuberosities (deep inside the buttocks), thighs, lower back, or feet become standard activities.

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The appropriateness and usefulness of touch between college classroom

teachers and their students was researched in an experimental study at a

community college. A. Lee Steward and Michael Lupfer (1987) wondered if

touch could help improve communication, and what impact touch might have

on the student/teacher relationship. Three instructors held brief, individual

conferences after the students' first exam. Students in the control group were

untouched. Those in the experimental group were touched lightly on the arm for

no more than five seconds on two separate occasions during the conference. All

students were given a questionnaire after the conference to rate the conference,

the instructor, and the instructor's performance in the classroom. The results

suggested that touching exerts a powerful influence on teacher/student

relations. The authors write,

> Students who were touched by an instructor rated that instructor as
> friendlier, more understanding, interesting, and capable than did students
> who were not touched... Here the effectiveness of touch as a form of
> *communication* can be seen: Not only were the instructors telling the
> student how to improve, but they were also communicating nonverbally
> through the use of touch. Touch served to emphasize the instructors'
> concern and commitment... The role of touch as *motivator* can be seen by
> comparing the [significantly improved] performance of the touch group to
> [the unimproved performance of] the control group on the post-
> conference exam. (p. 806).

A modern dance class—especially one in which touch is integrated—is a

unique culture and environment. In this setting students work cooperatively,

take risks, and develop a sensitivity to the emotional potential of touch.

Teaching dance through touch situates student learning within the paradigms of

meta-dance practice and moral education.

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Connecting the Parts and Constructing the Whole: Touching to Learn

Returning to the idea of constructivism, modern dance technique classes which integrate touching among students and teachers exhibit characteristics of a constructivist perspective on learning. This paradigm emphasizes knowledge as something a student constructs using her or his preexisting knowledge; it is not a phenomenon which is simply transferred from teacher to student.

John Black and Robert McClintock (1996) have created an educational model which is a useful frame for understanding the constructivist nature of a modern dance class. They use the word *studying* to describe what a student does when constructing knowledge. Black and McClintock present designs for *study support environments*, the key consideration of which is ". . . fostering the construction of interpretations based on observations and background contextual information" (p. 25). Their design for *interpretation construction*, described below (in *a* through *g*) embraces activities and elements common to a modern dance class which incorporates student-to-student-touch. Classroom students in study support environments (a) make observations; (b) construct interpretations of their observations and consider the validity of their interpretations; (c) contextualize their interpretations/argumentations in background information; (d) serve as apprentices to teachers to master observation, interpretation and contextualization; (e) collaborate in observation, interpretation and contextualization; (f) gain cognitive flexibility by being exposed to multiple interpretations; and (g) gain transferability by seeing multiple manifestations of the same interpretations (p. 26).

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How does interpretation construction apply to a modern dance class? (The numbered list below correlates to the order of the previous paragraph.)

1. When dance students work as partners, frequently the partnership begins with one student observing another as he or she moves independently. A teacher may ask the toucher to touch for a very particular reason, or, for more experienced students, give the toucher some freedom of choice.

2. The toucher's freedom of choice is not offered randomly, but is firmly dependent on observations and interpretations. The student toucher, like the teacher, also closely observes the touchee in order to discern how or if the touch is effective.

3. The toucher contextualizes her or his interpretations in what is known about the partner's skill level and particular strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps they have worked together on this same issue before.

4. Practicing touch with a student partner is a form of apprenticeship in which students develop their skills in observation, interpretation and contextualization.

5. Touch between two students is highly collaborative. It does not involve an active toucher who manipulates a passive partner. Both participants are—to use Noddings's words—active "coexplorers" working towards "mutual transformation" (1998, p. 193).

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6. Over the course of a semester or year, modern dance students experience and witness numerous versions of touch based on who is touching whom, what area of the body is being touched, and what type of touch is used.

7. By experiencing numerous variations of touch events, students learn how to work with a variety of people in multiple circumstances. Touch events provide experiences in the construction of interpretations.

The parallels between Black and McClintock's approach to constructivist education, and the interpretation-constructing possibilities available through student-to-student touch, are vivid. Features of meta-dance practice which loom large here include opportunities for students to (a) become better observers; (b) collaborate and, thereby, build relationships; and (c) recognize that dance is a multifaceted endeavor, requiring an openness and flexibility to its many possibilities.

Framing The Study: The Ethic of Care in Moral Education

This study investigated the use of touch in the teaching and learning of modern dance—situating these educational processes within the paradigm of meta-dance practice. Nel Noddings's theory of the ethic of care in moral education is, in two ways, an ideal scaffolding for this research. First, Noddings's concepts of modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation are important activities and areas of concern during a touch event in a dance class.

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Second, it is fitting that a theory of caring should harmonize with one of touch; touch is one of our primary ways of expressing care. I approached Noddings's theory as a *theory model* to assist me in organizing and interpreting the data. Penelope Hanstein (1999) supports the theory models approach as a way to understand data in a new field of inquiry by examining that data through a previously developed theoretical lens (pp. 78-85). Having set the context for exploring touch and meta-dance practice, let us move on to the researching process itself.

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

A Burgeoning Interest Leads to a Pilot Study

My journey toward understanding touch began when I developed an interest in the field of touch during the summer of 1988. That summer I enrolled as a student in the Laban Movement Analysis Certification Program in Seattle, Washington. My teachers—Ed Groff, Peggy Hackney, Carol-Lynne Moore, and Pam Schick—introduced me to the richness in the field of movement study. In the program, while studying Bartenieff Fundamentals I learned that touch provides us with an awareness that new patterns of movement are possible. Being touched can teach us that we have choices in how we move; we are not compelled to maintain movement habits which are inefficient or unhealthy.

In 1996 I conducted an informal pilot study as part of my doctoral course work. My objective was to determine whether investigating the topic of touch as a tool for teaching and learning dance held possibility as a research project. John Creswell (1998) recommends that researchers interested in qualitative inquiry engage in a small pilot project to determine if they are at ease with the open-ended, ambiguous, and fluid nature of qualitative research (p. 16). This initial research involved four case study interviews of modern dance teachers regarding their use of touch. The teachers were Adrienne Fisk, Peggy Hackney, Marta Lichlyter, and Gayle Ziaks. From this original study I developed a

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descriptive theory for the use of touch in modern dance pedagogy. Each of these teachers used touch in specific ways to promote learning. While each emphasized different methods and functions of touch, taken together, they stressed three primary themes: (a) touch develops awareness in the dancer of an extensive range of issues including the site of movement initiation, spatial clarity, and tension in the body; (b) touch contributes to the dancer's ability to form images which promote the learning of dance; and (c) touch is integral to the bonding or connecting process between the teacher and student, and among students.

The pilot study uncovered four primary touch relationships used in a modern dance class—teacher-to-student-touch, student-to-student-touch, teacher-self-touch, and student-self-touch. Two secondary relationships were student-to-teacher-touch and student- or teacher-to-object-touch. Objects that were touched to facilitate movement included such items as a skeleton, a towel, and the floor. I learned that each touch relationship has its benefits and drawbacks. The study clarified many types of touch which can be used in a dance class such as tracing a pathway, guiding, and shaking. Finally, through numerous, overlapping comments from the teacher participants, the study revealed how the issues of gender, status, personal history, and culture may impact the success or failure of touch as an inroad to teaching and learning. The pilot study demonstrated that the topic of touch in the teaching and learning of modern dance was a viable subject for more in-depth inquiry. What I learned

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from these four teachers provided me with a map for structuring the process of gathering data. They showed me the importance of carefully choosing the next participants in my research.

What is Going on Here? Exploring the Enigma of Touch

There are a number of reasons why qualitative inquiry was appropriate for this study. First, the questions to which I was seeking answers were *how* and *what* questions. I was already functioning on the assumption that touch was a viable teaching and learning tool—not only from the pilot study, but from my own years of experience as a dance teacher and student. Creswell (1998) writes that asking *how* or *what* questions—such as "How does this happen?" and "What is going on?"—provides useful entrées when initially venturing into a topic for study, and for which the end result is description. Conversely, asking "Why?" is more appropriate for quantitative research in which a comparison between groups, or an understanding of cause and effect is explored (p. 17). A future study which compares the learning outcomes of two groups—one which involves learning through touch and one which involves no touch—may prove interesting.

Second, the topic of touch in teaching dance was not a previously researched subject, in any formal, published way. Because theories were not yet available and variables were not clearly identified I felt the topic merited exploring. Elliot Eisner (1991) states that a good qualitative study is useful; it helps us understand a situation that might otherwise be enigmatic or

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confusing (p. 58). Qualitative research is useful for a topic which needs to be explored (Creswell, 1998, p. 17).

Third, I wanted to study touch in its natural setting—the modern dance class studio—rather than move students and teachers into a controlled environment. I believed that the modern dance class culture could only be clearly observed and understood in the participants' own studios. There, students and teachers had a level of comfort, feeling 'at home.' My presence, with video camera in tow, already removed them somewhat from their natural environment. The validity of the data depended on the use of the studio because, according to Creswell(1998) "If participants are removed from their setting, it leads to contrived findings that are out of context" (p.17).

And fourth, because I am a dancer, teacher, and student, and hoped to actively learn from the participants, I wanted to be free to write myself, in the first person, into the study. Creswell (1998) states that a researcher employs a qualitative approach to be able to bring herself or himself into the study. The researcher uses this approach also "... to emphasize the researcher's role as an *active learner* who can tell the story from the participants' view rather than as an 'expert' who passes judgment on participants" (p. 18). It was my desire to be taught *by* the participants, and also to tell their stories.

The Phenomenological Study: A Qualitative Tradition of Inquiry

My goal in this study was to understand the fundamental nature of touch in the modern dance class. I accomplished this by interviewing teachers and

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students, developing a student questionnaire, and writing memos when observing the videotaped classes. Understanding the essence of a phenomenon is the aim of phenomenology. According to Fraleigh (1999) the goal of phenomenology is to ". . . allow the essence of things to appear (to consciousness) and to identify habits of thought and action" (p. 210). A phenomenological study describes the meaning of experiences for individuals about a particular phenomenon. In this case the phenomenon was touch. Using a phenomenological approach, both in interviewing the participants and in my own observations and interpretations, the goal was to get to the core of the meaning of touch and its relationship to teaching and learning modern dance.

A major tenet of phenomenological research is the idea that the researcher suspends or *brackets out* judgments or preconceptions about the phenomenon in order to understand it through the voices of the participants. Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)—the German mathematician—referred to this idea as *epoché* (Creswell, 1998, p. 52). I recognized, when beginning this study, that epoché might be a challenging task. I had ample experience of the phenomenon of touch in teaching and I also knew the results from my pilot study. Creswell states that the phenomenological investigator writes research questions which will elicit the meanings of a particular experience, asking participants who have had those experiences to describe them (p. 54). And while I was seeking to elicit the participants' experiences with touch, I also avoided planting a priori ideas in their minds in a number of ways. For example, I began interviews with open-

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ended, general questions to allow the participants to simply talk while I mostly listened. I asked participants questions such as: "How would you describe the purpose which touch serves in your teaching?" This question was based on an assumption that the teacher participants believed that touch served their teaching, but not on an assumption that touch served them in any particular way. Asking "how" gave the interviewee latitude, and was one method of bracketing out my suppositions. Also, if I was seeking specific details of a teacher's pedagogy or a student's experience, I would first state what I had observed during a class, ask the participant to verify my observations, and then solicit any other specific information which the teacher or student wished to add.

I amassed and categorized numerous statements about touch, teaching, and learning. I then clarified the categories narratively, through the frame of Nel Noddings's theory of the ethic of care. In phenomenological research the inquirer looks for categories of meaning and develops a textual description. According to Creswell (1998) the goal of textual description in a phenomenological study is to provide the reader with a feeling of "I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that" (p. 55). This certainly is my goal as I write this document.

The Case Study

Case study research involves an in-depth study of a phenomenon (or phenomena) in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 545). In this study

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those phenomena were: (a) the particular ways teachers use touch, (b) the ways in which teachers and students perceive touch to function in teaching and learning modern dance, and (c) extrinsic factors which may assist or impinge on the usefulness of touch.

By choosing four educational settings with four teacher participants, I elected to study multiple cases rather than only one. Robert Stake (1998) refers to this approach as a *collective* and *instrumental* case study. I studied a number of cases jointly in order to inquire about touch. However, each case, in and of itself, was of secondary interest and thus together they became a collective case study. Also, the cases were instrumental in providing insight into the issue of touch. While it was tempting to become enamored with each individual teacher and her or his group of students, it was necessary to continually note that they were the means to an understanding of touch, thus, an instrumental case study (p. 88-89).

I believed the only way to obtain reliable data was through multi-case sampling. By choosing not less than four teacher participants (and the numbers of students available through four teachers' classes) I was able to probe (a) a variety of ideas and practices, (b) gender issues, (c) a diversity of faculty and student backgrounds, and (d) a range of modern dance technique class environments. There are divergent opinions on the use of multiple case strategy. Some researchers argue that studying multiple cases reduces the total amount of attention that can be given to any one of them and serves to weaken rather than strengthen the research (Gall, Borg, & Gall, p. 553). It is also true that

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management of the inordinately large amount of data which I have collected made this a challenging method. Miles and Huberman (1994), however, support multiple case strategy, writing that ". . . multiple cases offer the researcher an even deeper understanding of processes and outcomes of cases, the chance to test (not just develop) hypotheses, and a good picture of locally grounded causality" (p. 26).

As discussed in Chapter I, modern dance teachers who integrate touch demonstrate a constructivist perspective on learning. Case study strategies also support this perspective. Stake (1998) writes that case study researchers are constructivists. They emerge from one social experience (the observation) only to choreograph another (the report) thus assisting readers in the construction of knowledge (p. 95).

Understanding the Four Cases: Appreciating the Participants

I purposefully sampled sites and teacher participants. "In *purposeful sampling* the goal is to select cases that are likely to be 'information-rich' with respect to the purposes of the study" (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 218). The teacher participants were Steven J. Chatfield, Ph. D., Ed Groff, Laurie Sanda, and Mary Seereiter. I knew, from discussions with them, that these teachers had a tacit understanding of how touch functions in their classes. The word 'tacit' is used here in the sense that Donald Schön (1992) uses it. Often teachers have an innate—or tacit—and practiced understanding within themselves about what

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they do as teachers, however, they are not necessarily able to describe what they do (p. 124).

Fortunately, these teachers were able and willing to think and speak about touch, as well as allow me to observe their classes. Schön (1987) refers to such teachers as *reflective practitioners*. Reflective practitioners fully utilize the knowledge which they intuitively possess and regularly employ without necessarily being conscious of the depth of that knowledge base—what Schön terms *knowing-in-action*. They have a "reflective conversation with the materials of their situations" (p. 36). For the teacher participants, these materials included touch, movement sequences, and students of differing skill levels, backgrounds, and gender. According to Schön, during this reflective conversation, practitioners spontaneously improvise, as needed. Schön refers to the ability to teach with spontaneity as *reflection-in-action* (pp. 25-28).

The teacher participants in this study had long been reflective practitioners—bringing their tacit intelligence and spontaneity to the surface for their own investigations and personal research. However, their willingness to place these qualities before me for discussion and analysis made my research possible.

Each teacher had been involved in dance as a performer, choreographer, and teacher. Their backgrounds offered a diversity of experiences in areas such as dance science, Tai Chi, Laban Movement Analysis (LMA), Body-Mind Centering (BMC), Martha Graham Technique, Erick Hawkins Technique,

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massage, and contact improvisation. They also taught at four different institutions; this provided the study with a variety of learning environments. It was imperative to gain perspectives from both male and female teachers. My choice of participants reflects a goal to sample for gender, teacher background, and educational institution. The spectrum of institutions provided variations in students' backgrounds, motivations, and professional aspirations.

There was also an element of practicality to my choices. First, I personally knew Ed, Laurie, and Mary. Although I had not met Steven, he taught at my alma mater (University of Oregon) and we had professional colleagues in common. Therefore, gaining entry to each site was extremely easy. The second factor of a practical nature was that I had a place to stay, at no cost, at each of the research sites.

Thoughtfully choosing the four teacher participants and their associated institutions gave strength to this study. In a phenomenological study—one which takes the individual's experience of phenomena as its starting point for knowledge—the participants become co-researchers with me—the primary investigator. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) support purposeful sampling in phenomenological studies. They write, "The essential criteria for selecting participants is that they have experienced the phenomenon being studied and share the researcher's interest in understanding its nature and meanings" (p. 601).

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Institutional Settings

I first met Steven Chatfield during a telephone conversation. I described my research project, asked him if he believed he would be a suitable participant— given the subject matter—and if he would like to participate. Penelope Hanstein, my doctoral advisor, suggested that I contact Steven after the two of them had discussed my project.

Steven is a member of the faculty in the Department of Dance at the University of Oregon in Eugene. Situated in the School of Music, the department offers study for majors, minors, graduate students, and the general university population in a liberal arts setting. According to Jenifer Craig, the department chair (personal communication, March, 1995) as far back as 1920 the University offered a dance specialization through physical education. Craig stated that the department is not focused on a dance career as the principle objective, but on how the many aspects of dance reflect culture. She noted that modern dance permeates all of what goes on in the department including composition, teaching, and history. Steven was hired in 1989, in part, to teach dance science and develop it as an area of specialization. At the time of my site visit in 1997, he was one of seven full time dance faculty.

The class of Steven's which I observed, Dance 370, is the highest level modern dance class for non-majors. It met three days a week for one hour, however, according to Steven, with announcements at the beginning of class, and his desire to dismiss students in time to reach their next class, the class actually

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ran closer to 50 minutes. There were 21 students in the class—19 females and 2 males. Steven considered the students in this class to be eager and receptive. He believed that some of them had previously experienced good training and some had developed bad habits through poor training. Steven's syllabus described the class as "the final stage of training prior to entrance into professional level work at the University of Oregon. By attending to both the art and craft of performing, emphases are placed on physical skills, creativity, aesthetic performance, and cognitive development . . . "

At the University of Oregon, most of Steven's students register for his class without specifically choosing him or his style of teaching. This circumstance has, to some degree, diminished his use of touch because, as he noted, it is clear that the students are not necessarily coming to his class to experience a touch-based style of teaching and learning.

I met Ed Groff in 1988 when he was one of my teachers in the Laban Movement Analysis Certification Program at the University of Washington in Seattle. He joined the Modern Dance Department faculty at the University of Utah in 1997 and was in his second semester of teaching there when he agreed to being observed and interviewed. A dance program was started at the University of Utah in 1892, and in 1940 a dance major was established. In 1997 the Modern Dance Department—which is separate from the Ballet Department—had eighty-five B.F.A. students, fifteen M.F.A. students, and five M.A. students (*Dance*

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Teacher Now, 1997). That year there were seven full time faculty and a number of adjunct faculty.

Students attend 80-minute modern dance technique classes, five days a week. Each class is preceded by a 30-minute ballet barre which all modern dance students attended prior to their respective technique classes. Students experience rigorous technique classes, rehearsal schedules, and dance-related theoretical courses. Ed states that he was hired, in part, to contribute his knowledge of the work of Rudolf Laban, Irmgard Bartenieff, and contact improvisation, and to help students find the inner intention of their movement.

I observed Modern Technique Theory II, the second level of technique for majors. There were 18 students in the class, all female. Most of them were sophomores in the B.F.A. program and had extensive dance backgrounds before coming to college. Ed felt that this intermediate class may easily be considered an advanced class at other institutions. The students were simultaneously taking a kinesiology course. Ed sensed that the intellectual framework from that course helped them take responsibility for their own progress in technique class; they were able to work independently and provide feedback for each other. Ed considered his students to be serious and disciplined.

I met Laurie Sanda in 1994 when we were both doctoral students in dance at Texas Woman's University. When she completed her course work there she returned to Iowa State University (ISU), where she had been on the dance faculty since 1985. The dance program is part of the Department of Health and Human

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Performance. There is no dance major, per se, but students can major in Performing Arts with a Dance Emphasis. In 1998 there were five majors. When Laurie began teaching at ISU there were five dance faculty, but at the time of our interview she noted that the faculty consisted of two people, ". . . teaching the course load that five people taught previously."

I observed Modern III—the most advanced modern dance class at ISU. Modern III exposed students to different modern dance traditions. During the semester of my visit, Laurie had planned to teach Martha Graham-based technique during which she typically incorporated a great deal of touch. The 75-minute class met twice a week. I lived in Laurie's home for a few months, affording us opportunities for informal discussions about teaching. I also attended the Modern III classes as a student participant after I had completed my observations. This allowed me to experience Laurie's teaching style, first hand.

Laurie's 15 students in Modern III were a diverse group in their levels of experience, skill, and commitment. At least one student had danced professionally. Many had previous studio training in styles other than modern dance. Some were beginners with only one semester of previous experience with Laurie. Laurie worked to find a balance—challenging the experienced dancers while helping the beginners find some degree of comfort and drive.

I first met Mary Seereiter in 1977 when we were both members of the Mary Miller Dance Company in Eugene, Oregon. Because she was certified in Laban Movement Analysis and Body-Mind Centering, I knew that hands-on

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work was a valued part of her pedagogy. I also wanted to interview and observe her because, unlike the other three faculty participants who taught at larger liberal arts institutions, she taught at Lane Community College (LCC), in Eugene, Oregon. The Lane Dance Program is part of the Performing Arts Department. Students can pursue a two-year Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer Degree in dance and transfer to an Oregon college or university as a junior. The Program brochure states that "Lane offers the instructional quality and range of courses necessary for the serious dance student to achieve the technical proficiency required to audition as a third-year dance major. Students must be highly motivated, disciplined, and self-directed" (Lane Community College, no date).

Mary has been directing as well as teaching in the dance program at LCC since 1980. She is the only full time faculty member, and there are a number of adjunct faculty. I observed a combined class of the two most advanced levels of modern dance—Modern Dance IV and V. Mary considered the class of five female students (particularly small that semester) to be varied in experience level and with regard to professional aspirations. She felt the students were fairly open to her ideas, although sometimes distracted. The class met for 80 minutes, twice a week.

Background in Dance—History with Touch

Steven Chatfield's early movement training as an undergraduate at the University of Colorado, Boulder was in Tai Chi and massage. As a senior he was introduced to the dance technique of Erick Hawkins and he became a dance

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major. He names Nancy Spanier as an important influence on his dance training. Steven found Hawkins technique to be meditative and rich with "sensual understanding" as were his studies in massage and Tai Chi. Steven remarked, "I was using Tai Chi in a contact fashion, using lots of touch, pushing, and pulling;" he found that using touch seamlessly transferred to dance. Because of his experiences in Tai Chi, Steven's dance teachers' use of touch seemed absolutely natural. Following his undergraduate education, Steven became a member of Mountain Dance Movement, a dance company in Ft. Collins, Colorado. He developed his teaching practice in the settings of private studios and community spaces, rather than colleges or universities. Steven recalled his experiences in Colorado, noting that, for one important reason—his use of touch—they were very different circumstances from his current teaching situation.

> People would come to me because they wanted to study with me. They sought me out because they wanted what I did, and I touched *all* the time. From the word "go" in class, it was a hands-on experience. I would follow them across the floor, holding them, or manipulating, and it just wasn't even thought of. That's one of the reasons why I think people studied with me.

Prior to coming to the University of Oregon, Steven returned to school at the University of Colorado for a Master of Arts degree in dance and then a doctoral degree in the areas of exercise physiology and kinesiology. The field of dance science has been a strong influence on his teaching.

Ed Groff began studying modern dance while he was a student at Indiana University. He went on to study with Pam Schick at The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. There, he was introduced to Laban Movement

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Analysis (in which he became certified in 1980). In the late 1970s he performed with Whistle Stop and Kinetics Company, both Seattle-based dance companies. Kinetics Company was directed by Peggy Hackney, Janice Meaden, and Pam Schick—all three Certified Laban Movement Analysts. Through his work with Kinetics Company, and his own teaching at The Evergreen State College, Ed deepened his understanding of movement through LMA, contact improvisation and body therapies. He had minimal training in previously established modern dance traditions and therefore began to develop his own movement material which was based on the theoretical framework of LMA.

Ed's own training always included touch. He described an early meaningful experience:

> I remember a rehearsal with Pam Schick. We were working on something that opened into the right back high diagonal and she gave me a touch that helped me anchor the rib cage and connect it into the pelvis rather than disconnecting and arching. That was one of those "aha" moments that really made a significant difference and made me appreciate the usefulness of touch. I think I never even questioned whether it was important. It just always seemed absolutely intrinsic.

During the 1980s and 1990s—prior to joining the University of Utah faculty—Ed taught at a number of schools including Tufts University, Hampshire College, Temple University, and Connecticut College, where he received his M.F.A.

Laurie Sanda began dancing at the age of eighteen, studying modern dance with Lynn Maurer at Kalamazoo College. She moved to Chicago and studied intensively with the Chicago Moving Company, under the direction of Nana Shineflug. For a year she gave the dancers in the company massages in

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exchange for classes—as Laurie stated—". . . touching my teachers more than they were touching me." Her greatest influence at this point in her training was Shineflug. Laurie then attended Columbia College under the direction of Shirley Mordine, graduated with a Bachelor's degree, and worked as a freelance dancer and choreographer in Chicago. Laurie went on to receive her MFA in dance from the University of Iowa. Soon thereafter, she began teaching at Iowa State University. Laurie described Shineflug's early influence on her use of touch:

> Nana Shineflug is a very exciting, assertive personality and she definitely does a lot of touching. We were learning Graham-based technique and she would do anything it took with us—roar, sing, punch us in the tummies. She was a no holds barred kind of teacher, and still is. I thrived on that, on the personal interaction—physical and verbal. There are lots of different ways of being touched in class, and Nana is very direct and strong in her touch. She's not delicate.

Mary Seereiter began dancing at age twenty, which she considered to be a late age for starting. This circumstance fueled her already-present interest in the study of human anatomy; Mary felt that if she understood how the body works she would be able to dance fully and safely—and be able to work in the field for as long as a dancer who had begun her dance study at a younger age. She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in dance at the University of Oregon. During this period she spent summers studying with Utah Repertory Dance Theatre, Bill Evans Dance Company, Ed Mock, and Margaret Jenkins as well as at the Shawl/Anderson studio in Berkeley, California. Mary began teaching almost as soon as she started studying dance. Early in her teaching, concepts such as relaxation, anatomical principles, and repatterning movement habits were incorporated into her classes.

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Mary was introduced to LMA by Janet Descutner at the University of Oregon, and she went on to become a Certified Laban Movement Analyst. Her work in LMA led to her study of Body-Mind Centering with Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. Both LMA and BMC provided Mary with numerous experiences using touch in teaching and learning movement. At LCC Mary developed an aerobics teacher training program which incorporated LMA. She trained aerobics teachers through concepts such as Effort qualities, Space Harmony, and Bartenieff Fundamentals. Mary reflected on some early experiences with touch:

> Touch was used for finding the proper line, but also to find the right position. I would describe it as feeling like someone is putting me in a place where I should be; then I would try to match that place in myself. With Peggy Hackney and Pam Schick, one of the big enlightenments for me was that touch was used for finding the place of initiation. Rather than putting you somewhere, it's really feeling where the movement initiates so you are more successful finding the position. I feel like that was a real key for me.

Making Contact: Entering Four Worlds

I had the greatest opportunity to gain the trust and respect of the teacher and student participants through explicitly communicating with them before and during fieldwork. The teachers discussed my upcoming visit with their students prior to my arrival. Approximately two weeks before each visit I mailed letters of introduction for the faculty to hand out to their students. The letter (which can be found in Appendix A) (a) expresses my appreciation for the students' participation, (b) notes the voluntary nature of the questionnaire and of appearing on videotape, (c) explains the non-judgmental nature of my visit, and (d) describes the consent form which they will be asked to sign. (Copies of both the teacher and student participants' consent forms appear in Appendixes B and

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C. The Institutional Review Board at Texas Woman's University has approved the participants in this study. The I.R.B. letter of approval is in Appendix D. Signed consent forms are on file in the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Grants Administration.)

During my first visit to each class I briefly described the contents of the consent form while the students looked it over. I attempted to make them feel comfortable about being videotaped. The consent form gave students the opportunity to refuse to appear on videotape. I would make every effort to angle the camera away from where they were dancing in the studio; their image would also be distorted through a process known as 'fuzz out.' This became a non-issue when all participants agreed to be videotaped.

The teacher participants showed me the utmost respect in the presence of their students. They also spoke to their students about the importance of my research. This contributed to building a positive rapport between the students and myself. The teachers' positive attitudes enhanced the students' respect for this kind of research—a new area for most of them.

I participated further in this study—beyond observations and interviews—by (a) hiring Mary for three private sessions in Body-Mind Centering, (b) attending Laurie's Modern III class as a student after finishing the data collection process, and (c) observing Ed teach classes in improvisation and Bartenieff Fundamentals. These experiences did not provide additional data, however they deepened my understanding of the observation and interview data which I had already collected.

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Palpating With the Eyes: Participating as an Observer

What follows is a chronology, of sorts, of how the data was literally managed—how it was gathered, analyzed, and interpreted. A point for the reader to keep in mind is that gathering, analyzing and interpreting qualitative data—while it follows a basic sequence of first gathering, then analyzing and then interpreting—is actually an activity of simultaneous engagements. For example, my early interviews with students and teachers led me to analyses and interpretations which shaped new ways of interacting during subsequent interviews. Managing and making sense of literally thousands of bits of detail is both a sequential and simultaneous act. While this process may appear to be neat and ordered, it is, in fact, chaotic. As with teaching, which is both planned and improvisational, sequential and spur-of-the-moment, this research involved my responses to each new situation as it unfolded.

To understand touch, I had to see it for myself. Interestingly, I relied on one sensory mode to better comprehend another. Personal observation offered me a more complete understanding. As a method of data gathering, participant observation offers a different opportunity for researchers than do two other common methods of qualitative data collection which I used—interviews and analysis of documents. According to Gall, Borg, & Gall (1996) the usefulness of interviews and documents is limited by participants' knowledge, memory, and ability to convey information clearly; it also hinges on how participants wish to be perceived by outsiders such as researchers (p. 344). Through my observations, however, I was able to develop my own version of what transpired, independently of the participants. Together, all three methods of

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data collection provided a more complete picture. Each method verified the data which was gathered through another method.

A researcher may choose varying degrees of *participating* while *observing*, and vice versa. It depends on the goals of a particular study. I took the role of *observer participant* (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996) acting primarily as an observer, entering the setting to gather the data, and interacting with the students and teachers casually and indirectly. I arrived at the studio early enough to set up my camera, and I stood either in a corner or on a balcony. I used an 8mm video camera which was small and easily assembled and dismantled. I usually remained stationary during the class, or repositioned myself after the center-floor section in order to better record the across-the-floor portions of the class. I stayed as unobtrusive as possible, zooming-in on the teacher (rather than moving closer to her or him) to observe interactions with students.

During the course of each class I tried to remain invisible, but after class, in the hallway I occasionally let students know how much I enjoyed watching them perform a particular combination, or I empathized with them about the challenge of a movement combination. I was open to, but did not initiate shop talk with the teacher participants; I fully understood that they were already making room for me in their daily itineraries. I offered to show the tapes to any interested students, however none of them approached me. I felt that students could learn from self-observations; I also made that offer to demonstrate respect, and to gain the students' trust. Videotaped data provided me with far more detailed information than I would have had from written observations alone.

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Had I only been able to write notes during the classes I would have missed a substantial amount of data.

The dates of my observations were: October and November, 1997 (University of Oregon and Lane Community College), January and February, 1998 (Iowa State University), and March, 1998 (University of Utah). My approach in the field helped insure a level of trustworthiness in the research through *prolonged engagement* and *persistent observation* (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993). A prolonged engagement of 8 weeks/40 hours served to temper distortion caused by my presence. (I remained at each research site for approximately two weeks, recording at least 10 hours of studio teaching.) Through persistent observation—by way of repetitive viewings of videotaped data—and my development of new interview questions to reflect unfolding observations, led me to more data. The actual design of the study was emerging, along with the data itself. For example, after an observation, I pursued different, more relevant information during a subsequent interview.

Touching Base: Interviewing the Participants

Open-ended interviews best suited the study. Douglas Harper (1998) describes such interviews as "an exchange initiated and guided by the researcher in which the subject, one hopes, provides in-depth responses to complex questions" (p. 144). With teacher participants the goal was to have two interview sessions, each lasting at least one hour; they lasted between one and two hours. It was important to be sensitive to the teachers' busy schedules and to find a balance between my needs and theirs. However, I made myself available for any extra time the participants were willing to offer. The interviews were audio-

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taped. Steven was interviewed twice in his campus office, and Laurie twice in her home. Mary, who was interviewed at home, was willing to be interviewed a third time because she had not covered everything which she felt to be pertinent. Ed was interviewed twice, in his office and at home. The participants were generously forthcoming with any information I requested.

I began with the same interview questions for each teacher. However, as individual sessions unfolded I added new questions which were specific to a teacher's interests and which evolved from the flow of conversation. These additional questions dealt with issues such as particular touch exercises, dance science, Body-Mind Centering, Laban Movement Analysis, contact improvisation, certain students, and the teacher's educational institution or dance program.

During the teacher interviews I supplemented the question/answer format with *video-elicitation* in order to stimulate discussion guided by images. Video elicitation is based on the concept of photo elicitation. Harper writes, "... as the individual ... interprets the image, a dialogue is created ... " (p. 145) during which the researcher listens and encourages the participant to speak, without censoring her or his perceptions. For this process I selected a section of video footage from each teacher's class which had a clearly visible touch interaction. I showed that section a number of times and asked the teacher to describe (a) what was going on, (b) what appeared typical or surprising, and (c) how she or he felt about the interaction. In this encounter, the teachers had an opportunity to be self-reflective about their teaching during an event which we

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both witnessed. Video elicitation was a useful addition to the data gathering strategies.

I invited all of the student participants to be interviewed, knowing full well that only a handful would be interested. Of the 59 students in the final sample, 21 agreed to be interviewed. Within the context of an already purposefully sampled site, each student I interviewed was a *volunteer* (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996, p. 237). Consideration for volunteers is an important factor in maintaining ethical standards. Ethical standards are devised to protect individuals' rights in research, including the right to refuse to participate in a study, or cease participation at any point during the study. I made it clear to all of the participants—verbally and in writing—that they were, indeed, volunteers, free to leave the study at any time.

Erlandson (1993) reminds us of the importance of listening to all the varied voices in our sample of participants. He notes that naturalistic inquiry— unlike traditional inquiry which adheres to a single objective reality— ". . . takes its strength from the separate realities that have been constructed by different individuals. . . [each of which] must be given status in the lives of those individuals, in the contexts in which they operate, and in reports of inquiry" (p. 151). Through this status-giving process the researcher fortifies her or his research with *authenticity*. My goal in this process has been to listen to, observe, record, and interpret the multiple realities and variety of voices—which have spoken to me from the data—to enable an authentic 'reading' about touch. As well, I offered all students in the four participating classes equal access to the process, and I frequently verbally renewed our informed consent contract. This

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gave the research process a level of *fairness* which "... is the first authenticity criterion" (Erlandson, et al., p. 153).

The self-selecting nature of volunteerism can prejudice a study. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) state that research volunteers, among other characteristics, tend to be higher in need for social approval and have higher social-class status than non-volunteers (p. 238). The degree to which these and other characteristics of volunteers were likely to affect the results of this study were tempered by *triangulation*; I included multiple data collection methods and sources of data— teacher and student interviews, observations, questionnaires, and related written materials. As with the teacher interviews, the student interviews were open-ended and audio-taped. They were conducted in quiet environments such as student-organization rooms, conference rooms, and faculty offices.

For all of the interviews I attempted to create environments in which I was primarily a listener and facilitator, and in which the participants could feel unselfconscious about honestly revealing their lived experiences regarding touch. To sort out mis-communications between the participants and myself, and to enhance the validity of the interviews, I mailed copies of the transcribed teacher and student interviews to each participant. I included—for fun and encouragement—a red pen, as well as a self addressed stamped envelope. All of the teachers and most of the students edited their interviews and returned them. Erlandson, et. al (1993) term this process *member checking*. The authors write that having participants verify the data is "the most important [technique] in establishing credibility" (p. 142). Because one of the major purposes of qualitative inquiry is to present the emic perspective—reality as it is constructed

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by the participants—verifying that perspective was vital. (Interview guides for teacher and student participants can be found in Appendixes E and F.)

Student Questionnaires

When I began this study I was certain that some students would not want to speak with me about their experiences with touch, but they might be willing to consider the issue in private by completing a questionnaire. I received questionnaires from 46 students (75%).

I used Don Dillman's (1978) recommendations for writing and implementing the questionnaire, taking certain actions to encourage students to fill out and return them by: (a) demonstrating positive regard for the students by personally signing each letter of explanation that accompanied the questionnaire; (b) informing students of the study's usefulness; and (c) treating the students like consultants (pp. 13-18). I encouraged the participants to return the questionnaires to me in person, but I also furnished self-addressed stamped envelopes.

Again, using Dillman's (1978) suggestions, I searched for three general types of information: (a) *attitudes* about what students favored or opposed, (b) *beliefs* about what students thought was true or false, and (c) *behaviors*—what students and teachers actually did. Examples of three such questions were: (a) "In general, how do you feel about the use of touch as a method for teaching dance?" (b) "In your opinion is your teacher sensitive to your needs and feelings as a student when she or he touches you in the context of teaching dance technique?" (c) "As a dance student do you use self-touch to assist your dancing

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(for example, placing your own hand over a tense area of your body in order to release tension)?"

Questions were structured in a number of ways. Open-ended questions allowed students to express themselves freely and probe their memories and feelings. These kinds of questions were the most demanding of the participants, requiring full, and thoughtful responses. However, I felt they would elicit answers which might otherwise have been difficult to answer during an interview. One such question was: "How would you describe the way in which your teacher addressed the issue of using touch in your class?"

I also used closed-ended questions with ordered answer choices. These helped me determine the intensity of a student's feeling. An example of such a question was: "In your opinion, to what degree does your teacher's inclusion of touch when teaching a modern dance class contribute to or detract from your ability to understand the anatomical principles underlying the movement?"

1. strongly contributes
2. mildly contributes
3. neither contributes or detracts
4. mildly detracts
5. strongly detracts

I also used partially closed-ended questions. These indicated to respondents the type of information I was pursuing. They also demonstrated that I valued students' own unique experiences. For example: "How would you prefer your technique teacher to address the issue of using touch in class?"

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1. Discuss the idea of touch, and its functions, with the entire class at the beginning of the quarter (semester).

2. Discuss the issue privately with me.

3. Demonstrate the use of touch on students with whom the teacher is already familiar, and who are comfortable with touch, before touching me.

4. Incorporate touch into the teaching of the class without discussing it as a separate issue.

5. I don't have an opinion.

6. Other (explain):

Much of the data from the questionnaire was qualitative, however I generated quantitative data by calculating percentages for certain answers. These percentages gave me a quick viewing of areas of import for the students. By not limiting myself to student interviews, but obtaining information from a questionnaire as well, I avoided bias; I hoped that the profile of the interviewee differed from that of the questionnaire respondent. In any research project, some participants will likely respond more candidly to a questionnaire than an interview. With a questionnaire (a) the concepts are presented visually (on paper), (b) participants are not speaking directly to another person, and (c) participants can answer questions in their own time. (A complete copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix G.)

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Documents

I studied documents as other sources of evidence. They served to verify data gathered through interviews, observations, and questionnaires. These textual sources included articles and books on the topics of dance pedagogy, somatics, and touch—considered in pedagogical, psychological, sociological, and medical contexts. I also gathered vitae from teacher participants, university sexual harassment policies, course syllabi, pages from college catalogues, articles which teacher participants recommended to me, and descriptive brochures from dance programs. Ian Hodder (1998) writes, "The study of material culture is . . . of importance for qualitative researchers who wish to explore multiple and conflicting voices, differing and interacting interpretations . . ." (p. 114). The primary way in which I used this information was to double check that I was not either misinterpreting other data, or inadvertently omitting important ideas. For example, a specific journal article which impacted Mary Seereiter's teaching, and which she gave me to read, led me to inquire about the influence of a consumer-oriented college education and its impact on the use of touch.

Retracing and Unraveling the Spiral of Information

I collected a vast amount of data in the form of audio-taped interviews, videotaped dance classes, questionnaires, field notes, and analyses of academic documents. Through the following processes the data became accessible: (a) transcribing the interviews and mailing them to participants for editing, (b) writing memos of interviews, (c) organizing student interview responses by

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clustering answers, (d) viewing videotaped observations and writing detailed

descriptions, (e) noting pertinent categories, codes, and emergent themes, and

(f) reading questionnaire responses, assigning quantitative percentages to some

queries and grouping qualitative replies. This initial analysis took place between

November of 1997 and August of 1998.

From August of 1998 through May of 1999 I did not read the data, per se,

but I kinesthetically practiced and synthesized many of the emerging concepts

from the data in my own teaching. I extracted specific hands-on procedures

from the videotaped classes and taught them to my students. Robert Bogdan

and Sari Knoop Biklen (1992) suggest that the researcher "try out ideas and

themes on subjects" (p. 159). While this was not possible to do with the original

participants, I was able to synthesize some of the data through my own students.

After a nine-month break, I returned to the data analysis in June, 1999. One way

in which I approached the analysis at this stage was to choose a videotaped class

from each teacher and, in a somewhat stream-of-consciousness manner, write my

impressions of the teacher, class atmosphere, student behavior, types of touch,

teacher verbalizations, and skills which I felt the students were learning. These

writings included metaphorical language. For example, I wrote: (a) "Laurie gets

so close—like she has magnifying lenses on her own body—to really see them."

(b) "The students seem like cubs and Mary is the mother bear. The cubs are

experimenting and Mary is watching and teaching them how to walk."

(c) "Steven sings loudly—'hey' 'hup' 'let's go' and it reminds me of a ritual

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around a campfire." (d) "Ed is a sculptor who gets on the floor and molds his hands around students to form their bodies."

In Laban Movement Analysis, metaphors are considered important elements in the observational-mix; they have the power to tell observers what is occurring in a movement event. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest that researchers experiment with metaphors, analogies, and concepts to avoid a nearsightedness in one's research. They advise asking the question, "'What does this remind me of?' [to] . . . expand the analytic horizon" (pp. 162-163).

I have developed the term "phenomenological revisitation" to describe the activity of re-analyzing data which the researcher has not examined for a period of time. The researcher 'revisits' the data—in this case, videotape footage—with the attitude of being completely open to the lived experience of the current observation or reading process. Through uncensored writing the researcher documents her or his current observations and interpretations of the data.

During the phenomenological revisitations I used *motif writing* to document a number of touch experiences. Motif writing—or motif description—is a system for writing movement which uses concepts and symbols from Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis. It allows the viewer to capture the core movement ideas without all the details. It is impressionistic. (An example of motif description with verbal commentary, from my field notes can be found in Appendix H.) In each motif description I noted three specific elements of LMA: Efforts, Shaping Qualities, and Modes of Shape Change. Motif writing

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and LMA provided a lens for viewing the data. The motifs were thumbnail sketches of teaching styles which I synthesized into the whole of my understanding. Mary Alice Brennan (1999) states that movement description, in the early stages of analysis, enables a synthesis of the results of the detailed observation with contextual knowledge; this synthesis furthers the process of interpreting and evaluating the movement event. Brennan writes, "What should be understood is that movement analysis as a methodology is not complete until it is integrated into the larger focus of the study. It is at this point that it acquires meaning in scholarly inquiry" (p. 284).

Due to the immense amount of data, I created an organizational model (see Figure 1) to assist in further analysis and theory-building. The process of modeling is a useful tool, helping the researcher understand the inner workings of a theory that may be used as a theoretical base for a study (Hanstein, 1999, p. 72). The use of models to clarify large categories and the main areas of study—and the relationships among them—is supported also by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (1994, p. 18).

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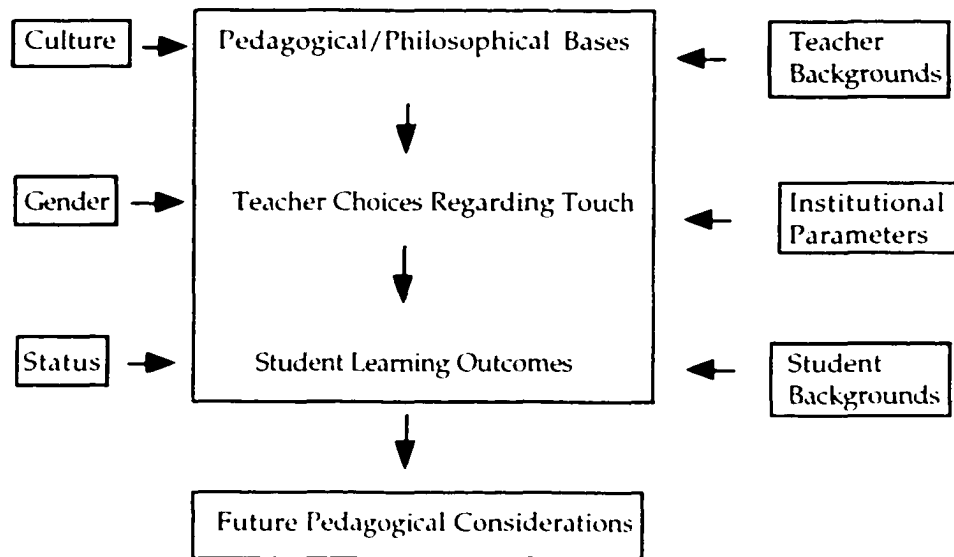
Figure 1.   Conceptual Framework for a Study of Touch as a
              Teaching and Learning Strategy for Modern Dance

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I began to organize and analyze the data, using Bogdan's and Biklen's (1992) suggestions. This entailed: (a) sequentially numbering the pages, (b) reading through the data numerous times, (c) developing a list of coding categories (emerging themes), (d) assigning a number to each code, (e) reducing the number of codes while refining interpretations, and (f) organizing data in labeled manila folders.

I continued to gain clarification in my analysis through the use of a conceptually clustered matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 128). This was a grid which organized relevant responses by students and teachers into an easily viewed format. As categories emerged I sensed that, in the voices of students and teachers, the body of data was 'speaking' to me; in reality, this was a two-way conversation. Analysis not only arises out of the data, but also out of the researcher. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) write, "For it is the social values and ways of making sense of the world that can influence which processes, activities, events, and perspectives researchers consider important enough to code" (p. 172).

The Theory Models Approach to Discovering Theory

The discovery of a theory of touch and the paradigm of meta-dance practice was aided by using a *theory models approach*. According to Hanstein (1999), when researchers are working in areas in which there is little, if any previous inquiry, the challenge of designing a way to study and frame an area of research can be clarified through developing a theory model. She writes, "Developing theory models is a way of looking at a research question from a particular vantage point. . . [which] reflects the researcher's personal perspective

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... and how she or he chooses to make sense of and understand the area of inquiry" (p. 78). Nel Noddings's theory of care in moral education appeared to have a structure analogous to the emerging themes of touch. According to Elizabeth Steiner (as cited in Hanstein, 1999) by using Noddings's theoretical framework to support my lines of thought, I engaged in a *retroduction*—a process of inferential reasoning and originating concepts and theories from other concepts and theories (p. 78). Through this approach I was able to find meaning and relevance in the seemingly overwhelming data, in order to shape my eventual theory.

The Bridge Between Care and Touch

During the summer of 1999 I wrote a descriptive report, detailing each category within the framework of Figure 1. Eventually, one year later, it became clear that (a) touch facilitated many aspects of learning which went beyond the learning of steps and dance technique, and (b) the use of touch situated the learning of dance technique within the larger paradigm of meta-dance practice which was, itself, situated within a constructivist world view.

Concepts of meta-dance practice were expressed in Ed Groff's description of a particular student-to-student-touch exercise which engaged students in developing a sense of trust, trustworthiness, taking responsibility for one's choices and for another person. It was also communicated through Mary Seereiter's description of the ways in which touch has the ability to bring one to an awareness and appreciation of the body; this awareness, she stated, has the potential to facilitate respect for oneself, others, and ultimately, the natural world.

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As the details—both of touch pedagogy and the paradigm of meta-dance practice—emerged from the data, I began to read the works of Nel Noddings (1984, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2002) on the topic of care. Noddings (1991) writes, "The attitude of care is characterized by attention (or engrossment)..." (p. 161). Caring, according to Noddings (1984) entails considering the other's point of view, her or his objective needs, and what she or he expects of us. As noted in the preceding chapter, Noddings's theory of moral education from a care perspective entails the acts of modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. Her four categories focused my thinking about the data. If I substituted the concept of *meta-dance practice through touch* for *care*, Noddings's writings were remarkably analogous to my data, and to my own developing interpretations of the data.

Concept Mapping

I created *concept maps*. During the process of concept mapping I began to clearly see what my research participants were showing me about teaching, learning, and touch. Concept mapping—described by Tony Buzan (1993) as *mind mapping*, and also known as *idea mapping*—is a useful graphic technique which may include such elements as words, images, numbers, colors and spatial arrangements. Maps provide one with an overview of a subject or area, and of one's thoughts and associations regarding that subject area. I created concept maps on the following themes: (a) moral education, (b) Noddings's model of the ethic of care in moral education, (c) student-to-student-touch, (d) interpersonal reasoning/dialogue and student-to-student-touch, (e) practice and touch, (f) modeling touch, (g) what *else* is taught, (h) interpersonal reasoning/dialogue

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via what *else* is taught, (i) confirmation and touch, and (j) learning movement as a living metaphor for daily life.

For each concept map I placed one theme at the center of a large piece of paper. Using notes which I had taken on that topic I wrote key words on *branches* (lines) which radiated off the central theme and I allowed my mind to freely associate related ideas, words, and images which I wrote on connected branches. As a map would, this process enabled me to plan routes, make choices, and let me know where I was going and where I had been. It synthesized and reduced a dauntingly large amount of data. Most importantly, it took me on pathways which may have originated at Noddings's concepts, but which deviated into my own concepts; through this process I shifted and enlarged her paradigm, building my own.

Noddings's (1984) use of the term *practice* refers to a student's structured engagement in the act of caring in order to understand caring as a concept and gain the skills to care. I found, through concept mapping this idea, that more relevant in this study were the ways in which the teacher participants developed strategies to incorporate touch effectively within the flow of a technique class. *Application*—the word I use instead of practice—describes such strategies as switching partners, deciding on the length of time spent on a given touch event, and deciding when to insert a touch activity at a given point during a class. It is how teachers *apply* the use of pedagogical touch which shapes students' practice in touch.

For Noddings the terms *interpersonal reasoning* and *dialogue* refer to attitudes of care and flexibility, as well as acts of paying attention, cultivating a

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relationship, and searching for appropriate responses. Concept mapping these ideas brought to the forefront the important and dominant use—by all four teacher participants—of student-to-student-touch. Through mapping this touch relationship in its association with the concept of dialogue, I discovered a number of vital themes of meta-dance practice. It became clear that through student-to-student-touch, rapport is built between teacher and student, and between students— enhancing empathy. As dance students are encouraged to pay close attention to each other when they touch, they learn how to assess situations, make revisions, self-monitor, self-reflect, and become better observers. Hands-on interactions require an attitude of flexibility; students learn that they cannot always predict the outcome of an interaction, and therefore, they must imagine alternatives. Due to the intimate nature of touch, it propels dance students to cultivate relationships. Touch tends to curb issues of competitiveness in the dance class.

Noddings emphasizes the importance of the teacher's act of *modeling*; it is only through this act that students can learn effective skills and behaviors— whether these are how to care or how to touch. Concept mapping the theme of modeling touch emphasized for me the fact that *every* act of touch in the technique class—physical or verbal—involves modeling. For example, when touching a student a teacher can demonstrate to that student the benefits, safety, and ethics of working in close proximity with a fellow student; verbally, teacher participants modeled with such expressions as, "Don't shy away," "Start slowly," and "Manage your partner securely." Modeling occurs when students

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observe a teacher's use of self-touch, and when teachers intervene/assist during a student-to-student-touch event.

Confirmation is the act of identifying a better self in someone, and promoting its development. Concept mapping this idea showed me that confirmation is closely tied to the themes of application, dialogue, and modeling. For example, trust is a basic requirement for the act of confirmation to be effective; if a student does not trust her or his partner's motives during a touch event, confirmation is ineffective. In order for trust to develop, there needs to be some degree of continuity—working with the same partners, and repeating certain touch-practices. Continuity is a matter of application on the part of the teacher. Confirmation—recognizing, respecting, and promoting a partner's best work is modeled and encouraged by teachers. Acknowledging students as individuals is exhibited through interpersonal reasoning—paying attention to their injuries, encouraging them to be experimental, and speaking to them using ideas and images which they will understand.

Noddings's theories about care and moral education opened my eyes to the educational paradigm of meta-dance practice which had been dancing right in front of me through the entire data-gathering process. I simply had not identified the array of potentials of touch until I lived with the data for a length of time. My recognition of meta-dance practice verified for me the value of researching touch.

Chapters III and IV will explore the ways in which the teacher participants use touch in their pedagogy. This exploration will occur within a framework of

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two concepts—the *simultaneity of time* and *meta*. Both terms provide a structure for understanding and interpreting the pedagogical significance of touch.

Through touch, students participate in *tactile dialogues* which engage them in simultaneous and overlapping layers of learning. Teaching and learning depend on (a) that which is *situated behind*, (b) the moment by moment *development* and *change* which occurs in the present, and (c) a willingness to *move beyond* and *transcend* current solutions and limitations: These are definitions of *meta*, and they are integral elements of teaching and learning through touch.

CHAPTER III

META MEANS 'SITUATED BEHIND'
*****
SHAPING THE FOUNDATION FOR TOUCH
THROUGH CONTEXTING, MENTORING, AND ENGAGING

The *practice* of dance students and teachers—their application and performance of dance knowledge—is best understood in the context of their backgrounds. Modern dance teachers and students enter the learning environment of the studio with their experiences in tow. To view this environment, I offer the metaphor of a landscape painting. The foreground and background are the histories which frame and support student-teacher interactions. The landscape of these interactions is bounded and undergirded by a teacher's personal pedagogy and students' backgrounds—their previous experiences with dance, touch, and life.

The term *background* indicates the past, yet dance and learning are only partially about the past. Penelope Hanstein (personal communication, October, 2000) notes that dance exists simultaneously (a) in-the-past—through the contexts brought by the participants, (b) in-the-moment—the "phenomenological now" of each class or performance, and (c) in-the-future—as a life-long framework for further growth. She suggests that good education reflects this same "simultaneity of time"—grounded in what students bring to the class and in what they experience during the class; it also moves students into the future.

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Hanstein's point of view reflects a notion of John Dewey's (1957) who

writes,

> "Present" activity is not a sharp narrow knife-blade in time. The present is complex, containing within itself a multitude of habits and impulses. It is enduring, a course of action, a process including memory, observation and foresight, a pressure forward, a glance backward and a look outward. It is a *moral* moment because it marks a transition in the direction of breadth and clarity of action or in that of triviality and confusion. (p. 281)

It is interesting that Dewey not only subscribes to an educational reality in which past, present, and future exist simultaneously, but that this simultaneity of time has moral consequences. Stephen Fishman (1998) adds that Dewey adopts a reality ". . . where means are ends and ends are means, where education is intelligent practice, and intelligent practice is moral, and the moral is aesthetic, and—like the snake swallowing its tail—the aesthetic is educational" (p. 17).

In this and subsequent chapters I will use the prefix *meta*—with its variety of definitions—to shape the data around Hanstein's and Dewey's concept of the simultaneity of time. *Meta* means that which is situated behind; it refers to the past. *Meta* means development and transformation in reference to one's learning and growing in-the-moment. *Meta* means later, relating to a more specialized form of pedagogy.

Keeping in mind the past and present aspects of the simultaneity of time, three primary areas will be addressed in this chapter: (a) the contexts or backgrounds which teachers and students bring to the learning situation, (b) the teacher's role in creating an environment for learning and teaching through

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touch, and c) mentoring students in their effective use of touch. (The term *mentoring* is used here similarly to the way Noddings (1998) uses the term *modeling*; teachers must show, through their own actions, what it means to do something effectively. I have chosen *mentoring* because it connotes a larger, more inclusive role than that of modeling.)

What Teachers Bring With Them: Personal Pedagogies

The landscape of learning is constructed through student-teacher interactions. However, in this chapter, the role of the teacher will frequently emerge into the foreground. The learning environment is profoundly shaped by the teacher's past experience. For example, a philosophy of teaching and touching accompanies a teacher into the studio. Let us look at ways in which the teacher participants discuss their pedagogy of dance and touch, and how that pedagogy is viewed by their students.

Steven Chatfield

Steven Chatfield describes his modern dance pedagogy as *functional human movement training*. He stresses the basic principles found in Body-Mind Centering (BMC) and Bartenieff Fundamentals. He states that his approach is non-theatrical, influenced by movement science, and one in which the body is viewed ". . . as a movement unit in a kind of physics environment." Steven noted that his technique lacks theatricality; he said, however, that his approach contains an Erick Hawkins-influenced aesthetic, and that the fundamental and

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functional basis leads to the attainment of higher aesthetic and expressive qualities.

Steven's developing knowledge and rapport with particular students leads to a more frequent use of touch with them. He stresses a *listening quality* to touch. Both the toucher and the touchee are required to listen. Steven expects the touchee to take an active role so that she or he is not just passively manipulated by the toucher; instead, the touchee is listening through touch, allowing tactile sensations to inform the kinesthetic experience. For example, in a balancing exercise the student finds a state of balance in her or his own way, after which the toucher notes how best to physically support the balance, and then does so. Listening requires paying attention, and it promotes receptive and reflective attitudes; these are integral aspects of touch pedagogy and meta-dance practice. Shira Musicant (1994), a dance/movement therapist addresses the issue of listening in a therapeutic context. She notes that at the heart of dance therapy is an acknowledgement of the body's wisdom, and the body's ability to pay attention to an ongoing stream of ". . . felt information . . . [through] inner listening" (p. 93).

Some types of touch which are common in Steven's class are (a) tracing a pathway, (b) touching bony landmarks, (c) guiding an area, (d) massaging, (e) stroking (often downward on the lower back or sacrum), (f) simultaneously touching two areas, and (g) pulling. When Steven touches students he is sensitive about intimate regions of the body. For example, when touching a

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student's back he will extend his hand only as low as the sacrum. When students witness this behavior—and experience Steven's mentoring regarding how to touch someone—they are prompted to develop their own sensitivity to another person's needs.

One of the primary functions of student-self-touch for Steven is to enhance students' awareness of their breathing patterns. During one exercise the students lie on their backs with knees bent and the soles of the feet on the floor; this position is sometimes referred to as constructive rest position (Sweigard, 1974) or hook-lie position. Steven instructs students to put their hands on the lower abdomen and to feel the breathing process. He asks them to note how the inhale causes the diaphragm to contract and press down on the abdominal contents and expand the lower abdominal region, and how the exhale relaxes the diaphragm, allowing the abdominal muscles to move back toward the spine. This awareness exercise is followed by a partial sit-up during which Steven emphasizes initiating with the breath and an abdominal contraction prior to sitting up. He laces his fingers together and touches his own abdomen, creating an image of the abdominal muscles knitting together. Steven tells students that through a hollowing-out action the anterior abdominal wall can create a supportive pressure without a dancer needing to tuck the coccyx under during a sit-up. Finally, he asks students to remember later—while they are dancing—the sensations of breathing and abdominal support that they explored through stillness and touch.

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According to his students, Steven's philosophy of teaching modern dance involves a number of factors. Alignment is a key issue, as is finding a sense of weight and grounding within the body. Movement is to be felt and understood internally. (The *inside/outside* nature of understanding, learning, and performing movement is emphasized by all of the teacher participants, and numerous student participants. The concept will be briefly noted throughout this chapter, and explained in more detail in Chapter V.) The external appearance of movement should be directly influenced by the kinesiologically correct execution of the movement. Students are encouraged to find ways of moving which feel right for them as individuals. Steven reflected,

> It would be interesting, as an experiment, for me to try to teach a class without touching, not even touching myself. I bet I would falter hundreds of times because it's part of my world. Touching is communication that is different from vocal, intellectual communication—but it is communication.

Ed Groff

Describing his pedagogical philosophy, Ed Groff stated that the fundamental idea in studying technique is to try to find the basis of coordination or connectivity to support three-dimensional movement in many kinds of distortion and contortion. This approach is influenced by contact improvisation in which the dancer cannot predict resultant designs. Ed believes dance training needs to address ". . . what goes where, how it's done, and why it's done." For him, dance is a gestalt of the Laban Movement Analysis categories of Body, Effort, Space, and Shape. Ed wants to help students find their own voices,

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uniqueness, self-confidence, and self esteem. He addresses issues of gender, race, identity, politics, power, emotion, psychology, philosophy, and aesthetics. A number of these issues are physically experienced and verbally addressed through a 'toboggan' improvisation in which one dancer straddles another from behind. Physically, the dancer seated behind manipulates her or his partner with hands, arms, legs, and torso, taking responsibility for directing the partner's flow of movement, and trying to maximize the three-dimensional shaping through the partner's torso. Ed gave his students these instructions.

> The person in back is doing the labor; the person in front is enjoying not having to make decisions. Just be molded, sculpted, shaped. There's a degree of core connectivity and core shaping, even though you, in the front don't have to make choices. Allow yourself to react in the spine; just feel like, "Here I am."

For me, as a viewer, this was a mesmerizing and beautiful activity. The students appeared to fully release into the experience. The student-to-student-touch variations which I witnessed included supporting, molding, surrounding, manipulating, guiding, stretching, stroking, pushing, pulling, and simultaneously touching a number of areas on the body. Both participants demonstrated a high level of focus and attention to the other; the leader took the role of caretaker. This activity was followed by a discussion during which Ed informed the students that they had engaged in two phenomena: "the architecture of support and the gift of surrender." He encouraged them to reflect on which role felt more or less comfortable. He reminded them that, from the standpoint of technique, this exercise was an opportunity for ". . . fluidity,

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sequentiality through the spine, release, breath, inner connectivity and the opportunity to listen non-verbally." These issues, he explained, are all necessary components for partnering. Regarding the toboggan improvisation, students commented: "It felt good." "I noticed that I felt the use of technique in terms of my abdominal area." "My partner, when she was in front, was 'reading' through her skin." "There are different ways for the front person to 'say' the same movement—my movement."

Ed explores concepts of supporting and surrendering body weight through another approach—"ledging and draping forms." In these forms the supporter creates various stable ledges with her or his body, and the partner drapes over the ledges—releasing the weight of the body. Miranda Tufnell and Chris Crickmay (1990) describe a similar contact improvisation exercise in which one dancer stands on all fours as a partner drapes her or his body over. The authors offer these instructions to the draping dancer:

> Let go of all weight, head, shoulders, knees. Breath [is] lengthening the axes of arms, torso, legs. Slowly melt down off your partner, into the floor. Find a series of stretches supported by your partner. Let the hands, feet, head be like antennae. Find a series of rests supported by your partner—a still or a moving support. A seamless dialogue—exchanging roles, supporting, supported, balancing. [all punctuation added] (p. 69)

Tufnell's and Crickmay's use of the word "antennae" resonates with Ed's concept of non-verbal listening.

Ed believes that intermediate and advanced levels of technique class are more appropriate for the inclusion of touch than beginning level classes; it is during the intermediate and advanced stages when students' underlying

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alignment and connectivity issues are becoming integrated. Ed stated that he

thinks of the body as a lump of clay, malleable in his hands. Simultaneous to his

touch, he contributes verbal information. Ed commented that he uses substantial

force in order to limit a dancer's movement range or to manipulate it. He also

provides resistance to a student's movement. He noted that he "... attempts to

trick normal, less efficient patterns into more efficient patterns through the direct

sensory feedback offered through touch." He believes that touch contributes to a

dancer's understanding of the biomechanics of technique, and that kinesthetic

learning provided through touch is an inroad for some students for whom visual

learning is less effective. Ed elaborated on kinesthetic intelligence:

> I believe the body has its own organic intelligence—kinesthetic
> intelligence—so just by visualizing and trying to accomplish something
> the body is going to try and find the most efficient way to do it. People
> who have never been touched can learn and improve because the body
> will eventually seek out the most biomechanically efficient means to do
> something. But it's a lot more hit-or-miss without touch than it is with
> touch.

Ed's students consistently described his teaching as emphasizing two

primary areas—internal process and dynamic range. They noted that he

encourages dancers to find the physical sensations within their bodies to

(a) understand how movement feels on the inside and (b) find internal sources

for movement. They also remarked that he pushes movement to its extremes in

terms of dynamics (and dynamic changes), timing, and performance level.

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Laurie Sanda

When describing her approach to teaching modern dance, Laurie Sanda

qualified her remarks, noting that technique is offered only twice a week. She

enrolls students of all levels in each of her classes, and she has limited control

over restricting or leveling them due to enrollment pressures and scheduling

problems. Laurie's approach necessarily takes into account what each student in

her class has experienced previously in terms of dance technique. She senses

when students are ready for touch intervention, and she felt that her students in

her current Modern Dance III class were definitely ready. Her primary objectives

for student learning include alignment, musicality, breaking out of previous

movement conceptions, and, as she puts it, ". . . knowing your body from the

inside out." Laurie incorporates anatomical concepts and terminology into her

classes, and she teaches her students the kinesiological underpinnings of the

movements which they perform. Laurie teaches Modern Dance III as a styles

class. She always spends the first eight weeks on Graham-based technique; the

second half of the semester might focus on Nikolais/Louis technique, Laban's

Space Harmony, or another style. Laurie stated:

> I think it's really important that the dancers go out of the dance program
> knowing what a contraction is, where it comes from and the correct way
> to do it because they're going to be asked to do it in choreography from
> one end of the spectrum to the other. They need to know how to do a
> spiral that is initiated from center. They need to know how to do that
> really clear, crisp attack that is associated with Graham, and to feel the
> strength to the ends of their fingertips and toes that is approached so
> completely in Graham.

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For Laurie, three areas in which touch is particularly useful are alignment, place of support, and point of initiation. For example, she instructs students to touch themselves for support during an upper back arch. A student places one hand on the front of the pelvis to stabilize it; with the other hand the student draws a line up the back of the neck toward the base of the skull and then pulls the head up from under the cranium. The student arches/hyperextends the cervical spine, maintaining the upward, lengthened energy. According to Laurie, this exercise, like other self-touch experiences requires students to take responsibility for their own learning. In contrast, a primary goal during a student-to-student-touch exercise is to search for the appropriate response in one's partner. The abilities to take responsibility for oneself and to attend to another person are necessary for an effective use of touch; teaching and learning to take responsibility for oneself and for another person engage one in meta-dance practice.

Laurie's students stressed that she emphasizes dancing from one's center (the pelvis) and that, in general, dancing should come from the inside and move out. They sensed Laurie's belief that dance is available for everyone, and that each dancer should learn to use the instrument she or he has. They believed Laurie values anatomical understanding of movement, as well as finding the emotion behind the movement.

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Mary Seereiter

Some of Mary Seereiter's primary areas of focus in her teaching are encouraging students to (a) sense and initiate movement from the inside of their bodies; (b) perceive their weight; (c) embody a range of movement qualities; and (d) release tension, release their weight into gravity, and release anything being unnecessarily held. To clarify Mary's concept of perceiving one's own weight, one aspect of this concept is the LMA idea of weight Effort, which deals with ". . . your sensation of Self and your own intention in moving" (Hackney, 1998, p. 220). Intention may be actively asserting one's weight or passively surrendering it. It also pertains to a stabilizing sense of feeling grounded or connected to the earth.

One way in which Mary instructs the concept of 'release' is teaching that the cells in the human body are permeable, and that they can have the quality of breath. She teaches the idea that through the cells one can allow energy in, or hold the cell membrane rigidly, with tension. Along these lines, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen (1993) writes,

> The permeability of the cell membrane determines the flow of intercellular fluid carrying nutrients in and waste out of its walls. The cellular fluid rhythm . . . is manifested as a continuous filling and emptying of all cells throughout the body and is referred to as cellular breathing. (p. 70)

Cohen goes on to state that sensing the cellular fluid brings one to a state of absolute rest and being in the moment. The inner and outer flow of cellular fluid can be assisted through touch by ". . . supporting each body part with a restful non-directive and steady presence and touch" (p. 70).

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Mary demonstrates the concept of the flow of cellular fluid. She takes a paper napkin—which represents the cell membrane—and places it in water. The wicking of the water represents oxygen moving into the cellular tissue which students are asked to imagine as capillary action moving into tense areas of the body. Mary touches the napkin with her finger to guide the water into places where the napkin—as she describes—"needs help." This is clearly a reference to ways in which her students can assist each other through touch. This demonstration is followed by a student-to-student-touch experience that focuses on bringing the qualities of ease and breathiness into the body. The exercise is intimate; it builds a rapport between students; it develops trust, and a communal, non-competitive attitude towards others. Rapport and trust are integral aspects of touch pedagogy; they are also learning outcomes—far beyond dance steps—of meta-dance practice.

Incorporating Body-Mind Centering into her teaching, Mary also concentrates on the body's fluids, joints, and organs as centers of movement. She states, ". . . for me, teaching is a path to self healing and finding spirituality." Mary tries to bring aspect of healing and spirituality into her classes without talking about them. For her, a dance class is a balance between the ritual/metaphysical and the anatomical. She demands that her students be 'present'—fully engaged at every moment of the class.

Similar to Ed, Mary believes that using touch is more useful with intermediate or advanced students who have a degree of *body intelligence*. For

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Mary, touch allows one to 'speak through the body' and activate her or his own, or another's body intelligence. Reminiscent of Ed, Mary spoke on this concept:

> I feel the purpose for me is to communicate with their bodies and bring their awareness to the intelligence of the body, rather than their only learning from a brain perspective. I bring awareness to them—feeling and sensing from the inside. I ask, "What do you sense?" That gets into the body intelligence. If you tune in, your body is going to tell you where you are, but if you're not tuning in then you need someone to help you. The purpose of touch is to facilitate their own awareness and knowledge that's already there. I'm just reminding them. Sometimes I feel like my hands have intelligence that my brain doesn't understand. My brain is behind. My hands are more intelligent.

Mary's students noted her emphasis on finding an internal understanding of how one produces movement. They recognized her interest in having students explore different qualities, develop their expressive skills, and learn how to care for the body.

The Dance Student Diaspora

Mark Strand's (1992) poem *My Life*—excerpted here—is a reminder for teachers that all students come to class with their own metaphors for their bodies and their lives. We might ask ourselves what would be a student's body image and response to touch if the student's metaphor for the body is a doll.

> The huge doll of my body
> refuses to rise.
> I am the toy of women.
> My mother
>
> would prop me up for her friends.
> "Talk, talk," she would beg.
> I moved my mouth
> but words did not come. (p. 72)

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Let us recall that one of the meanings of 'meta' is *situated behind*; meta-dance practice is invested in an acknowledgement of what is behind each student in a class. Teachers ask themselves, "What is this student's background with dance and touch?" The moment students engage in a touch event in class they are required to confront (consciously or subconsciously) their own histories. A teacher's acknowledgement of a student's past is a pedagogical imperative— especially if touch is involved.

By the time they arrive in a college modern dance class which is not at a rank-beginner level, most students have faced some of their concerns about touching in class. Many have encountered touch in studio modern dance or creative movement classes, or in gymnastics. Following are ten students' own descriptions of their backgrounds and how those backgrounds affect their availability to touch, or to be touched in a dance class. (Real names are not used.)

> Yoko: I grew up and still live in Japan. We don't touch a lot; we greet with a bow. Americans think touching is important and always say, "I'm sorry; excuse me." In crowded Japanese trains people touch and kick, and no one says, "I'm sorry." In the U.S. people come up too close for my comfort; sometimes I back away. My host mother hugs me, but I can't hug back; I can trust Mary Seereiter's soft touch and I know what she's getting at. I did not experience that soft touch in Japan; I was grabbed by the shoulders, slapped on a body part. I learned from the hitting to do it right. When I get hit I just remember the form, and then forget it; when I learn from soft touch and kindness I can remember it and fix it myself, later.

> Melissa: Growing up, my family was close, touchy-feely. I was in water babies with my mother. I was always being touched in family activities. I didn't feel hindered in class by being touched and I can't imagine having a class where I wasn't touched.

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Dana: I grew up in a family where touch was a form of punishment, control. I was molested at age seven by a group of girls. This incident makes me want to know when a touch activity is coming up in class. As a woman I feel reluctant to touch in a culture where women are frequently sexually assaulted. To ease the comfort level and make touch more useful in the class we should learn about weight, how to cradle someone's skull, how to lean on someone.

Juanita: Being from Mexico helps me with touch. Latin cultures use a lot more touch than Americans. In Mexican culture we sit closer on the couch. Even Mexican culture varies by class segments: upper classes use more space between people unless they are very close friends; other classes are more relaxed. In [North] America people focus on individuality, how you're different. Latin American countries use intuition more; touch communicates a lot of intuition. My cultural comfort with touch transfers to comfort in the studio.

Judy: Both my parents gave me massages, especially going to sleep. My mother is a dancer; she danced late into her five pregnancies. This has made me open to touch. Our culture tells us not to touch. A dance class should be an environment where there is a lot of touching.

Susan: I grew up in a family that did folk dancing, which created a comfort with touch and makes touch effective for me in learning dance. The folk dance environment provided a community where you could touch, give hugs, feel comfortable learning about your body. You could watch other people and see how they work their bodies and enjoy moving together. It feels normal to touch.

Anne: It could be my culture, background, upbringing, or just personality—I always want to be in control and independent. It is sometimes difficult to trust somebody or let them in my space. It makes me vulnerable. I'm working on it because I know you can't dance like that. In contact improvisation I always want to be lifting, helping, holding, not letting people take care of me. It takes a lot to build touch relationships. When teaching it's important to get permission to touch.

Kim: I blame my being from the Midwest for a lot of standoffish qualities I have. My family is not as openly affectionate or free with touch as other people are, elsewhere. My family's touch dynamics affect how I respond to touch in class. I have trouble with contact improvisation. North Dakota is quite Lutheran—a second Norway. The way of speaking is understated: "Cold enough for ya?" We don't want to show social reliance, but be independent. This may have touch implications.

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Marci: Touch is an awkward subject for me. Raised Roman Catholic, I'm a religious person. However, I have no problem the way touch is used in dance class. Steven's use of touch, and partner touch is effective.

Janet: Personally, for me touch is very useful because of my background where there was some inappropriate touching when I was younger, as a child, and then I also had a date rape experience. There had always been a problem with boundaries being crossed. So, for me, I think it's very helpful psychologically to have a place where I can go that's safe, where I get to enjoy my own body and moving and still feel it's O.K. to be touching other people. That's why I enjoy dance, and I always did, because it allowed me to break out of that feeling that there is something inappropriate going on.

As a group, the 21 students I interviewed acknowledged touch to be an important and integral aspect of a modern dance class. However, as evidenced from the above cross section of participants, each one's journey to acceptance or comfort with touch is unique. This variety of journeys highlights the importance of a teacher's sensitivity to the individual needs of students. Throughout this chapter the teacher participants reveal their approaches to a number of issues which strongly impact the usefulness of touch as a learning tool—issues of personal space, gender, sexual orientation, receptivity, empathy, and rapport.

When teachers acknowledge the pedagogical significance of the very process of a student gaining comfort with touch—physical, psychological, cultural, or sociological comfort—they are working within the paradigm of meta-dance practice. Ed commented that the process of gaining comfort provides an opportunity for students ". . . to self assess with a degree of honesty and openness, and hopefully accuracy." He described his approach to teaching as holistic, and one in which the development of the artist is not dissimilar from the

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development of the person. He stated, "I believe, as we mature as individuals

that we mature as artists, and that ultimately artists are people who have taken

detours along the way and have lived their lives fully and investigated all kinds

of emotional territory . . . "

Teachers who acknowledge the importance and individual nature of

students' receptivity to touch are engaging in meta-dance practice: (a) They are

teaching much more than steps; (b) they observe and pay attention to the

readiness of the student; and (c) they cultivate relationships with, and identify a

range of possible appropriate responses from their students. With each student,

teachers engage in a common search for understanding. As we have observed—

through the teacher and student participants' descriptions of their backgrounds,

philosophies, upbringings and experiences—the college modern dance class has

the potential to be a culturally rich setting. Teachers and students' personal

cultures—composed of heritage, religion, family, and previous experience with

dance and touch—feed into the culture known as the modern dance technique

class. As we move into a discussion of culture, I ask that the reader remember,

from Chapter I, how the word culture is used in this context. Culture consists of

our language and symbols; these include our choices in how we use words,

touch, and movement. How we use these elements defines who we are,

organizes our realities, and guides us in our behaviors.

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The Culture of the Modern Dance Technique Class

The modern dance technique class of this study is a subculture of the larger North American culture. Like any culture it contains socially accepted patterns of behavior and beliefs. While all modern dance classes share certain traits (such as the fact that articulate expression through bodily movement supersedes verbal expression) individual dance teachers build different foundations for their classes which reflect particular preferences. Among numerous pedagogical beliefs and strategies, which they share in common, Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary undergird their class cultures with human touch. From reading the preceding biographical statements by students, it is apparent that many students expect to find touch within the modern dance class culture and have experienced it widely. To varying degrees they accept, need, are uncomfortable with, and would feel a great loss without it.

Contact—in Contact Improvisation

Similar to the modern dance pedagogy and technique of Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary, another dance form—contact improvisation—shares the cultural norm of touch. Contact improvisation is an approach to movement training and performance involving collaborative interaction, based on force and momentum. The dancers sense and experience their own and their partners' movement, largely through touch. Inherent in the practice of contact improvisation is student-to-student-touch (or in this case, improvisor-to-improvisor-touch). Contact improvisation grew out of modern dance in the early

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1970s and has, in turn, fed modern dance styles. Steve Paxton, its primary

innovator had been a modern dancer; conversely, modern dance choreographers

and teachers (such as Ed) incorporate contact improvisation into their modern

dance work. Cynthia Novak (1990) describes how a teacher of contact

improvisation uses touch:

> Regardless of differences in approach from one teacher of contact
> improvisation to another, all teachers instruct their students to focus on
> the physical sensations of touch and the pressure of weight. Thus in the
> learning process, the sense of touch and physical reflex actions assume
> more importance for the dancer than the sense of vision and consciously
> chosen actions. (p. 150)

A major difference between contact improvisation and modern dance in

the use of touch is that for contact improvisation—whether in teaching it or

performing it—touch is an end, in itself. Being in contact with another dancer

defines the form. However, in the modern dance class, touch—except when

students are explicitly learning or performing choreographed or improvised

partnering— is usually a means to an end. These 'ends' include, but are not

limited to the following: (a) knowledge of anatomical principles and movement

qualities/dynamics; (b) development of a positive rapport with the teacher

and/or between students; (c) receptivity to the teacher's instructions;

(d) perceptiveness to the activities in class; (e) ability to use imagery, to clearly

observe, and to balance; and (f) awareness of alignment, spatial orientation,

tension in the body, breathing, the three-dimensional nature of movement, site of

movement initiation, and inward and outward rotation of the limbs.

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Touch also leads students beyond technique—finding new choices, learning to be flexible in their approach, cultivating relationships, and feeling empathy for another person. Steven described the culture of his modern dance class:

> What happens in the dance class is we create a cultural norm that's different from what's out in the hallway or what you encounter when you're in your biology or English class. In the dance class it's a proper part of the training and the learning to touch, be touched, and communicate through touch. When they work with one another there's this mushroom cloud of openness and socialization that occurs. I know, from experience, that when I do some of my first, more exhilarating touching exercises, after it's done I just have to wait for them to come back because they are just delighted and they're giggling and they have to talk about it. They want to intellectualize the experience they just had, working with one another. It creates a huge bonding experience among them.

How Teachers Create Environments for Touch

John Dewey (1939) discusses human environments:

> The fine old saying "A sound mind in a sound body" can and should be extended to read "A sound human being in a sound human environment." . . . Is there anything in the whole business of politics, economics, morals, education—indeed in any profession—save the construction of a proper human environment that will serve, by its very existence, to produce sound and whole human beings, who in turn will maintain a sound and healthy human environment? This is the universal and all-embracing human task. (p. 834)

The environments created by Steven, Ed, Mary and Laurie embrace touch as a natural component. Cyclically, touch cultivates their pedagogies and the class atmospheres that those pedagogies foster. Also, those atmospheres themselves are such that they foster an ever increasing use of touch.

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There are numerous idiosyncrasies that frequently define the culture of a modern dance class. For example, students wear form-fitting clothing, and they learn to recognize and respect personal space versus communal space. Touch is another of many cultural features. To enable students to successfully use touch teachers stay aware of the social and cultural distinctions of their classes. They create environments with some or all of the following characteristics: cooperation, risk-taking, sensitivity to the emotional potential of touch, experimentation, and rapport among members. How do teachers accomplish this? What atmospheres do they foster?

How Steven Creates an Environment for Touch

The environment of Steven's class has a quality of ongoingness. His extensive warm-up combinations are repeated from class to class so students are familiar with the material; the early part of class feels somewhat ritualistic. Students are required to stay focused because Steven does not allow for wasted time. However, within the efficient use of time he encourages experimentation and tells students to "goof around" and "have fun" when they engage in student-to-student-touch. Often, when students explore touch exercises together they appear to be at ease with each other and with Steven, and they laugh. Steven also encourages intellectual exchange and understanding by asking students, after a touch exercise, to explain their feedback to their partners. Students are focused on their verbal and tactile give-and-take.

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As with all the teacher participants, Steven is sensitive to the impact of gender with regard to touch. This awareness plays a role in the dance class culture that he fosters. While he has witnessed female colleagues joke with their female students and in class use such terms as "boobs" and "crotches" and touch female students in the pubic area, he will not. He does not find this approach/ rapport which some female teachers have developed with their students to be negative; he simply knows that his relationship with female students will always be different. Whatever experiences his students (male or female) may have had with touch from other dance teachers (male or female) he builds his rapport from his own base. His pedagogy includes touching male students on the chest, sternum, front of the lower abdomen, upper leg, or gluteal area—places he would not touch a female. Steven remarked,

> I can remember grabbing a guy's pecs, and shaking them to try to move tension, or to show connection. I can't ever do that to a woman, even to a woman who has a pectoralis minor syndrome where she's really clenching in here and she can't feel that she's holding, or that she's pulling her shoulders forward. I might work up towards the clavicle. I don't come down where the real meat of the muscle is, of course, under the fatty tissue of the breast. And, I'll try from the peripheral fibers to help her get a little sense of that. Or, I would have her touch herself and try to visualize an energy that moves out through there and have her trace a path across her own body. Once I sense that some tension has drained in that area, then I will be very comfortable helping move her into a less concave posture, and help her try to invigorate the posterior muscles to create that kind of release of tension in front.

Steven is sensitive about knowing when not to touch a student. This is another element of his teaching that creates an environment of cooperation, risk-taking, and experimentation, and a culture that is open to touch. Sometimes his

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students are not in a receptive state, for numerous reasons: Today is not a good day to be touched; a student has some inhibitions to touch; a hindrance is due to lack of confidence with one's dance technique. According to Steven, "Sometimes the students just can't handle some of the exercises I'd like to do. It takes time to build up a progression where they can fully utilize some of the benefits of touching." Considering reasons for a student's hindrances with touch, while this study did not include data regarding the response of gay men or lesbians to being touched by a same-sex teacher, it is an issue which certainly warrants a teacher's awareness.

How Ed Creates an Environment for Touch

Frequently the beginning of Ed's class, like Steven's, feels ritualistic—a morning ritual to help wake up the students. Students might use self-massage; they also move as if massaging the space with their bodies, acknowledging the viscosity of space, encouraged by Ed who asks them to "pay homage" to the space. The metaphorical becomes real; imaginations are awakened. The quality of Ed's voice has hills and valleys, depending on how he is counting the rhythm and what he is emphasizing; his voice welcomes and guides students on a journey. When he makes mistakes he and the students freely laugh. Sometimes Ed will stop to touch, working with a single student. At those times his expectation is clearly that each student will maintain her focus and stay occupied. Ed affirms, encourages, and expects their greatest effort and maturity.

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There are a variety of ways to introduce students to, and promote discussion of the concept of educational/therapeutic touch in the dance class. Sometimes a teacher makes an explicit statement of fact at the beginning of the semester: "Touch is beneficial in the learning of dance and it will be included in this class." Also, it can be mentioned in the syllabus, or simply used as a matter of course without discussion. Ed informs his students that he values touch as a teaching tool, but that he understands it can be loaded with a variety of messages. He knows that his students will have different comfort levels. He wants them to feel free to tell him if and when they simply don't want to be touched, touched in a particular way, or on a particular place. Knowing that his students realize they have permission to speak up, he feels comfortable circulating through class, using touch where be believes it will help. Ed will touch his students unless they ask him not to. That is their agreement.

Ed acknowledges that teacher-student relationships are also real and personal relationships; he inevitably develops a stronger rapport with some students over others. Ed stated,

> I've tried to get a little more systematic and just make sure that I'm not leaving anybody out, asking myself, "How recently have I done hands-on intervention with this person?" I'll go through my roll book and just think through it periodically and I also say to them once in awhile, "If you're feeling ignored, please ask a question or say, 'come over and take a look' or 'what do you think about this and that?'" I give them permission to take that kind of initiative.

Ed recognizes that gender issues are related to a student's comfort with touch. Like Steven, Ed takes into account anatomical differences.

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Ed remarked,

> Certainly in terms of anatomy I would touch men on their chests in ways
> that I wouldn't touch a woman on the chest. And that does come into play
> in terms of the sternum softening and folding, or even center of levity and
> center of gravity for breathing. I often feel I'm touching a woman a little
> higher on the chest than I would be on a man. I would go more directly
> over the sternum area on a man. I do feel like I make adjustments to the
> anatomy. But then sometimes going in for the psoas I feel more
> comfortable going deeper with a woman than with a man; I feel more
> timid, maybe, in center of gravity with men. In some ways I really think
> that's probably about the extent of the differentiation. I think I use degree
> of pressure pretty equally, or would make that adjustment based on the
> individual which is not necessarily by gender.

Ed acknowledges that issues of sex, sexual orientation, and gender can

surface with the use of touch, and cause discomfort. He summed up his

approach to these issues.

> Ideally, I make sure everyone knows that I'm gay, that I am forty-two, and
> am not remotely motivated by sexual interest in any student, male or
> female. I discuss with students the fact that sensations of touch can arouse
> sexual feelings and that the individual student is responsible for
> monitoring his or her own experience and taking responsibility to act on
> those feelings of discomfort. In contact improvisation I sometimes refer to
> what Steve Paxton calls the "Gland Game" when sexual curiosity becomes
> too much a part of a duet dance. I would continue to emphasize the
> objectives—educational and functional—and invite students to keep their
> focus.

How Laurie Creates an Environment for Touch

Laurie's studio environment is shaped by her style of teaching, which is

large and theatrical, as well as intimate. Her theatricality comes out in a feline

quality; at times she prowls throughout the studio, intently watching her

students, sometimes growling. She makes many different sounds, such as a

squeaking hinge when strongly and directly pushing a student into a forward

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curve of the upper back. Her guttural sounds, such as "foom!" and "hchuh!" encourage students to put their weight behind their movement. Her sound effects tap into the students' imaginations; they also add humor, which builds rapport between herself and her students. Laurie refers to the class as "gang" which, in and of itself, points to her view that she and the students are all there for one common purpose—to dance.

Laurie's use of unabashed strong touch and close proximity propels her students to take risks; she doesn't hold back, so why should they? To get students to feel a sense of anchoring when sitting in a straddle position, she sits behind and straddles a student. Sitting behind and hugging a partner is an intimate event, but Laurie makes no reference to this intimacy—she just does what she needs to do to help the student. She then has students do this with each other. Laurie mentors the idea that close proximity and firm touch are used with care and sensitivity, they are beneficial, and there is no reason not to practice them.

Laurie has a direct manner of introducing the concept of touch that helps to move it out of the realms of embarrassment, mystery and confusion:

> I make a disclaimer in the beginning—"This is what we do in technique class. This is how I give corrections." And I will bring out a student as a model and the student will take a second position plié. I will tell the class, "I may come over to you and open your knees over your toes," and I'll demonstrate opening the student's knees over her toes. "Or I may tell you to lift up in the back of the neck," and I'll demonstrate that on the student. "Or I may ask you to lift up in your abdominals," and I'll place my hand on her tummy and lift up on her abdominals. And I'll say, "I may do this to you as a part of teaching. This is called hands-on teaching and it is a

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traditional way of teaching dance," and I'll make a little joke and I'll say, "It's not sexual harassment" and everybody laughs, and that's good.

Jocyln Lawler (1991) writes about the issue of embarrassment in the use of touch between a nurse and patient. Similar to a dance teacher's need to clarify the intent of touch, Lawler notes that it is important for a nurse to continue to define the situation between herself or himself and the patient. This will promote comfort during an interaction which might otherwise be embarrassing. As with Laurie's approach, Lawler writes that a successful social interaction between nurse and patient occurs when certain aspects of the touch-encounter are recognized:

> . . . the need for all parties to define the situation as a professional encounter; the 'matter-of-fact' manner of the staff; the careful use of language. . . the use of humour to minimize potential embarrassment; and the clear expectation that the patient and staff will behave 'properly.'
> (p. 112)

Along with her direct approach, Laurie invites students to speak with her if they would rather not be touched, or be touched in a particular manner. She lets them know that she fully honors and accepts their choices. Laurie has devised ways to sensitively touch dancers who are new to dance, to her, or to touch. She may start with a lighter touch and a less vulnerable body area. For example, through touch Laurie encourages a student to stretch the back of her neck. She gently strokes her hand up the student's neck and takes the skull, lifting it up, away from the spine. Laurie has discovered that students usually can be touched on the back of the neck without feeling self-conscious or as if their space is being invaded. Interestingly, as noted in Chapter I, Jones and

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Yarbrough (1985) and Oseroff-Varnell (1998), unlike Laurie, include the neck

(and feet) as vulnerable body parts. In considering this discrepancy it is

noteworthy that one of these studies dealt with everyday interactions and the

other, with adolescent dance students—not young adults in a college dance class.

Laurie takes the time to consider which types of touch will best serve a particular

student. She stated,

> Non-threatening ways to touch somebody else include cupping the front
> of a foot to work the metatarsal arch, holding a leg while helping a partner
> drop her hip, or cupping underneath the shoulder blades and pushing
> them up towards the ceiling in an arch. Those seem to be less threatening
> for people than pushing in on their abdominals, for example. I would do
> that myself, but I wouldn't—certainly not in a Modern I class—have them
> putting their hands all over each others' abdominals. By the time they get
> to Modern III they're more relaxed about that, plus they usually know
> each other better in the Modern III class. The atmosphere in the class is
> much more collegial than in Modern I.

At times Laurie will dance an entire sequence with her students while

watching them. Afterwards she is able to give a remarkable number of highly

personalized and specific corrections. In this way she demonstrates care for her

students and supports them on their journeys toward greater understanding of

their own dancing. Noddings (1992) believes that as we understand ourselves

better we are able to increase our motivation to understand others. She notes

that as we engage in caring forms of dialogue—[in which I include tactile

dialogue]—we gain a deeper understanding of ourselves. Self understanding,

and understanding and caring for others should be synergistic (p. 195).

Laurie's attitudes about gender and body size contribute to the culture of

her class, building comfort and rapport, and encouraging experimentation.

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Laurie feels that a large, athletic person sometimes needs to be touched with more physical assertiveness to understand a concept than does a smaller person. As she said, "I don't really beat around the bush with anybody. In terms of amount of force I would use, if a student happens to be a man then he happens to be a man. But if she happens to be a woman who is a big athletic woman I would be the same way with her." Laurie offered the same example as did Ed and Steven—touching the chest, in relation to male and female students. If she is trying to encourage a student to open up—to become less concave across the chest in an upper back arch—she will most likely feel freer to stroke her hands across the chest of a man, and not do so with a woman. For Laurie, gender makes some difference in her choices, but, she stated, "It has more to do with that physical body in front of me. Whether it's male or female is not the deciding factor."

Laurie's intent of helping her students feel welcome and able in the class is demonstrated through her willingness to put herself in the role of a student. Occasionally, at the end of the warm-up, students will sit back-to-back with a partner, press against the partner's back and stand up without using their hands. For some people it is an easy activity; body size, in relation to one's partner does not make a difference. Sometimes Laurie's heavier students will feel intimidated. They are concerned that they are going to hurt their partners and they will hold back, afraid to push hard. Laurie does not want to reinforce negative body images. She comes to the rescue of students who are having

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trouble and she encourages and coaches them through the exercise. Also, at times she will partner either the smallest or the largest person in class and do the exercise herself to show that size is not the determining factor. Laurie believes that this exercise, like other guided student-to-student-touch experiences, builds students' comfort with each other.

Tufnell and Crickmay (1990) describe a version of a back-to-back exercise that might function as a useful and sensitizing preamble to Laurie's sequence. They write,

> Sit back to back with a partner, an 'ear' to the wall of your partner's body. Listen to the ebb and flow of breath, of weight, of movement. Imagine a bear rubbing its back against a tree. Use your partner's back to make your own back: long, warm comfortable, wide, flexible, and vice versa. The body is rounded—two round surfaces, meeting, rolling. Allow the point of contact to roll around, down the arms, across the pelvis. [punctuation added] (p. 70)

How Mary Creates an Environment for Touch

Mary has an uncanny ability to sense, often from a substantial distance, just how and where a student needs to be touched—when to intervene. She mentors intuitive knowing, empathy, and care. Her teaching style invites students to experiment and take risks. Frequently, she speaks words of encouragement. Mary demonstrates a desire to know the goals and to respect the potentials of each student. Noddings (1998) addresses this characteristic, contending that as teachers or students intervene and attempt to persuade, the goal is to assist a partner to find the response that is best for her or him. Often Mary will use what I term "confirmation touch." She gently places a hand on a

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student, not to change or manipulate, but to confirm for herself that the student (a) understands Mary's goal, and (b) is performing properly.

There is another important aspect to how Mary creates a learning environment available to touch. She recognizes the important relationship between the metaphors we have for the body, and how we treat our own, or another's body. People have a variety of metaphoric views of the body. Carol-Lynne Moore (1987) names a few—the body as beast, machine, objet d'art, child, and chimera. She suggests that it is necessary for each body-related discipline, such as movement education or dance therapy, ". . . to become aware of its salient metaphor(s) so as to transcend the limitations of its figurative world view" (pp. 31-32). Mary addressed the interplay between her caring, gentle approach, and body metaphors:

> An image that I use is that you have to encourage the body as if the body was a young child and you're just encouraging it with gentleness. I am not forcing the body into a new place, or using the myth of 'you train this animal,' or 'you train this machine', or 'you whip it into shape.' You're coaxing it, gently enticing it to move in the direction that your hands are going. More of a concern to me is that they are focused and that their intent is correct. I feel like the students are taking care in how they are touching each other. Maybe they're not holding in exactly the right place, but they're doing it with care. It looks like they realize the importance of touching someone, that you're really touching the whole person. And they seem to be very respectful.

Mark Johnson (1987) supports Mary's emphasis on the educational potency of body-metaphors. Johnson relays a story of Hans Selye, the founder of modern stress research. Johnson contends that Selye began his medical practice embracing the 'body as machine' metaphor. This metaphor, according to

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Johnson, promotes a view that the body is composed of distinct, yet interconnected parts, and that it breaks down when the parts malfunction; treatment focuses on specific faulty units or connections (p. 130). Johnson states, "For someone whose understanding (i.e., whose experience) is structured by the BODY AS MACHINE metaphor, it is entailments like these that influence his or her perception, diagnosis, treatment, theorizing, and other practices" (p. 130). Johnson suggests that Selye's success in his research on stress was due to his shift from one dominant metaphorical grasp of the situation—'body as machine'—to a new understanding—'body as homeostatic organism' (p. 129).

Mary's gentle quality of touch builds trust in her students. This trust opens students up to deeper levels of unselfconscious expressiveness in their dancing; it also makes them more available to the use of touch as intervention for skill-building in dance. Students trust that Mary will touch them only as far as they are ready. Mary knows that touch can propel a student into an emotional experience. She related two episodes:

> An example is opening the sternum area and you see in their face that you are into very emotional territory and something comes over their face. And you assure them that it's O.K. I've had to talk people down a little bit because you're getting into their 'stuff.' And it could be something so simple. One day I was having this student push against me, just to feel that kind of Effort quality and I said, "Come on, push harder!" and there was this *wave* of energy and I said, "O.K., that's enough." I could just feel it. Later I talked with her and she agreed that it was a scary place for her. But she was really open to talking about it.

Mary's work in Body-Mind Centering has helped her define boundaries when touching a student. For her it is a question of degree of intimacy and

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respect. While there is no denying the intimate nature of touch and its requirement of close proximity between participants, Mary noted that it is important for her to know where her energy ends and the student's begins. The concept of boundaries is addressed in *Zero Balancing*, a hands-on therapy. John Hamwee (1999) describes *interface*, a type of touch. He writes,

> It is possible to touch another person while maintaining a clear boundary, or interface, between the two of you. At all times during the touch, you know where your body ends and the other person's begins—and the other person knows the same too. (p. 40)

Hamwee distinguishes interface touch from other kinds of boundary-free touch which humans often encounter. One is 'blending'—such as a blissful melding when a parent cradles a baby, or the merging of a sexual union. The other is 'streaming' which is a touch that transmits energy from one person to another; it might occur during a handshake or a hug. Hamwee writes, "Sometimes [with streaming] you receive energy, so you feel revitalized: sometimes your energy is pulled into the other person and you feel low afterwards. In both cases what is happening is that one person's energy is streaming into the other" (p. 41). Like interface touch, both blending and streaming can be used positively and therapeutically. Yet, because blending and streaming involve a transfer of energy between practitioner and client—or between teacher and student—there may be a muddling of information about the experience of the client/student. This can lead to the practitioner/teacher not receiving the kind of clear information available from an interface touch.

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Based on my observations, and an understanding of the four teacher participants' teaching philosophies, interface touch was their predominant choice. Their own touch, and the touch they taught their students to use with each other was one which informed the touchee of her or his own movement patterns. Through a student's new awareness, he or she is able to initiate her or his own change. Ed's toboggan exercise is an example of the use of streaming, and potentially blending, to some degree. Through their experiences of touch in Ed's technique and improvisation classes—as well as their level of maturity— Ed's students were able to touch in this fashion with positive educational outcomes; Ed observed the students during this exercise and did not find it necessary to intervene.

Foundational to Mary's use of touch is her clarity of intent. Does she want a specific point of initiation, or a particular movement quality? Mary also maintains a non-judgmental attitude, and a focus on being fully present and in-the-moment. As she said, "If you're not in-the-moment you don't touch." The idea of being in-the-moment is salient to Mary's approach to gender issues as they relate to touch. She noted,

> You're trying to be in your body. That, to me, makes the whole idea of using touch kind of genderless. I feel very genderless when I'm teaching in that way. There's an acknowledgment of who this person is, and that includes gender, but it doesn't jump out. This is a human body and I see it as bones and muscles, organs, fluid, and the whole person's spirit. I feel I touch the men in my classes the same way I touch the women.

Mary encourages students to visualize and understand dance and the body from new points of view. For example, when manipulating the ankle joint

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of a skeleton Mary demonstrates and describes a way to view an elevé (rising to the balls of the feet). She touches the medial and lateral malleoli (ankle bones) and shows how they slide forward. Mary believes that focusing on the bones can lead to qualities of lightness and ease. She noted, "The mental idea of 'bone' will rebalance usually overused calf muscles and will instead strengthen the stirrup muscles under the foot." Mary's use of touch stimulates students' observational skills, the imagination, and—especially when the exercise is transposed to student-to-student-touch—cooperation and rapport.

Steven, Ed, Mary, and Laurie value and encourage cooperation, risk-taking, sensitivity to the emotional potential of touch, experimentation, and rapport. These factors are integral aspects of touch pedagogy; they are also learning outcomes of meta-dance practice. The presence of these values and behaviors leads to a greater use of touch and, in turn, to an expansion into other areas of meta-dance practice. Through their sensitivity and skill, these teachers build environments in which touch—and students—can flourish.

Mentoring Touch

Noddings (1998) proposes that when considering moral education and the ethic of care, the primary concern is with the growth of students as carers and cared-fors. She writes, "We have to show in our own behavior what it means to care. . . We demonstrate our caring in our relations [with others]" (p. 190). In the same way, if dance teachers incorporate touch, especially if they expect their students to give and receive touch, they need to mentor appropriate touching

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behavior; students become capable touchers by virtue of their mentors. Also, students' skills at touching others directly relates to the experiences they have when being touched.

Mentoring Through Teacher-Self-Touch

There are a number of touch relationships that dance teachers may incorporate in their classes including: (a) teacher-self-touch, (b) teacher-to-student-touch, (c) student-self-touch, (d) student-to-student-touch, (e) student-to-teacher-touch, and (f) student/teacher-to-object-touch. All of them provide opportunities for teachers to mentor touch. Mentoring may be visual, verbal, tactile, or any combination. Here we will focus on teacher-self-touch and teacher-to-student-touch which I believe to be the touch relationships that offer the richest opportunities for mentoring; literally and figuratively they put teachers 'in touch' with themselves and their students.

Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary all incorporate teacher-self-touch. It frequently appears completely instinctual; it is also used very deliberately to show the quality and emphasis of a movement. Mentoring via teacher-self-touch may or may not include verbal instruction, but it is a visual constant—an ongoing panorama of touch. Teacher-self-touch is often the preamble to a student-self-touch exercise during which students repeat the actions of their teachers. Through watching their teachers, many students naturally adopt a self-touching behavior as part of their learning, without being told to do so.

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Of the 46 students who completed questionnaires, 31 students stated that teacher-self-touch was either "good" or "excellent" at enhancing their learning; 12 students noted that it was fair, and one student noted that it was a poor teaching tool. Comments regarding "fair" and "poor" should not necessarily lead one to believe that teacher-self-touch was perceived as a negative activity, but rather that it does not enhance certain students' learning as successfully as do other touch relationships.) Teacher-self-touch impacts students in a variety of ways. Students commented that it: (a) assists in memorizing choreography, (b) helps to see what the teacher is focused on, (c) shows the pathway of movement, (d) teaches how to touch oneself, (e) reminds one to touch oneself, (f) provides a perception of the teacher as someone who is interested in finding internal sensation, and (g) helps one visualize proper execution of the movement.

Steven's Mentoring Through Self-Touch

Steven's frequent use of teacher-self-touch helps students become better observers, and encourages experimentation. It also has the potential to develop a rapport between Steven and the students because they are able to see him as someone who is still working on improving his own technique. Steven noted,

> I hope they actually see that I'm having an experience as the teacher, as a mover in front of them. I often am addressing problematic issues that I, too, possess in my technique. Particularly when I'm standing in front of them with my goal being instruction (as opposed to being focused inwardly on my own technical ability) my body releases through self-touch. Also, I show some changes that I need them to work on. I think it magnifies. This helps clarify and augment what I'm doing in my body. I say, "O.K. move from this place or move from down here." Then I'll almost always instruct them to touch themselves such as, "stroke your sternum down" or "touch your sacrum" or "lift underneath" or "pull up

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this way" or "feel that when you lift there." My self-touch also sets up an example for them when I ask them to touch themselves.

Ed's Mentoring Through Self-Touch

Ed uses self-touch to show ways in which students can touch themselves in order to attend to a number of concepts including (a) identifying bony landmarks, (b) feeling counter-directions within the body which push and pull in opposite directions, (c) lengthening the back of the leg and flexing the femoral joint in a leg swing, (d) actively reaching the head or lengthening the spine in an upper body/off-vertical combination, and (e) sensing kinetic chains of muscle coordination for grounding of the scapula or feeling gradated rotation in a joint.

Ed touches the top of his head to indicate a point of initiation. He presses his fingers into his hip sockets saying ". . . in the crease . . ." to emphasize the action of femoral flexion. Moving from a forward lunge to a sitting position— bringing in the back leg—Ed draws a line up the front of his back thigh to indicate the energy needed in a pelvic shift. In a forward leap (grand jeté), he brushes downwardly on the back surface of his front thigh with one hand and places the other hand in the hip socket crease of the same leg; he does this to emphasize the undercurve action of the leg. He slaps his abdomen saying, "connectivity" to underscore the importance of central support. He takes hold of his leg, throws it up into an extension (grand battement) and then pushes it down to give it a sense of weight; while demonstrating he asks, "How loose and floppy can you be with that leg without it throwing you off your supporting leg?"

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Laurie's Mentoring Through Self-Touch

For Laurie, all manner of touch is ". . . in the service of deepening

understanding—the whole point being communicating an idea and a sort of

kinesthetic transference." Any time Laurie wants students to use self-touch, she

demonstrates on herself, first. For example, she will use self-touch to show

certain Efforts or qualities she wants in movement, or to highlight an area on the

body. Laurie stated,

> If I want a quality of extensiveness or rigidity in a movement I might put
> myself to show that it's not limp, that it has a resistance to it. I think I
> probably do that innately as I teach. If they're really supposed to be
> pulling up the quadriceps, I might just pull my hand across my
> quadriceps to say, "Pull up the quadriceps" so it's reinforcing what I'm
> saying verbally, and demonstrating visually. Also, the visual
> demonstration is important because frequently I have international
> students in my classes who speak barely enough English to get along in
> their lectures and they may not know the specialized vocabulary of
> anatomy.

Mary's Mentoring Through Self-Touch

Mary's use of self-touch, like much of her touch, has a subtle, gentle

quality. It draws attention to an area of focus. She strokes lightly on her

supporting leg, saying, "Think tall on the standing leg." When lengthening her

spine from an arched to a vertical position while simultaneously circling her leg

from a back attitude around to the front, she places one hand on her abdomen

and one on the top of her head saying, "Find the length of your spine." (An

attitude is a pose on one leg, with the other leg lifted, well turned out, bent at the

knee, and opened away from the body.) Mary manipulates her jaw back and

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forth, helping students find a quality of ease in their faces. She touches the distal

end of her femur, describing how it reaches through space during a plié.

Mentoring Through Teacher-to-Student-Touch

Among the students who filled out questionnaires, 89% noted that when

teachers touch students it has either a good or excellent effect on their learning.

Ed, Mary, Steven, and Laurie all incorporate student-to-student-touch and

teacher-to-student-touch. Students said that one of the primary differences

between these two touch relationships was that being touched by the teacher had

much greater credibility than being touched by a fellow student. Students

commented on being touched by their teachers in the following ways:

> I think when Ed does it there's a little bit more credibility because I
> assume, since he's the teacher, he knows what he's talking about. With
> the teacher, touch will be more direct regarding what he wants.

> When Mary is explaining and she is touching me and I'm closing my eyes,
> I really feel a connection between what she's doing and myself. It's
> sometimes hard for me get into that state of mind when I'm working with
> a fellow student, to get connected and really try to feel what I'm supposed
> to be feeling, or make them feel what I'm supposed to be trying to make
> them feel. And with her it's almost instantaneous.

> I think that there is more importance attached to it when the touch is
> coming from the teacher, who has a certain amount of expertise. There's a
> bit more formality in that relationship so that maybe it feels like more of a
> significant movement towards a more personal or closer relationship with
> the teacher (than it would with a peer in the class because we have a more
> casual relationship). I think Ed approaches it with clear intention and
> consideration for the recipient of the touch.

> Steven is not afraid of touching us. Once, he was telling us, "Don't be
> afraid to give them a bear hug." And he brought me up and gave me a
> bear hug and it was a whole different feeling than when the student had a
> hand here and a hand here. It was like he was really holding you.

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When Ed touches me it probably depends on what I'm doing, because I can be really resistant to his touch. If I'm doing a movement and he's trying to change it and we're contradicting each other, sometimes that's difficult for me because I'm not sure what he wants. And then when he talks to me he tells me what's going on and we try again, it's better. Most of the time it's just helping me reaffirm or improve upon something.

Without touch—especially with Graham technique—learning would be at a slower rate. It's so hard to know if your body is feeling or doing the right thing at the right time. Even when Laurie corrects another student it helps a lot too because I can visualize it on myself the same way. If she never touched anyone and just said, "Your hips should look like this and you should feel such and such muscle" and just did it, I think everybody would be lost, wondering, "What exactly does she mean, and where?" When she touches me and says, "This is where you should feel it" I can internalize how my body feels in that certain spot which I couldn't do just by looking at her.

Steven refers to teacher-to-student-touch as 'expert touch' which contains nothing extra to confuse the student's sensations. Laurie says that she touches the students more than any other relationship because she is the one with the training to do so. For Ed, touching students reinforces his verbal information. Teachers touch their students in a variety of ways, for numerous reasons. For example, Laurie adjusts a student's foot from an outwardly rotated position into a parallel one. Steven holds both sides of a student's pelvis to help her feel a 'square' alignment. Mary gently rests her fingers on a student's shoulders and says "relax." Ed walks his fingertips up a student's spine to help her feel the sequential quality of moving from spinal flexion to extension.

The many types of touch available to a teacher include, but are not limited to the following: (a) surrounding/molding around a dancer's body, (b) touching bony landmarks, (c) tracing a pathway, (d) holding, (e) guiding, (f) stroking,

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(g) massaging, (h) jiggling, (i) simultaneously touching two areas, (j) adjusting or realigning body parts, (k) providing resistance to a motion, (l) supporting, (m) pressing, (n) rocking or rolling, (o) shaking, (p) tugging/pulling, and (q) manipulating.

Leaning Backward, Pushing Forward

The veracity of the *simultaneity of time* as an educational principle begins to emerge as we recognize the importance of teacher and student histories in the process of student learning. Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary brought with them a number of underlying pedagogical principles that influenced their use of touch in a modern dance technique class. An overriding concern for all of them was the notion of the inside/outside nature inherent in learning, comprehending, and performing movement. Other pedagogical considerations included skill development in observation, release of tension, understanding of alignment, and knowing where and how to initiate movement. As a group, the students expected, desired, and appreciated the use of touch. However, their cultural, familial, and personal backgrounds strongly influenced their receptivity to different modes of touch.

Inherent in the culture of the modern dance class is human touch; conversely, the use of touch continues to develop the culture of a particular teacher's class. Teachers—within the given class culture, and in their individual styles—create learning environments that foster the effective use of touch. They

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do this through their sensitivity to students' histories and gender issues, through their spoken and unspoken metaphors for the body, and with humor.

An extremely vital way in which teachers create an environment where touch can flourish is through their clarity of intent when touching a student. Due to the inherent hierarchical differentiation between teacher and students, teachers can potentially use touch to gain personal power over students. This might occur through overt physical manipulation of a student, or through a more subtle use of 'blending touch' or 'streaming touch' described earlier. However, when the teacher's intention is clear—and respectful—touch functions to deepen students' own learning and understanding, enabling them to make choices/ changes for themselves. Clear intention may be demonstrated in a strong, direct push which propels a student across the studio floor, or, by way of contrast, in a subtle, quiet holding of the head.

Throughout the course of a dance class a teacher's verbal instructions and physical actions are at the crux of an ongoing mentoring process. The inclusion of teacher-self-touch and teacher-to-student-touch enhances the possibilities for mentoring because they offer students opportunities to experience the teacher as demonstrator, leader and guide. Students are mentored in their skills as dancers and touchers. It is the mentoring that they receive as touchers that moves them even farther beyond the learning of dance steps—into meta-dance practice.

The effective use of touch engages students in meta-dance practice. We are able to recognize the significance of touch pedagogy when we note that touch

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leads to the following meta-dance practice components that have been uncovered in this chapter: (a) recognizing qualitative changes; (b) observing closely and repeating what is seen; (c) sensing kinesthetic transference of information; (d) learning to speak, understand, and respond to another (tactile) language; (e) recognizing wholeness and differentiation; understanding and experiencing the body as a fully integrated entity encompassing thinking, seeing, listening, imagining, touching and dancing; (f) honing communication skills into gradations, from subtle/gentle to firm/direct, and using what is appropriate at the moment; (g) pinpointing an area of focus and seeing that which is important to see; (h) learning consideration for others; (i) developing relationships, (j) trusting oneself; and (k) gaining fearlessness.

In this chapter we have explored the ramifications of *meta* as something which is situated behind. Moving into the next chapter we will explore some ways in which meta means *development and transformation*, as students journey toward growth and change. These ways include how a teacher (a) applies and integrates touch into the flow and pedagogical needs of a class, (b) engages students in tactile dialogue, and (c) confirms and encourages the best in others.

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CHAPTER IV

META MEANS 'DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION'
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REMAINING 'PRESENT' FOR GROWTH AND CHANGE THROUGH APPLICATION, DIALOGUE AND CONFIRMATION

John Dewey (1957) reminds us that while it is important for teachers and students to embrace their pasts and plot the trajectories into their futures, it is their ability to be 'present' and in-the-moment that makes teaching and learning possible. He writes, "Memory of the past, observation of the present, foresight of the future are indispensable. But they are indispensable *to* a present liberation, an enriching growth of action" (p. 265). Through touch, teachers guide their students along journeys of development and change. They consider how to apply their knowledge of touch. They devise frameworks in which students can practice touch, reflect on that practice, become apprentices, and assume responsibilities. During this learning process students cultivate relationships, engage in tactile and verbal dialogue, and explore ways of paying attention and caring for their fellow dancers. Learning through touch avails students to acts of discovery which are encouraged and confirmed by teachers and students, alike. In this chapter we will explore three activities which are vital for a student's growth and change: application, dialogue, and confirmation.

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Application: Taking the Time to Touch

There is an art to creating the logistics of touch within a modern dance technique class. Teachers strive to find a balance in three primary realms: momentum, continuity, and comprehension. First, over the duration of a class period, students build momentum, energy, and drive. Their senses wake up: they see, hear, and feel more acutely over time. Their muscles and joints find greater mobility and readiness to move in all variations—from simple to complex, from subtle to large. Second, at its best a class unfolds with continuity and cohesiveness. Each event builds on the previous one. A conscious change of pace in mid-stream, based on a teacher's perceptions of what students need, also plays a role in continuity. And third, rather than just doing the movements requested by the teacher, students need to fully understand what they are doing, or, to quote Ed, they need to know "... what goes where, how it's done, and why it's done." Modern dance teachers explore ways to practice—to apply their touch-based pedagogies in order to teach classes that make sense.

Nel Noddings (1992) writes, "Attitudes and mentalities are shaped, at least in part, by experience. . . If we want people to approach moral life prepared to care, we need to provide opportunities for them to gain skills in caregiving . . . " (p. 23). Here, Noddings is referring to her concept of practice. She is speaking to teachers to encourage them to provide their students with opportunities for the practice of caring, and for reflecting on that practice. In the same vein, dance teachers who incorporate touch into their technique classes explore ways to

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provide students with touch experiences; I refer to this as 'application.'

(Application is used instead of practice to alleviate confusion with the term meta-dance practice.) Applying touch strategies, by their very nature, often requires an arrest of bodily movement. This can be challenging within the dance class—a structure founded on movement. It is a challenge because teachers—including Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary—highly value what can be learned through touch, but they also feel the constraints of time and the expectations of their students.

Mary—Making Time to Touch

Mary described her thoughts on the challenges of time and the expectations of students this way:

> It's hard because you're always in this time pressure, and for touch, I feel like it just takes time to stop and feel. What's happening in our culture— the fast pace—makes it difficult to slow the students down enough to where they're willing to stop and feel and take the time to go in. 'Going in' means a feeling from the inside instead of this peripheral feeling or this mirror image that you have of yourself as a dancer. I want to ask students, "How does it feel on the inside?" It takes time to slow down. Students frequently are not as willing to do that, and it's really hard. I feel like I'm battling that all the time.

Mary is not alone in her dilemma. Most college modern dance teachers function within a very limited time frame and—if Mary, Ed, Laurie and Steven are the least bit representative—they would always like a longer class period.

Mary stated that one of her solutions for being able to teach technique and have enough time for hands-on work would be for students to take a 2-hour Body-Mind Centering/Bartenieff Fundamentals class followed by a technique class. Another alternative would be a 2-hour technique class, five days a week. Until

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then, she explores the possibilities within the current frame of her technique class.

Mary acknowledges that in technique class ". . . students have to build their technique; also, they desire to move, sweat and build strength." Mary wants to find a balance. She looks for ways to build strength and technique, and give students an understanding of how to conscientiously and safely do so. She stated, "You can do so much with less strength if you know what you're doing. But I think you have to go that full cycle sometimes—develop the strength and then you realize you can let some of the strength go and you can develop other aspects, like the quality."

Ruth Solomon (1990) notes that, while most college dance students want a fulfilling movement experience, ". . . many of them are ill-equipped physiologically or by way of prior experience to undertake this exploration" (p. 38). Solomon is supportive of dancers learning body-principles such as Laban Movement Analysis and Ideokinetic Facilitation outside of the technique class. However, she has found ways to address movement principles in the context of a technique class through her use of kinesthetic imagery, neuromuscular retraining, and motivating movement from the center of the body. She writes, ". . . the dance technique class can be used to correct common malalignments and faulty movement patterns without compromising its primary business, the training of dancers" (p. 40).

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Mary senses that higher education has developed a business-oriented

mentality in which students are customers and consumers rather than students.

This contributes to her frustration with regard to both the time allotted for a

dance class, and the students' attitudes. Mary remarked,

> There's this push from the culture itself, this culture that's coming up; it
> lives at a fast pace and on TV. There is all this input so students need
> entertainment. They come to class, and how can you keep them happy
> and entertain them? I really feel that's part of it—how the students are
> coming in. What is their interest in growth, and how far away are we? I
> think it's relevant to what we're talking about. How far away have we
> gotten from the body-knowledge and from ourselves that we need so
> much stimuli to stay present? We've separated out the value of just being
> present in the body.

Mary relayed an incident that she felt addressed this consumer mentality

and the need of students to be entertained. (Reed and Johnson, 1999, and Sacks,

1996 also note how television has impacted students' desires to be entertained.)

Mary's experience provides an example of how teachers, from time to time, are

required to teach something to meet the student's need—even if that need is

unidentified by the student—when students are neither eager nor enthusiastic.

At a point in one of her technique classes she felt that her students needed to

seriously focus on the use of the iliopsoas muscle. In advance, Mary scheduled a

hands-on session, explaining her intention to the students. For this unique

session she would use the usual time slot of the technique class, but the period

which was to immediately follow a student concert. Mary believed the students

would be fatigued from the concert and enjoy a slower class. When the day

came the students were completely unwilling to participate with any degree of

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enthusiasm. Mary said to her students, "As a teacher, this is what I feel you

need, but I feel you're not open to it. To me, it's a gift that I want to give you.

But, if you're not open to it you can't receive it, so we're just going to do a

technique class." Mary said she felt a great loss from this incident because she

believed that with this session her students could have advanced in their

training. Mary remarked,

> I love to dance, I love training, but when we don't have another class to
> balance the conceptual part of what we're doing in our training—such as
> understanding where a movement is initiating—how do you get in touch
> with those muscles? I feel you can do only so much if you don't have that
> balance. So, sometimes I'm willing to sacrifice a technique class, or an
> hour of a technique class in order to introduce the work. And they're not
> willing to sacrifice that. If you're really going to repattern and change
> habits, it takes time. And if you're trying to do it while you're doing
> familiar exercises—pliés, tendus, développés, spinal curves—you're not
> really going to repattern because those muscles will not stop working in
> their habitual way.

Mary's ideas regarding the time it takes to repattern movement reflect

those of Lulu Sweigard (1973). Sweigard asserts that in order to repattern

movement habits one must do so with the imagination rather than through

voluntary movement (unless the voluntary movement involves different body

areas than those of the imagined action). Sweigard writes,

> Simply stated, the student is instructed to concentrate on envisioning
> movement occurring within his [or her] body without contributing any
> effort to its performance. In fact, the contribution of any voluntary effort
> negates the influence of the imagined movement on the subcortical
> patterning of muscle coordination. (p. 223)

Mary's sentiments about student attitudes echo those of University of

Virginia English professor, Mark Edmundson (1997) whose article had impacted

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her, and which she gave me to read. He finds that a capacity for enthusiasm and an endless curiosity are so remote from his students that when he recognizes those qualities in a particular student he is surprised and overjoyed. He bemoans both the attitude of students and the university. He feels his students' passionless state is due to the fact that they "... imbibed their sense of self from consumer culture in general and from the tube in particular" (p. 41). To his dismay he does not see the university or the professors doing everything in their power "... to fight that dreary mind-set [of the consumer mentality] in the interest of higher ideals ..." (p. 43). Rather, he sees campus construction of such buildings as attractive sports facilities; he witnesses softer grading and relaxed requirements in some humanities departments. Echoing Mary's desire to do what she knows will better her students, despite what they think they need, Edmundson writes,

> A willingness on the part of the faculty to defy student conviction and affront them occasionally—to be usefully offensive—also might not be a bad thing. We professors talk a lot about subversion, which generally means subverting the views of people who never hear us talk or read our work. But to subvert the views of our students, our customers, that would be something else again. (p. 49)

Mary applies her belief in the need to 'take time and feel' through a range of strategies. For example, during some classes she will spend ten minutes demonstrating a concept, possibly with a skeleton or on a student. Students then work in pairs in a stationary touch exercise for another ten to twenty minutes. Also, Mary's students perform complex and lengthy dance sequences during which she will observe and touch them as they are moving.

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Ed—Making Time to Touch

Ed believes that technique class is predominately a group activity. He notes the challenge of incorporating touch—a typically one-on-one activity—into the context of a group event. Because of this, and the fact that his class is 1 hour and 20 minutes, his touch interventions are of shorter duration than they might otherwise be. Ed stated, "I probably will focus on identifying bony landmarks, sources of initiation, locations of countertension, and relationship of body parts. But it's a glancing blow, as it were, in the context of moving." His concern is that a touch intervention might be so fleeting that students will feel more confused than assisted. Ed continued, "If I'm going to touch somebody I'm going to try and make sure that for whatever interaction we have, I stay with it to at least a point—and I ask them before I leave them, 'Does that make sense? Do you understand what I'm going for here?'" Ed finds it a challenge when a student responds, "No" and he needs to work with that person a bit longer.

To be able to continue teaching the group as a whole, Ed gives his students the option of meeting him outside of class for hands-on intervention. He waits for them to take the initiative to ask. When they request to see him he tells them they need to find a 'buddy' so that during the session there is a participant and a witness. Ed remarked,

> In terms of harassment and liability issues I have come to value having a third party present, or to be in some kind of public setting—not completely isolated one-to-one. Also I think they benefit more because then they're learning as observers as well as people being worked upon.

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To use the students' class time more efficiently, Ed chooses to have them work in partners with student-to-student-touch. However, he finds that one problem with this strategy is that students are not adequately trained for hands-on work so they could just as well be giving misinformation as correct information. Ed explained, "I have to accept that that's part of the nature of the beast and hope that they're communicating with each other, that they are troubleshooting and that some benefit and value is still coming out of it." Prior to a student-to-student-touch experience he will frequently demonstrate with one person. He said, "That's a way of getting more mileage. If I can demonstrate and have them all look and then help each other—that has a ripple effect." Even so, he sees some students unwilling to apply themselves completely. For example, a student might not fully take the weight of a partner's leg; this results in an action of compressing a joint rather than elongating it.

Laurie—Making Time to Touch

Laurie, too, finds that the brief duration of her class, 1 hour and 15 minutes, can be frustrating. However, she believes that the early stages of teaching the basics of Graham technique require a patient use of touch. Those basics include the initiations of the contraction, spiral, and release, and the movement of the coccyx. Laurie commented,

> I just teach it slowly and if I have to go around and touch every single person in the class, I do it. I just take the time. Or, if we work in partners we do things slowly. I just need to make sure that everyone understands the concepts and has them in their bodies. In Graham technique, if they don't understand initiation the whole thing is going to be wrong.

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As time goes by and students grow into the technique, Laurie may touch less and verbally clarify more. But, regardless of the length of the class, she will take as long as is necessary, through touch, to build an understanding of the core ideas. Laurie commented, "Doing those tactile corrections takes time; going around to students is time consuming."

Like Ed, when Laurie finds that she has a number of issues to address through touch with one student she will invite that student to work after class or to set up an appointment. She does not want to completely stop the entire class for 10 minutes while she focuses on only one person. Another of Laurie's strategies is to do hands-on work with one student and ask the rest of the class to observe and simultaneously explore that same issue independently. Laurie will only use this second strategy if she feels that her one-on-one intervention will actually benefit the class, at large.

Steven—Making Time to Touch

Steven also addressed the issue of how the length of a class impacts his use of touch. When he teaches the next level up from Modern Dance III he has 1 hour and 45 minutes, rather than only 1 hour. Steven remarked,

> When I teach that class I take whole 10-minute bundles of time in between exercises where we'll stop dancing. We'll group around an individual and I'll demonstrate by touching them, correctives, for instance. This is a regular kind of insert to the pedagogic experience.

Only occasionally in his Modern Dance III class will he stop the class in that way; although when he does demonstrate a touch experience with one student in front of the class he is more assured of what the student is sensing.

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More frequently, Steven has students explore a concept through student-to-student-touch. He does not feel he has the luxury of time to be the primary toucher, even though he does not have complete confidence that student-to-student-touch is always performed with the highest skill. Over time, however, he witnessed an improvement in his students' abilities with touch.

Steven enjoys hands-on work with students outside of class because it establishes a rapport with, and a base of knowledge for those particular students. After he has worked with students individually, when he is back in the studio with the entire class he feels free to engage those individuals with even more in-depth touch. He knows that they want it, are comfortable with it, and understand what he is trying to communicate through his hands. Like Ed, Steven waits for students to request one-on-one time with him; he does not suggest it to them. If he and a student are working in his office he always leaves the door open. He might also suggest that they work in a public place, such as in the corner of a dance studio while other people are present. In this way, Steven protects himself from potential accusations of sexual harassment.

It is interesting to note that both Steven and Ed specifically mentioned that their policies for working one-on-one with students outside of class involved an open door or the presence of a third person, but neither Laurie or Mary made this point. This is likely due to at least two factors: (a) Mary and Laurie are females and thus—in our current cultural climate—are less likely to have their pedagogical touch interpreted as sexual harassment than that of a male teacher,

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and (b) Mary's work, in particular, as a trained practitioner of a hands-on system such as in Body-Mind Centering has educated her in skills and attitudes which, to use her term, lead to a "genderless" approach to touch.

Balancing the Interplay of Momentum, Continuity, and Comprehension

As we have seen, when teachers structure their classes, they address the concepts of momentum, continuity and comprehension in a variety of ways. For example, throughout a class students may find themselves repeating sequences of movement, without any touch intervention. They might be moving while simultaneously being touched. At times most movement will be arrested for one student while a partner provides tactile guidance, manipulation, or resistance. A student may remain completely still while the teacher (or another student) takes full responsibility for tactile intervention—through actions such as stroking, patting, or simply placing the hands. Teachers weave combinations of touch/movement/stasis into many patterns, all of which have the potential to foster momentum, continuity and comprehension. It is a matter of how each individual teacher puts together the pieces of the puzzle of a modern dance technique class. In this puzzle, one of the most predominant pieces used by Ed, Steven, Laurie, and Mary is student-to-student-touch. They incorporate this touch relationship, in part to maintain the pacing of the class. Also, however, it provides students with learning opportunities which these teachers value. Learning opportunities occur through dialogue—a dialogue of the skin.

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Dialogue: Engaging in Tactile Conversation

Dialogue involves an exchange of ideas between two or more people—

and much more. Every touch event in a dance class is a dialogue. It is a

tactile dialogue and frequently it includes verbal interchange. Here we will

explore the concept of dialogue in a broad sense, and then more specifically in

relationship to the pedagogical touch employed by Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary.

Dialogue involves a relationship which is reciprocal and in which partners

are fully present and in-the-moment. They are responsive and responsible to

each other, and to the relationship. Martin Buber (1965) advocates just such a

dialogue, one in which partners are able to speak openly and freely about that

which is on their minds. He writes,

> It is in this kind of dialogue that personal growth and empowerment can
> take place. The innermost growth of the self is not accomplished . . . in
> man's [or woman's] relation to himself [or herself], but in the relation
> between the one and the other . . . (p. 71)

Elizabeth Ellsworth's (1992) critique of dialogue is instructive. She writes

about the application of critical pedagogy in her own college classroom. Critical

pedagogy is an educational philosophy—articulated by Paulo Freire (1985) and

others—which asks teachers and students to consider issues of power relations

between students and teacher, and the relationship among power, knowledge,

and authority. Critical pedagogy acknowledges dialogue as an essential element

in learning. Dialogue, in this sense, is open and focused on collaborative

learning. Patti Lather (1992) describes critical pedagogy as a transformation of

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consciousness at the intersection of teacher, learner, and knowledge through practices "... intended to interrupt particular historical, situated systems of oppression" (p. 121).

Returning to Ellsworth, her commentary is thought provoking in relation to touch as dialogue, and touch as a facilitator of dialogue. Ellsworth challenges the viability of a free and open form of dialogue, no matter how committed students and teachers are to the issues of building trust, sharing, and improving the quality of life—three attributes of critical pedagogy. She cites the "... asymmetrical positions of difference and privilege ... [between students and teachers, as well as] ... the dynamics of subordination present among classroom participants" (p. 106) as contributing factors to this impossibility. She discovered that, despite her best intentions, her own class—*Media and Anti-Racist Pedagogies*—was not a safe environment for true dialogue. She felt this lack was due to experiences of oppression both inside and outside of the classroom. These included "... experiences of being gay, lesbian, fat, women of color working with men of color, white women working with men of color, and men of color working with white women and men" (p. 107).

Holding back and not fully expressing oneself occurred for numerous reasons including feelings of vulnerability, fears of being misunderstood, and negative memories of speaking out in other situations. Ellsworth's students agreed that a greater level of trust would aid this situation so they planned social interactions, outside of class. These gatherings helped students to better

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understand each others' contexts. Indeed, the same issues of race, gender, status, and body image exist in a dance class. However, when sensitively mentored by a teacher, student-to-student-touch facilitates the possibility for dialogue—and through dialogue—meta-dance practice.

Regarding one's body image, researchers Madhulika Gupta and Nicholas Schork (1995) found that physical modes of nurturance during childhood, such as touching and hugging are important in the development of body image—especially among females. Their most salient finding was a direct correlation among females between (a) their drive for thinness and (b) a perceived deprivation of tactile nurturance during childhood and a current desire for more tactile nurturance, as adults. The researchers' findings—which they stress may be particularly relevant to the relatively touch-deprived North American culture—suggest that "... tactile nurturance continues to play a significant role in the maintenance of a healthy body image in adulthood" (p. 188).

Due to its structure, Gupta's and Schork's study leaves the reader with some important unanswered questions regarding touch. The research was based on a survey of 200 volunteer adults. It utilized previously established scales for 'Drive for Thinness' and 'Body Dissatisfaction' in conjunction with the participants' response to three statements: (a) "I have fond memories of being hugged and/or cuddled by my parents/caregivers during my early childhood years," (b) "I wish I had been hugged or cuddled more during my childhood," and (c) "At the present time, I often wish I could get more hugs from others"

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(pp. 186-187). Specific issues of interest which are not addressed include (a) the amount of touch which is considered to be enough touch, (b) the quality of touch, and—except for statement a—(c) the particular people doing the touching. If being touched by a dance teacher contributes to a student's awareness of her or his body, and demonstrates a caring attitude from the teacher, there is an increased likelihood of that student's positive body image, and availability to open dialogue.

In a modern dance class, dialogue may be fostered through a number of touch relationships: teacher-to-student, student-to-teacher, and student-to-student. It is this last relationship which has the greatest potential to engender dialogue. Because students are touching their peers, the teacher/student hierarchy moves into the background. In fact, because of the 'equal footing' between participants which is available through student-to-student touch, one might argue that it is the only touch relationship which is truly a dialogue. One student noted that through student-to-student touch she learns equally in both roles, as toucher and touchee. She addressed the issue of status this way:

> I think sometimes with a partner it's more comfortable, just because they're more on the same level as I am and they're still learning. The comments or corrections I get from my peers are easier to take on. I guess I get easily intimidated by a teacher because I want to do it right. With your friends you're not as concerned with doing it exactly right because we all know we make mistakes in the learning process. So, if you know that we're all learning together, it's easier to accept their corrections and say, "Oh, yes, I was doing that wrong. I'll fix it."

A major difference between Ellsworth's class and a dance class—which may lead to a greater likeliness of open communication in the dance class—is the

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difference between verbal dialogue and tactile dialogue. Student participants

remarked: "Touch can impart something very quickly that words alone, cannot."

"When you're touched it's immediate. You get it right away. Visuals don't

always do that." Its immediacy and intimacy may also help to move touch more

successfully towards the relational dialogue of Buber, the socially and politically

conscious dialogue of Ellsworth, and the caring dialogue of Noddings.

Dialogue, as explained by Noddings (1992) involves a number of

processes which are essential to an effective pedagogy of touch, and which

engage one in meta-dance practice.

> Dialogue is open-ended . . . neither party knows at the outset what the
> outcome or decision will be. . . . Dialogue is a common search for
> understanding, empathy, or appreciation. . . . It gives learners
> opportunities to question "why," and it helps both parties to arrive at
> well-informed decisions. Dialogue serves another purpose in moral
> education. It connects us to each other and helps to maintain caring
> relations. (p. 23)

Much of what is involved in creating dialogue is 'interpersonal reasoning,'

an adaptable and malleable form of critical thinking (Noddings, 1991, 1992,

1998). There are five components of interpersonal reasoning, all of which are

essential for effective touch, and for meta-dance practice outcomes: (a) an

attitude of care and solicitude, (b) attention, (c) flexibility, (d) the act of

cultivating a relationship, and (e) the search for an appropriate response.

Students develop skills in these areas through dance and through touch. Below,

specific examples are offered to clarify the elements of interpersonal reasoning as

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they occur in a dance technique class. However, to engage students fully, each student-to-student-touch event simultaneously will entail all five aspects.

Dialogue Through an Attitude of Care

An attitude of care is absolutely essential when students touch each other. Ed, Steven, Laurie, and Mary all mentor the use of touch as a considerate, empathetic, thoughtful, and nurturing activity. Mary remarked,

> I think student-to-student-touch teaches them to be sensitive to all the learning that takes place when we touch someone else. We talk about respect, and telling each other if it doesn't feel comfortable. It puts them in a certain state to touch.

This sensitive and respectful approach to touch is liberating for students because both participants learn that it is all right to express what they need, and to respond to an expressed need. When some students are in the early stages of learning to touch each other, or they are touching a new partner, they are timid. But the attitude of care which is fostered by these teachers ultimately builds students' self confidence and helps them move beyond their reticence.

Steven promoted a sense of care during a floor sequence. In the exercise, one student lies on the floor with knees bent. The toucher takes hold of one leg and gently moves it to give the touchee a sense of mobility in the femoral joint. Because one of the goals of this exercise is for the touchee to feel safe enough to completely relax and to not assist or resist, Steven instructed the toucher to protect the knee, stating, "It's very comforting to feel support inside of the lower thigh."

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Another way in which Steven promotes an attitude of care is during a standing exercise involving one dancer taking the position of an outwardly rotated front attitude with the torso flexed forward in a contraction; the position simulates a forward-hovering leap. While the toucher holds the pelvis, offering resistance and pulling backwards, the touchee reaches her or his energy forward. The goal is to find an equal forward and backward pull through the body. Steven asks the toucher to be careful of the soft tissues, and to hold the bones, instead.

Like Steven, Mary instructs students to take care of their partners. In one instance, a student (A) lies on her back in a *Big X* shape in which the body is spread wide, as if forming the letter *X*; Mary is in contact with *A*'s right arm, and another student (B) is in contact with *A*'s left leg. The two touchers create a jiggling action along the diagonal of the body to help *A* feel how energy can freely travel on that diagonal, and to feel the compression and release in the left hip joint. Mary instructs students to hold above the ankle or knee joints, but not on the joints—a touch which supports and protects the joints but does not compress them; she also clarifies that the two touchers need to take care to work in a synchronous rhythm.

A number of students commented that an attitude of care and respect is demonstrated when a teacher or fellow student asks permission to touch, or to touch in a certain way; they appreciated this act. Yet other students had become so accustomed to touch as the norm that they felt permission was unnecessary.

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Ed, Steven, Laurie, and Mary all mentored a caring attitude through their own

actions and words, and students could fully practice a caring attitude when they

partnered each other.

Dialogue Through Attention: Mindful Acts of Touch

Charles M. Johnston (1986) addresses the inextricable link between two

aspects of touch pedagogy—attention and confirmation. He writes, "Any time

we risk really hearing someone, letting who they truly are dance against the

intimate core of our being, what we give that person is the gift of themselves"

(p. 233).

The acts of touching during a modern dance class <u>teach</u> students to pay

attention and <u>require</u> that they pay attention; touching demands our focus and it

teaches us how to focus. Noddings (1992) uses the term *engrossment* to describe

". . . an open, nonselective receptivity . . ." (p. 15) to another person. Mary

describes this as "being present with another person" and she feels that it

transfers to one's ability to listen during a spoken conversation. Steven says,

"Touch helps someone focus in." Ed maintains that touch helps students

perceive relationships within the body. Laurie notes, "Touch brings

awareness." Through student-to-student-touch there are an infinite number of

ways to practice paying attention.

Laurie teaches a touch sequence which offers students practice in paying

attention. This partner exercise regularly ends her classes to give students an

experience of cool-down and relaxation. For most of this exercise the touchee

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stands in front of the toucher, inverted, completely flexed forward from hips, buttocks towards the toucher. This is a vulnerable position and it requires trust on the part of the touchee and attention on the part of the toucher.

The touchee begins standing, waiting, and listening tactily for the toucher—who is standing behind—to initiate a forward roll of the spine by gently pushing the back of the touchee's head. Once the touchee has completely rolled forward the toucher uses cupped hands in a percussive motion—a Swedish massage action known as *tapotement*—and pats the back, pelvis, shoulders and backs of the legs. Laurie invites the toucher to do a kneading style of massage in any of those areas. During the patting and kneading the toucher pays attention to contacting flesh, not bone, which could be painful. Then, the toucher walks her or his fingers up from the sacrum to the top of the head, watching and feeling each vertebra; the touchee follows the tactile sensation of the fingers and rolls up, extending the spine to a standing position. If, during this spine/finger dialogue the toucher feels that the touchee's spinal extension is too quick, moving faster than the toucher's the fingers, the toucher might communicate by pausing, or by gently pushing the touchee back down, slightly. Finally, the touchee arrives at a vertical position and the toucher—attentive to any subtle adjustments required to help the touchee find correct vertical alignment—gently places her or his hands over the ears, carefully rotates the head from side to side, pulls the head vertically, and releases the touchee.

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During that exercise the toucher has, for a substantial length of time, completely focused on the needs of her or his partner. The toucher's goals are to assist the touchee to attend to a number of aspects of dance technique: (a) releasing tension, (b) sequentially articulating the spine, and (c) finding a free and lengthened use of the neck and head. It should be noted that Laurie, herself is in a continual state of paying attention throughout the class, making ongoing assessments based on such considerations as: "How comfortable is this student with touch?" "How might I assist these two student partners to work more effectively with each other?" "How could I modify the exercise so it is more beneficial to this student?"

One of Laurie's students who noted on the questionnaire that student-to-student-touch was only fair at promoting her learning recalled the above-described partner exercise writing, "I am uncomfortable when students touch me in class, for example, the massages at the end. I do not like students massaging my legs or back." On the questionnaire, this same student reported that (a) she mildly dislikes being touched during a dance class, (b) touch mildly detracts from the development of a positive rapport with the teacher or fellow students, (c) touch mildly detracts from her awareness of tension in her body, and (d) in the past—prior to Laurie's class—dance teachers had tried to over-stretch her and had manipulated her in a physically painful way. Of the 14 students from Laurie's class who returned questionnaires, this student had, by far, the most negative response to touch. One can only speculate as to the relationship

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between her recollections of her previous dance teachers, her past experiences with touch in any context, and her current comfort/availability to touch. Another student of Laurie's wrote,

> As a student, it's hard to accomplish what a teacher is describing to you because you have so many muscles and parts to control and manipulate. I associate movements with how they feel in my memory, and until the teacher places you in the "new" movement your memory can't record it because until then you were unsure of what you were trying to accomplish. TOUCH IS VERY IMPORTANT IN DANCE.

This student noted that touch, in general, is vital for learning. She also specified that every single learning area listed on the questionnaire—from understanding anatomical principles, to awareness of alignment, to the ability to use imagery—was strongly aided through the use of touch. Laurie's students provided a broad spectrum of responses to touch. Of particular interest is the wide range of responses to the questions regarding the ability of touch to develop a positive rapport with the teacher, or among the students in class; the answers included *strongly contributes, mildly contributes, neither contributes or detracts* and *mildly detracts*. A pedagogy of touch requires the teacher to pay attention to the 'mixed bag' of student responses to touch.

Three examples from Ed's teaching demonstrate the vital necessity of an attentive attitude when touching while locomoting through space. In one sequence a group of dancers stands in a tight circle, arms wrapped over each others' shoulders in the shape of a huddle. They perform a sequence of diminishing counts (4 4 3 3 2 2 1 1) which constantly shifts weight and direction. Touch allows students to tacitly attend to each other's subtle changes in weight,

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time, and space. In a second sequence Ed requests ". . . forward propulsion, active in the whole spine. . ." as students run quickly across the floor. For this event a toucher stands to the side of a partner, one hand placed on the touchee's sacrum; they run in tandem, the toucher pushing from the back, keeping pace, and maintaining visual and tactile contact with the runner. Using touch in this fashion assists the runner in shifting the pelvis forward. In a third sequence, injury is a possible consequence if attention lags from either participant. Here, a runner advances towards a partner—the lifter. When they meet, the runner pushes down on the lifter's shoulders; the lifter elevates the runner by holding the pelvis and moves the runner in the direction already established through the run. Again, full attention—to time, weight, space and momentum—is crucial.

Teacher and student participants commented that touch enhances (a) their ability to clearly observe and (b) their perceptiveness to the activities in class. Ed remarked how student-to-student-touch fosters students' abilities in dancing, teaching, communicating, observing, and, ultimately, more effective hands-on intervention. The ability to touch builds on itself. Ed noted,

> If I'm going to actually put my hands on somebody, then I have to look pretty closely at what's going on and make a choice, "Is it here or is it here?" When I have them working in pairs, what I generally do is roam around and watch what they're doing and then I intervene. Sometimes I even take their hands and place them in a different place on the partner's body. I use touch to help clarify the touch intervention. So I'm touching the toucher. One of my major goals for them is to be better observers. And I think student-to-student-touch helps them in their own training and I think it helps them be a better aid or guide to their peers. If they've been doing some kind of hands-on manipulation on the floor, then later in class in a larger combination I have them in groups and say, "O.K., now be

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observers for each other and offer some verbal feedback." This builds the ingredients of that relationship so that ultimately they would be able to problem-solve and answer the questions, "What do I see and what kind of hands-on technique would help facilitate that?"

Ed's commentary returns us to the concept of the simultaneity of time—

particularly the ideas of the *in-the-moment/phenomenological now* of the class, and

the *in-the-future/life-long framework* for further growth. One student's

commentary reflected a common response about student-to-student touch: to

simultaneously see and feel, look and touch, enhances one's abilities to observe.

She noted:

> From touching a partner in the knee exercise I am able to look at peoples' pliés in parallel now and see the position of the knees and ankles and the whole alignment of the legs and see if it looks correct. From feeling and seeing the pathways that the bones should travel on in the pliés, now I'm actually able to look without using the touch and think, "Oh, I remember how that felt, the way it should go, and that looks correct."

An attitude of attention may be focused externally, at one's partner, and

also internally, on oneself. Ed, Steven, Laurie, and Mary want their students to

attend to their inner sensations. Ed noted that touch provides a tactile

stimulation that helps people ". . . move inside, into their own proprioception, to

locate movement origins and connections." As mentioned in Chapter III,

teachers also encourage students to find an inner intention or focus for their

dancing; this may be a dramatic motivation; it may be sensing the

countertensions inside the body; and it may be feeling how the deep postural

muscles support one's alignment.

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Touch, in conjunction with imagery and words can bring students to an inner focus, and to greater anatomical awareness. Laurie used imagery from a science fiction film to focus students internally and to clarify anatomical information. She instructed her students,

> You have to do *Fantastic Voyage* with yourself. You have to put your mind in a tiny little space ship and send it all over the inside of your body to learn how to use your left adductor magnus; you have to know where it is and how to use it, without engaging your left quadriceps.

Artist, Ben Shahn (1957) writes that the objective of a liberal education is to produce a cultured citizen, and an integrated person. The outstanding quality of this person is perceptiveness, ". . . an awareness of things and people, of their qualities." Shahn notes, "These are the indispensable qualities for the artist too—. . . *to look and look, and think and listen, and be aware*" (p. 115).

Attention—inner and outer—develops such skills as self-monitoring and self-reflecting. Students ask questions of their own dancing; they revise their choices, and they explore further.

Dialogue Through Flexibility: Limbering Up to the Many Possibilities

In any college modern dance technique class, no matter how homogeneous the level of dancing skill, numerous factors contribute to students' opportunities to practice an attitude of flexibility. These include varieties of (a) body type, (b) learning style, and (c) response to being touched. During any given semester a student may participate in student-to-student-touch experiences with many different partners, having to, as Ed stated, ". . . problem solve with different bodies." Laurie believes it is valuable for students to work

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with partners who are at many different skill levels. Sometimes she pairs advanced students with beginners; at other times the parings are more equally balanced, or random. It depends on her goals for a particular partnering event.

Flexibility is an open attitude that allows for shifting means and ends (Noddings, 1991, p. 16). Not only does one need to take into account a variety of body types, but also one must have a flexible and malleable focus that recognizes the myriad of phenomena which occur simultaneously when someone is dancing.

Flexibility came into play as Laurie assisted a beginning-level dancer with a 'strike'—a position in which the dancer stands on the left leg and extends the right leg, high and to the side, tilts the torso left, and lengthens the arms to the sides of the body. In this instance, Laurie's goal is to help the student (A) outwardly rotate his right leg and extend his energy through a pointed foot. A held the position, Laurie took hold of his right leg, and another assisting student (B) held A's left arm for balance and support. Laurie gently adjusted A's leg into greater outward rotation while she simultaneously supported the weight of the leg. At this moment in the learning experience, students A and B had tactile, visual, and aural perceptions of the energy necessary to perform the strike; the rest of the class took it in only visually and aurally. Also, all of the students had the opportunity to understand this lesson through 'kinesthetic empathy'—a bodily response to the imagined physical sensations which they witness in someone else. (This concept will be explained in more detail in Chapter V.)

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To fully benefit from the experience described above, a flexible awareness was required of all the students. They needed to consider at least some of the following phenomena: (a) *A* is a beginning-level, large male; (b) a strike requires particular positioning of arms and legs; (c) the torso is tilted; (d) certain elements are restricting *A*'s performance—what are they? (e) *A* has a particular sensitivity and openness to touch—what do I perceive this to be? and (e) there are certain ways in which *A* might be touched effectively—what are they? Students are required to perceive, reflect, and act on many levels, simultaneously.

Peggy Hackney (1998) articulates the idea that a movement event has many facets as she reflects on her studies with Irmgard Bartenieff. "Irmgard Bartenieff constantly reminded her students that 'There is always more than one thing going on.' She implored us to look at the whole system and see the orchestration" (p. 44). To use Bartenieff's words, "There are many possibilities" (p. 1) when it comes to learning, understanding, and observing movement. Tactile dialogue—which encompasses and necessitates an attitude of flexibility—will enhance students' availability to all of the "possibilities."

As mentioned in Chapter III, when Ed teaches dance partnering he frequently uses the theme of 'the architecture of support and the gift of surrender in ledging and draping forms.' He wants students to learn how to provide strong and reliable architectural support systems throughout the body; he also creates opportunities for students to yield, drape, and surrender their weight on to the architecture of another human. Ed stated that ". . . this creates all

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possibilities for dialogue or negotiation back and forth between people." He
encourages students to recognize their methods of (and responses to) alternating
between the roles of supporting someone and allowing oneself to be supported.
Ed facilitates an attitude of flexibility through his ledging and draping
explorations. He stated,

> I think if they build their facility, confidence, and enjoyment of both ends
> of that continuum it gives them more strategies for coping out in the
> world. It gives them a broader range of ways of relating to people; they
> can flow easily back and forth between those different roles.

Students commented that experiences in student-to-student-touch
contribute to their abilities to be flexible. One student remarked,

> It's been interesting because I think every time we've worked, I've had a
> different partner. Every single one of them has something different, a
> different way of touching and a different way of showing me—even
> holding my hips, the level, where they hold them and how tightly they
> hold. Having people touch me in different ways lets me learn about the
> movement, and feel it in different ways.

A second student noted,

> Sometimes I'm working with partners and, if they're your friends, or
> you're not into it, you just kind of do it and don't really understand what
> you're doing. But then when you do get a good partner it's different. I
> was partners today with the boy in our class and he gave me new visual
> images that Steven hasn't given—new ideas, like sternly saying, "Hold
> these hips down" and it was very helpful.

A third student remarked,

> Working with a student affects my learning because I'm learning how to
> interact with other people, too. And when you're that close to someone
> and you're trying to learn and teach something, you get a better
> understanding of what you're trying to do by helping them. If you can
> teach it to someone that means that you really do understand what you're
> doing. When partnering someone who has a different agenda, or who is

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not as interested as you are—I think you probably get _more_ mileage, because if you want to be a choreographer, if you want to teach, you're going to get a wide range of people. So I guess it would almost be more fun to have a partner who is not as into it—a person that needs more help. If you can help someone who needs more help, then, hey, more power to you.

Dialogue Through Cultivating Relationships

Martin Buber (1923/1970) writes, ". . . relation is reciprocity" (p. 60). Apparent from my observations and interviews, this give-and-take between two people who meet as equals occurs through touch, and because of touch. Touching in a dance class, according to many participants, develops a positive rapport among students. Steven commented, "Touch is responsible for sharing and bonding between students." He encourages this positive rapport; during a partner touch event he requests of the touchers, "Talk to them with your touch; give them a sensibility."

Student-to-student-touch establishes a level of comfort that, as one student noted, ". . . makes the learning experience more pleasurable." Students commented that the comfort fostered through touch helps them to feel less constricted—emotionally or physically—so they can fully participate in class. One student asserted that a higher level of openness from touching carries over from studio to stage; when she is performing with her colleagues from class they can all more fully express themselves.

The positive relationships fostered through student-to-student-touch offset an atmosphere of competition that is common in a dance class. A student remarked, "I think it gives a sense of community. We're working together

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instead of competing with each other. We're helping each other out and trying

for everyone to improve instead of just caring about yourself."

Along with a sense of community, trust is another important aspect of

relationships. A student expressed the idea this way:

> I think when you have to trust somebody and allow yourself to be
> vulnerable, to trust their eye to watch your body (which automatically
> makes it really personal), it opens some doors. It's helpful, especially with
> the partnering that we've been working on. These are the people you
> need to be with every day and essentially trust your life to—if they're
> holding you in the air.

After Ed taught a technique class which was expressly devoted to dance

partnering, students commented on a major difference between that class and a

more traditional modern dance class. They remarked that even though they are

constantly together in classes, students tend to remain in their own, isolated little

bubbles, dancing side by side. Partnering, on the other hand, requires constant

interaction between them.

For Ed, touch is used primarily to teach students about numerous aspects

of their bodies and of movement. However, a secondary agenda is to

consciously assist his students in developing a positive rapport amongst

themselves. For example, Ed facilitates a trust circle in which there are any

number of people—four, five, or six—creating the perimeter of a circle. One

person is inside the circle, alternately giving weight to the various people on the

perimeter. The primary functions of this touch event are (a) to feel grounded

and resilient when absorbing someone's weight, (b) to be able to set someone

back on to her or his own support, and (c) to give one's own weight to someone

in the circle. Secondarily, this exercise is about building trust between people.

A modern dance technique class is a communal activity. Some degree of

interaction among participants is built into the genre. However, the

development of relationships among participants, depending on the teacher, can

take greater or lesser precedence. The inclusion of student-to-student-touch

inevitably gives it greater precedence. I find John Dewey's (1934) commentary

on the connection between the qualities and metaphors necessary for

(a) cultivating relationships, and (b) defining 'form' in art, to be intriguing. He

writes,

> . . . relations are modes of interaction. They are pushes and pulls; they are
> contractions and expansions; they determine lightness and weight, rising
> and falling, harmony and discord. . . Art expresses, it does not state; it is
> concerned with existences in their perceived qualities, not with
> conceptions symbolized in terms. A social relation is an affair of affections
> and obligations, of intercourse, of generation, influence and mutual
> modification. It is in this sense that "relation" is to be understood when
> used to define form in art. (p. 134)

Dialogue Through the Search for an Appropriate Response

Every engagement of student-to-student-touch is not only an ongoing

search for an appropriate response, but an act of identifying a range of possible

responses. The range of possibilities is vast because of the range of movements

and partners. This search for a response works best as a learning activity when

students embrace attitudes of care, attention, and flexibility, and have a sense of

relationship to their partners. It involves kinesthetic empathy—feeling

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sensations in one's own body in conjunction with being able to see and feel the same movement issues on/in another body.

Despite its challenges and obstacles, more often than not this search between partners is a satisfying journey, and one which students value. It requires students to work as independent duos. According to one student, "It's almost like we can remember it more because we had to figure it out ourselves." Another claimed, "It teaches me more about my own body and what I might be doing right or wrong. I just enjoy touching other people, too. It's really relaxing for me. There's a feeling of moving through someone's body."

Students learn about themselves when they touch others. Ed, Steven, Mary and Laurie all advocate the idea of partnering a variety of people. A student remarked on the positive nature of having multiple partners:

> Touching a different body every time provides different experiences. I learn something about that person's body and how to work with their limitations. Each person has limitations. I see what it is that needs to happen or what needs to be encouraged. Or, if they're doing great then I just help them stabilize whatever they're doing and I figure out what it is that I need to do to help them more. I usually ask, "How was that? Did that satisfy you? Was that O.K.? Was that good?" Most of the time they'll say, "Yes." Sometimes they'll say, "Let's do it again."

Sometimes this search for an appropriate response can be frustrating and confusing. It may be difficult for an experienced toucher to work with someone who is unskilled in touch, or who is uncomfortable with it. One student commented, "It's really a useless waste of time to be stuck with someone who is wishy-washy. I always try to grab someone I know, whose opinion I trust. But

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sometimes you get stuck with somebody and it's painful." Similarly, another

student noted that she is demanding of people and that it is disheartening when

she experiences a noncommittal level of touch from her partner. For her, most of

the time, touch from a student partner is not readily effective. However, the

situation can improve due to her willingness to provide her partner with

feedback. This student relayed an incident that supports Ed's previous comment

that reticence on the part of a toucher can lead to a compressing, rather than an

elongating manipulation of her partner's joints:

> We were doing leg lifts, when the person lifts my legs off the floor and
> slowly lowers them. The other person just lowered my legs and there
> wasn't a pulling so my spine would stretch, so I asked this person, "Can
> you please pull on my legs more so I can feel my spine really stretching,
> because I think I can feel that more and I'd like your help." Sometimes I
> probably sound a little cross but that's the honest truth. I think that it's
> only honest for me to say that, because if I didn't say that it would be
> frustrating for both of us.

Certain students are not at ease taking on the role of teacher. Some have a

sense of propriety and etiquette that is difficult to cross: They are in class to be

attentive learners, not to tell someone else what to do. Others simply feel

unqualified to give advice. When they touch each other, students are continually

put in the position of making informed decisions based on their accumulated

experiences. For this reason, pairing rank beginners together, or rank beginners

with seasoned dancers may not always be constructive choices. This was

substantiated in the questionnaire. Nearly 90% of the students at Lane

Community College, University of Utah, and University of Oregon stated that

student-to-student-touch was either good or excellent at enhancing their learning

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process. However, less than 50% of the students at Iowa State University gave this rating; over 50% of the Iowa students rated it as poor or fair. The participant populations in the modern dance classes at the first three schools were quite homogeneous in terms of experience and skill level. At Iowa State University the students ranged from those with professional performing experience to rank-beginner, and every level in between.

As noted through student participants' responses, the accumulated experiences which one's fellow students bring to a dance class play a significant role in the success of a student-to-student-touch activity. Accumulated experience exists, to a substantial degree, in the form of body-knowledge. This concept was noted in Chapter III. Ed mentioned that he believed that the body has its own organic or kinesthetic intelligence that will allow the body to find the most efficient way to perform an action. Mary spoke of the intelligence of the body, contrasting it with learning or functioning from a brain perspective. For her, the function of touch is to facilitate and bring a remembrance to a body intelligence that is already there; body intelligence is the ability to feel and sense from the inside of the body. Hackney (1998) notes Irmgard Bartenieff's thoughts on the issue of body-knowledge.

> In her manuscript, the Art of Body Movement as a Key to Perception, Irmgard states, "The main object of all this material is to suggest additional modes of perceiving yourself and the world around you, using your live body totally—body/mind/feeling—as a key to that perception. The heart of that 'liveness' is movement and, therefore, it is the movement itself that we have studied. How your body functions in movement—Body/Effort/Shape—and what that means to your perceptions and expression." (p. 3)

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Like Ed and Mary, Hackney (1988) notes the important role of kinesthetic

understanding within the learning process:

> The first step in any creative process (and learning is certainly a creative process), is the act of *merging*, identifying and becoming one with that which is there to be known. This part of the process generally happens at a pre-conscious level. Most adult learners do not actively acknowledge this part of the process—and therefore do not teach the particular skills of this stage to others. Here is the crux of the current educational problem. *The ability to know through merging happens bodily.* It is almost cellular knowledge—grounded and made vital through moving. (p. 27)

Touching another person opens the gate for Hackney's *merging*, providing

students with opportunities for discovering and identifying appropriate

responses. Hackney clarifies, however, that she does not advocate merging vs.

differentiation. She notes that setting boundaries is an important act in the

learning process; merging precedes differentiation and is followed by integration

(p. 27). During my observations of numerous student-to-student-touch

explorations I noted that students engage in a spectrum of tactile intimacy. It

ranges from boundary-setting touch to merging touch (or 'blending')—from

touch that differentiates the toucher from the touchee, to that which does not.

Exploring all variations of intimacy is part of a student's discovery process. The

teacher participants, due to their extensive experiences of teaching with touch

were much more consistently working with a highly perceptive and sensitive

touch, but one that maintained a boundary. (The reader may wish to refer to the

discussion on interface, blending, and streaming touch in Chapter III.)

In Steven's class, for example, a type of merging occurs as students search

for mobility and then stability in a partner. The toucher stands behind and

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shakes, waves, and manipulates the pelvis of a partner, finally bringing the pelvis to a stable state. The touchee flexes the right leg in a parallel passé as the toucher supports under the right thigh with the right hand, and slides the left hand in front of the left hip, searching for a sensation of flatness and openness. The close proximity of their interaction and the placing of a hand directly in front of the hip is a highly intimate interaction for some students. Care, attentiveness, flexibility, and rapport are all needed in order for partners to merge enough to give and receive tactile feedback.

Laurie talks her class through an experience during which one person sits cross-legged and the toucher kneels behind. The toucher assists the touchee to move the torso from a (curved) contraction into an (elongated) release. To help the touchee find the point of initiation for the release the toucher slowly applies pressure in the lower back with the flat part of a fist. The toucher observes the sequential extension of the spine; the toucher then adds to the touchee's sense of elongation by pulling the touchee's head with a gentle sense of traction, guiding the dancer from a forward tilt to a vertical position. Laurie offers words—which both participants try to embody—to inform the dances what they should be doing and experiencing: "Start at the base of the spine. Do not drop your energy as you come out of contraction into release. Lift and extend the spine." Laurie guides the students in their search for a sense of lengthening, talking them through the how and why of touching. Verbally, she continually refines their actions as they search for appropriate responses.

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Similarly, the words Mary uses to accompany her students' touch guides them in their search for their partners' appropriate responses. "Keep the joints open; think about the joints being hollow. . ." she says as a toucher gives downward pressure on a touchee's pelvis while the touchee extends her legs from a plié. Here, Mary wants students to sense the use of the hamstrings and the pushing action through the legs.

As student partners travel on a common search for understanding they are bound, from time to time, to venture into a realm which Ed refers to as the 'psychosomatic dimension.' This is a mental/emotional/physical domain in which humans make sense of their world by acknowledging that how they (and others) move affects how they think and feel, and vice versa. Ed challenged his students to take note of their experiences in the psychosomatic dimension with his toboggan improvisation during which students experience the acts of being in control, and being controlled. He recognizes the therapeutic implications of touch; for example, touch can comfort us, help us feel accepted, or bring up deep-seated emotional responses. These are not his primary objectives or explicitly stated goals, but they are secondary gains from the use of touch. Ed commented,

> This psychosomatic dimension deals with what they're learning about their own erogenous zones, and what they're learning about what kinds of touch they like and don't like. They're learning about what parts of the body they feel comfortable with and what parts they don't. They're dealing with lots about self-image and body image, sensuality, sexuality, and morality. I think they are even coming to understand which parts of the body they have greater or lesser sensation in. I think some people start to become aware of areas where they have blocked sensation.

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The five aspects of Noddings's (1998) interpersonal reasoning are interwoven into a whole; attitudes of care, attention, and flexibility, and acts of cultivating relationships, and searching for appropriate responses are integral to a tactile dialogue between two students. These aspects are not only required for a meaningful tactile dialogue to occur, they are the meta-dance outcomes which are the result of touch.

Confirmation: Witnessing Another's Uniqueness

Confirmation is a vital element of tactile dialogue. For Noddings (1998) it is a major component of her theory of moral education from the perspective of care. When dance teachers encourage their students to practice acts of confirmation they are strengthening the humanitarian spirit behind meta-dance practice, and within their students.

The term "witnessing" is used in this section deliberately, reflecting its use in Authentic Movement. Authentic Movement is a practice of dance/movement therapy in which the relationship between a mover and a witness is explored. The mover works with eyes closed, following internal impulses to move. According to Janet Adler (1999), the witness

> . . . practices the art of seeing. Seeing clearly is not about knowing what the mover needs or must do. The witness does not 'look at' the mover but, instead, as she [or he] internalizes the mover, she [or he] attends to her [or his] own experiences of judgment, interpretation and projection in response to the mover as catalyst. As she [or he] acknowledges ownership of her [or his] experiences, the density of her [or his] personal history empties, enabling the witness at times to feel that she [or he] can see the mover clearly and, more importantly, that she [or he] can see herself [or himself] clearly. (p. 194)

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The witness observes the mover's improvisation with an attitude of support for the mover's uniqueness, <u>not</u> looking for the 'right' improvisation. Following the improvisation there is an option for each party to verbally share experiences. Together, the mover and witness may achieve a degree of perception of self and other that evokes respect, empathy, and confirmation.

Confirmation is the act of affirming and encouraging the best in others (Buber, 1965). Confirmation is embedded in three previously discussed pedagogical elements: (a) how the teacher shapes a class for touch, (b) how touch is mentored, and (c) how teachers and students engage in dialogue. Yet, the singular importance of confirmation in education warrants a separate discussion.

Two elements are vital for confirmation to occur. One, as mentioned earlier, is the ability to see another person as 'other,' not as someone who we hope to make more like ourselves, or even whom we attempt to emulate. The other element is trust. A student needs to trust her or his teacher and fellow students if any acts of confirmation are to be deemed credible. Students must be able to trust the motives behind acts of confirmation. Trust requires continuity; when students and teachers work together over time they gain a familiarity with each other which is necessary for confirmation. How can we possibly confirm someone—identify her or his "better self" and encourage its development—if we have not had ample time together?

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Teachers and students demonstrate respect for another person's uniqueness in numerous ways. From the very beginning of the semester the teacher shows respect by giving students permission to forgo touching, as well as to communicate if a particular type of touch is painful, uncomfortable, or confounding. Mary's attention to her boundaries—knowing where her energy ends and the student's begins (discussed in Chapter III)—shows her regard for her students. A student of Laurie's commented on a way in which Laurie demonstrates confirmation, noting that she embraces the importance of ". . . learning how to use the instrument that you've got." As we have noted earlier, all four teachers, as described by themselves and their students, teach dancers to understand movement from the inside, rather than by pasting on an external standard. One of Steven's students noted,

> He's very concerned with learning to use your body in a way that's good for your body. The emphasis is what you can do. It is not so much some ideal of having a 180° turnout and getting your leg up to the ceiling, but something that is comfortable and can still be aesthetically pleasing.

Through ever-changing partnerships in student-to-student-touch exercises dancers learn that each individual is unique in strengths, limitations, attitudes of fear and risk, comfort with touch, and in many other ways. This is learned through touching, speaking, listening, and seeing. Over time, students mature in their abilities to care, pay attention, remain flexible, cultivate a relationship, and identify a range of responses; they become more able (if not always more willing) to embrace a variety of ideals pursued by an array of 'others.'

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There is no one right formula for making someone a dancer (although some students seek out a teacher whom they believe has this formula). This is the message taught when a teacher allows time for students to experiment and explore during their touch encounters. Each time a teacher's intuition, or kinesthetic intelligence whispers, "She's not ready to be touched; stay out of her kinesphere" or prods, "Touch is exactly what he needs"—it is an act of confirmation. Ed, Steven, Laurie, and Mary go to great lengths to encourage the development of all of the individuals in their classes. They are willing to answer questions. They may offer an uncomplicated affirming press or a stabilizing hold as they simply say "Yes" to confirm an individual. Or, the touch may be accompanied by enthusiastically shouting "Oh, Magico!" as Laurie does.

Setting aside everything noted thus far which promotes and demonstrates confirmation, let us acknowledge that touch, itself, stands alone as confirmation. Consider, for a moment, how frequently we touch ourselves in daily life—pressing or rubbing our hands, massaging a tight muscle in the neck, resting the chin in the palm of the hand while thinking, or unconsciously playing with our hair. Do not these gestures, to some degree, confirm for us that we are indeed here as ourselves, alive, and O.K.? Deane Juhan (1987) writes, "Touch, more than any other mode of sensation, defines for us our sense of reality" (p. 29). A sensitive, practiced, attentive touch from oneself, a teacher, or a student can, and does function as confirmation.

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Trust

As noted earlier, trust is an essential element in the act of confirmation; students need to be able to trust their teacher's and fellow students' motives for confirmation. Ed described an example of a group touch exercise during which the touchee learns to trust, not only her or his partners, but also herself or himself and the space around the body. (The concept of 'trusting space' may appear to be metaphysical rather than physical. However, dancers learn that they have the capacity—through acts of shaping the body, and through spatial intent—to interact with space in ways which make the space palpable, with viscosity and texture.) The mover steps into an undercurve in plié and then rises up to a relevé on one supporting leg. The action is one of spreading horizontally (as well as rising vertically) into a forward-leaning *arabesque*; this classical ballet position—entailing the dancer balancing over one foot with the other (gesturing) leg extended behind and the torso held in the vertical dimension—has been adapted by modern dancers. Students work in quartets, with touchers at each arm and at the gesturing leg. Ed commented on this exercise,

> We're working on trust—eccentric contraction and lengthening for balancing. So, rather than pulling in toward the center they're trusting space and reaching out into the edge of the periphery. Three people are teaming up, trying to help that person trust the extension into the distal edge. The helpers provide a little bit of actual support, like a ballet barre but they also coax the elongation, so it's a spatial impetus; as it's rising, it's also spreading.

In this example, we can observe that trusting (a) one's technique, (b) the ability to maneuver one's own weight, (c) one's capacity to respond

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appropriately, and (d) the space around the body, works synergistically with trusting one's teacher and fellow students. Just as with the concept of 'making a dancer,' there is no one formula for building trust in a class. Yet without it, learning—and, I would venture to say dancing—is likely to maintain a mechanical quality, rather than become fully human. Over time, trust can be built as teachers place their students, literally, in each other's hands, as well as in their own. Teachers provide trust-building experiences during which one partner must surrender the weight of a limb, or of the entire body. Simultaneously, the other partner experiences the meaning of absorbing another human being through the skin, bones, and muscles.

There is potential for trust to develop when teachers (a) understand and respond to their students' backgrounds, (b) mentor the use of clear intent when touching, and (c) promote candid verbal feedback about touch experiences. The greater the level of trust among teachers and students, the greater one's comfort level and receptivity for being touched. And, the more available one is to touch, the more one will be able to respond to and learn from it.

Remaining Available to the Multiple Layers of Perception

Students and teachers are required to perceive and act on many levels, simultaneously, in order for touch to be effectively used in a dance class. Conversely, when touch is included in a dance class students are provided with numerous opportunities to develop a flexible, multi-tiered awareness. Ed, Steven, Laurie, and Mary create class environments in which students are able to

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be fully available for learning—on multiple levels. The teachers sequence their classes to balance momentum, continuity, and comprehension. Each teacher explores ways to help students take the time to feel the inner workings of their moving (or still) bodies, to repattern movement habits, and to balance the conceptual with the somatic levels of knowing.

Ed, Steven, Laurie, and Mary provide students with opportunities to develop their skills in adaptable and malleable forms of seeing, feeling, thinking, moving, and observing. Through touch, students have enlivening opportunities for self-discovery and artistic growth within the paradigm of meta-dance practice. Again, however, it is worth noting that using touch both requires and cultivates (a) an attitude of care and solicitude, (b) attentiveness to oneself and others, (c) flexibility, (d) the cultivating of relationships, and (e) the ability the search for appropriate responses. Embedded in each of these phenomena are two other requirements and outcomes. One is confirmation. Confirmation exists when students and teachers are willing to see and respect people for who they are and to trust that they will do the same for us. And two, embedded in acts of confirmation is kinesthetic empathy: the ability to understand and interpret oneself and others through one's own bodily sensations.

For effective touch experiences to occur, teachers and students require an attitude which existentialist Gabriel Marcel (1952) refers to as 'disposability'— "... the readiness to bestow and spend oneself and make oneself available ..." (p. 80). One who is disposable has a readiness to recognize that she or he has a

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self to invest and give, while engaging with others in the world. Once again, it is noteworthy that the effective use of touch <u>requires</u> us to remain 'present' and in-the-moment, <u>and</u> it <u>teaches</u> us that ability.

Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary develop their pedagogies by weaving together application, dialogue, and confirmation. First, they make the time—and <u>take</u> the time—to stop, include tactile interactions, and help their students to *feel inwardly* in order to gain new levels of awareness about their dancing. The teachers accomplish this in the face of many students' drive to move quickly and remain entertained. Second, the teachers engage their students in critical pedagogy through the practice of tactile dialogue—an engagement which entails the students' involvement as caring, attentive, flexible individuals who cultivate relationships and seek appropriate responses in their partners and in themselves. And third, the teachers confirm their students' uniqueness, and mentor/encourage students toward a confirming point of view and behavior with each other.

In this, and the preceding chapter, Steven, Ed, Laurie, Mary, and their students have clarified and described how touch may be used effectively in the teaching of dance; their work offers other teachers the opportunity to reflect on their own uses of touch, and to invent new ones. The next chapter details a pedagogy of touch.

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CHAPTER V

META MEANS 'LATER'—'A MORE SPECIALIZED FORM'
*****
CONSTRUCTING EMBODIED KNOWLEDGE:
A PEDAGOGY OF TOUCH

A pedagogy of touch is possible only if teachers create environments that allow for touch. Andrew Kaplan (2000) notes that teachers do not teach students directly, but by controlling the environment. A teacher creates an environment which ". . . calls out the responses of students" (p. 379). Dance teachers do not mold students' characters or their dancing bodies. They create conditions where students may (a) gain awareness of their current choices, (b) reflect on which choices are, or are not, effective, and (c) learn how to make new choices.

In order to create an environment for touch, it is essential for teachers to recognize the ways in which the 'simultaneity of time' plays out in the teaching/learning process: What transpires in their classes is the result of a 'chemical reaction' of mixing the teacher's and students' narratives/histories, their expectations for—and trajectories into—the future, and the in-the-moment praxis of each dance class. One cannot overstate the importance of a teacher's acknowledgement of student narratives and how those narratives intersect with the teacher's educational paradigms. It is through this recognition that teachers are able to construct a beneficial praxis for shaping students' experiences.

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An effective pedagogy of touch provides students with touch experiences that not only help them to reshape their dancing, but also rewrite the metaphors which are embodied in their dancing. Through touch students have opportunities to interrogate their metaphors for such ideas as *the body, body image*, and their personal movement scope/limitations.

When dance teachers incorporate touch into their pedagogy they have situated their teaching within the educational paradigm of meta-dance practice. This is a way of engaging in the study of dance technique which takes students <u>beyond</u> their development as dance technicians and performers. Meta-dance practice is akin to the larger educational philosophy—moral education. Moral education entails the idea that developing aspects of a student—such as character, personality, and a sense of right and wrong—are as much a part of what a student should learn as is the particular subject matter. In the case of meta-dance practice, what can be learned <u>beyond</u> dance, through the use of touch, includes such traits as attentiveness, flexibility, and rapport with others. These are also part of Nel Noddings's (1998) theory of moral education from the perspective of care.

We begin a discussion of a pedagogy of touch with three core constructs: (a) the inside/outside nature of dancing, and of learning movement, (b) the importance of student histories, and (c) the significance of intentional touch. It is imperative that teachers account for these foundational elements if touch is to be used effectively.

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Creating and Environment for Touch

The Inside/Outside Nature of Dancing and Learning Movement

One of the core constructs which underlies the effective use of touch is the inside/outside nature of dancing, and of learning movement. Touch propels one to sense the inner workings of the body. Through interior sensing a dancer is assisted in finding greater clarity of the outside performance of movement—that which is visible to the audience. Inherent in modern dance, as a performing art, is an emphasis on external presentation of the choreographic product; the dancers' processes notwithstanding, they perform and an audience watches to see how and what they perform. Through touch a dancer learns the benefits of internally sensing technique to support its external manifestation.

A dancer's experience of the inside/outside nature of movement may be described in a number of ways, such as (a) understanding movement internally, (b) feeling or sensing movement on the inside—having an internal sensation, and (c) knowing one's body from the inside out. These expressions, while seemingly vague, describe a number of specific pedagogical goals for the teacher:

1. Developing an awareness and functional use of the deep supportive and postural muscles, such as the iliopsoas, the transversus abdominus, the abdominal obliques, and the pelvic diaphragm (floor).

2. Discovering an awareness of ways to use the breath—and an internal sense of energy flow—as the impetus for movement.

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3. Learning to allow internal sensations—physiological and emotional—to fulfill specific movement goals, rather than simply trying to replicate the demonstrated movement from an external image of it.

When a dancer accesses internal awareness and support first, he or she has the potential for a broad range of movement choices; with a more expansive palette of available movement in performance, a dancer may also discover more compelling interpretations, whether in dramatic/narrative roles or in non-narrative works. Steven Chatfield noted that, while he considered his technique to be 'functional human movement training' and lacking in theatricality, its fundamental/functional basis leads the dancer to the attainment of higher aesthetic expressive qualities.

Using touch to help dancers understand the inside/outside nature of movement is in the service of expanding their physical artistry, and their metaphorical imaginations. Maxine Greene (2000) notes that as humans learn to eliminate their habitual separations of inner from outer, or subjective from objective they are able to ". . . give imagination its proper importance and grasp what it means to place imagination at the core of understanding" (p. 140).

Peggy Hackney (1998) also addresses the inside/outside nature of movement, noting that the goal of Bartenieff Fundamentals ". . . is to facilitate a lively interplay of Inner Connectivity with Outer Expressivity to enrich life" (p. 34). Through the use of touch dancers develop an understanding of the process/product continuum. On one end is the inner world, typically the

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province of therapy; on the other end is the outer world, the traditional realm of technique and performance (p. 34). Dancers enhance their artistic lives by accessing the full range of the inside-process/outside-product continuum.

Acknowledging Student Narratives

A second core construct which underlies an effective use of touch is student narrative; narratives are the stories which form a student's history, and which they tell/believe about themselves. In order for touch to be used effectively it is imperative that teachers acknowledge students' backgrounds and their influence on the teaching/learning process. Teaching and learning are shaped by such issues as the extent of a student's dance studies, her or his experiences with, and readiness for, touch, and cultural, religious and familial backgrounds. Lest teachers worry that their teaching will be hampered by considering student histories, teachers may be pleasantly surprised that this consideration, according to Eliot Eisner (2000), leads students to learn more than their teachers intended. Educators have learned from a constructivist approach to education that students create meaning for themselves, based on the tools they bring with them. The meanings they create are not simply a function of what teachers intend for them to learn. Eisner writes,

> These tools consist, in the broadest sense, of the backlog of their experiences and the 'languages' they know how to use—words, images, numbers, [movements, modes of/taboos for touching]—to represent those meanings. Meanings are indeed constructed but, the tools that students use to construct meaning are not limited to what teachers provide. . . Educators should all be grateful for that. (p. 344)

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"Constructivists believe that reality is socially constructed," writes James G. Henderson (1992a, p. 206). He notes that—within this educational paradigm—all forms of knowing are human creations and touched by human interpretation, and that ". . . both teachers and students must learn to become active interpreters of their classroom experiences" (p. 206). A teacher's recognition of the tools which students bring calls for a respect for the individuality of each student. As Greene (2000) notes, what a student wants ". . . is a feeling of ownership of one's personal history" (p. 164).

A distinguishing feature of many college level dance programs is cultural diversity. Teachers have opportunities to work with students from a range of cultures within one class—of both national and international origins. This factor adds to the challenge and interest of creating a pedagogy of touch which serves every student. By demonstrating respect and sensitivity to individuals, teachers have the potential to coax all students towards effective participation in hands-on intervention.

A student from Mexico clarified the fact that within her "Latin American culture"—as she termed it—there is much differentiation regarding touch, in both attitude and behavior. This variation is due to the social class structure and the particular context of a given interaction. She also noted that living and dancing in the United States had dramatically shifted her previously open and unrestrained attitudes about touch, to behaviors which were more inhibited.

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This student's experiences call attention to the importance of a teacher's sensitivity to cultural differences, if touch is to be used effectively.

The concept of diversity in educational environments encompasses a range of perspectives including country (and region) of origin, primary language, race, religion, gender identification, sexual preference, history of sexual abuse, and body type. An effective pedagogy of touch requires teachers to consider students, first as individuals, and then with regard to the groups with which they identify; effective pedagogy necessitates an open and inclusive attitude. It is imperative, however, that teachers and students avoid stereotypes linked to a particular identifier. Greene (2000) notes the ineffectual nature of stereotyping, writing, "To view a person as in some sense 'representative' of Asian culture [or Hispanic, Jewish, or homosexual] . . . is to presume an objective reality called 'culture,' a homogeneous and fixed presence that *can* be adequately represented by existing subjects" (p. 163).

Teachers have the potential to engage all of their students by acknowledging their backgrounds, narratives, values, inhibitions, and prejudices. This acknowledgement, in tandem with the teacher's content knowledge is still not the entire picture when considering the effective use of touch. Full engagement of students can occur only when teachers gain the students' trust. And it is the totality of an unquantifiable essence—the teacher's *presence*, energy, and personality which compels students to trust their teachers. The *presence* which a student senses in a teacher is closely tied to the teacher's ability to touch with a clear intent.

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Touching With Intent

Fundamental to establishing a teacher's *presence* is the teacher's recognition of the importance of intentional touch—a third core construct underlying a pedagogy of touch. Irene Dowd (1992), who supports the notion of intentional touch, writes, ". . . I must approach the other person's realm in such a way that he/she can understand *and* accept my intent. Then I must prepare myself so as to avoid projecting my own conditions and pre-*conceptions* onto him/her" (p. 51).

A teacher's clarity of intent is informed by a number of factors. These factors are imperatives for touch pedagogy. First, teachers understand that the primary reason for touch is to awaken the student to sensation. That sensation is like a spark that ignites a readiness for knowing in new ways—about the body and about movement. Second, teachers recognize the intimate nature of touch. Touch occurs in close proximity—it can provide a sense of comfort, it may be offered or received with sexual innuendo, and responses to it are variable and highly personal. Third, teachers have a clear idea of the *movement information* they wish to impart through touch. Andrea Olsen (1991) addresses this third issue, noting that a teacher's intention and attention are both keys to hands-on work; one's choice of a particular type of touch or area for placement of hands on the body is informed by one's primary goal for the intervention. Olsen writes, "If we want to relax muscles, we might use a muscular movement of the hand to stimulate the fluids and connect us to muscle" (p. 79).

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Clarity of intent increases as teachers develop their levels of perception, and they are able to sense a student's readiness to be touched. Mary Seereiter noted this in her recollection of touching a student's sternum and sensing that the touch experience uncovered emotional territory which was more than the student could handle at that moment and therefore, she withdrew her hands. It is imperative that teachers learn to perceive a student's 'psychic boundary'—the edge of her or his personal space which is communicated through body attitude/language and facial expression, and, thus, can be discerned by a sensitive teacher. This sensing will lead the teacher to change her or his approach—to move more slowly or quickly, to touch more gently or firmly, to speak with the student about touch, to assign two students to work as partners, or to forego touch intervention altogether. Effective use of touch requires not only that teachers are sensitive to the permeability of a student's psychic boundary, but that, once they enter a student's personal space, teachers maintain a tactile boundary.

Let us recall that the function of touch in a technique class is to elucidate an internal awareness in the student, enabling the student to make her or his own choices about change. Touch does not function to drain the student of energy, or to engender a dominant/submissive interaction between toucher and touchee. Effective teachers learn to touch respecting boundaries; they develop methods of touch which engage, inform, and even comfort, but which do not deplete the student of her or his own authority.

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The effective use of touch requires teachers to be sensitive to the student's well being, in general, and, specifically to issues of gender and sexuality. This sensitivity manifests itself in numerous ways. A teacher considers the body zones which will be touched. Areas such as the chest, groin, buttocks, sacrum, coccyx, neck, and thighs will be, for many students, highly intimate. Teachers can introduce the use of touch by incorporating less intimate zones/styles of touch—such as hand-holding or taking the weight of a partner's arm; they can then work toward incorporating more intimate regions of the body as students' skills and rapport develop. Sensitivity is demonstrated when teachers accompany a touch experience with clear spoken description of what they are hoping the student will sense through touch. Verbal questioning also demonstrates sensitivity. Teachers may inquire as to the touchee's state of mind-body asking, "Can you feel this?" or "Am I hurting you?" Often, all a student requires in order to feel open to touch is having her or his permission requested in a query such as, "Would it be alright with you if I put my hand on your sacrum?" Teachers also reveal their sensitivity through a clear demonstration of touch on a student— physically and verbally clarifying the placement of hands (or whatever area is making contact), the tactile pathway (such as long strokes or small circles), and degree of pressure.

Reflecting on gender, Luke Kahlich (2001) asks teachers to examine issues of gender in their work, through reflective questions. Pertinent to a pedagogy of touch, and specifically to the significance of intentional touch is his question, "Do

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we address gender and sexuality in our choice of words, examples, phrases, questions, corrections, [touch,] and choice of metaphors and references" (p. 45)? While sensitivity to boundaries, gender, and a student's readiness are required for the effective use of touch, there are no hard and fast rules which make touch useful or, more to the point, appropriate. Some teachers can 'get away' with teaching behavior—and effectively serve their students—which would be out of the question for other teachers. This returns us to the elusive concept of a teacher's *presence*. When a student senses a teacher's clear intent he or she is more likely to freely give the teacher permission to touch. Along with the issue of intent, other factors play a part in a student's offering permission to be touched: Is the class in a college or in a private studio? Have the particular group of students and teacher been working together for a long time? Is the teacher a famous guest artist? This last question deals with the fact that some students will feel more obligated to allow well known professional dancers to touch them in ways which would otherwise make them feel uncomfortable. That may be due, either to a fear of appearing 'unprofessional' or to an assumption that this teacher's touch must surely be the 'correct' way to touch.

Ed Groff noted that he had been an aggressive advocate for the use of touch in college dance classes. He had resisted any efforts to diminish its presence, even while teaching at Temple University where teachers were required to attend a 2-hour sexual harassment meeting, and where the reality of harassment lawsuits ". . . was in the air." Ed relayed a story about a class he

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observed which was taught by a female instructor, Risa Steinberg, a former

member of the Limón Dance Company, and a master teacher of Limón's work.

> A female student was in second position, working on a plié and Risa used her whole forearm right under the crotch and pulled up on the student as she was coming out of the plié. And it seemed fine in the context and nobody reacted negatively. I didn't sense any discomfort, but it just made me realize that it was something that I [as a teacher] would not feel comfortable with. I wouldn't choose to use that intervention. Although I thought it was wonderful and marvelous that she did it. I could see how effective it would be and I just thought, "Go, Risa! That was gutsy."

Bruce Brownlee (personal communication, June 9, 2002) related a similar

scenario, describing his experiences as a student in a dance technique class which

was taught by a male instructor, Kelly Holt.

> In the late 1970s, Kelly Holt was teaching a Hawkins-based modern dance technique class at the University of California, Santa Cruz. In this technique, dancers try to sense their legs hanging from the pelvis like tassels hanging from heavy draperies. Holt encouraged dancers to jump by pushing down to get into the air, and then to allow their legs to dangle, without any excess muscular tension. To assist a dancer with finding a relaxed and fluid plié and jump, Holt would stand to the side of a dancer and lace his hands under the dancer's crotch. He gave the dancer a sense of support by making a cradle with his hands. He pushed the dancer up, and the dancer was able to let go of muscular tension due to being momentarily suspended in the air. Holt did this with both men and women. I think this technique helped dancers get to a level of kinesthetic understanding that would be difficult to achieve, otherwise. Granted, this was Santa Cruz in the 70s, before all the sexual harassment fears, but no one seemed the least bit bothered by it or uncomfortable.

It all comes back to intent. There will undoubtedly always be students for whom

touch by a teacher of the opposite sex—or the same sex—will be more or less

comfortable, no matter who the teacher is, and no matter what the style of touch.

The effective use of touch hinges on a teacher's ability to clearly communicate her

or his technical and ethical intent.

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One of Steven Chatfield's female students commented that his class—one with a male instructor, and which included the use of touch—was a completely new experience for her. She noted that at first, the ideas of a male instructor and touch seemed "strange" to her. However, her abilities to not only accept these factors, but also to grow as a dancer were due to a number of issues which are pertinent to an effective pedagogy of touch. She noted that when touching, Steven was "careful, without being nervous." His "comfort with touch" helped her to easily partner the male students in class. His touch was free of "sexual overtones." The importance of a teacher's consistently ethical approach to touch was represented in the student's comment, "There's something about the way Steven presents himself and how he's acted up to now; I feel like there's no way he would touch with sexual overtones, just because of who he is." The student's final statement, "Just because of who he is" points to an extremely important aspect of student/teacher interaction. Positive interactions are a product of the teacher's moral integrity and the degree of student trust which it invokes.

Peggy Hackney (1998) addresses the idea of intent with regard to movement phrasing. Her commentary parallels the ideal of clarity versus vagueness in touch. She writes,

> Clarity in phrasing leads to clarity and efficiency in body usage. . . . Intent
> is part of the preparation stage of phrasing and it is at this crucial point
> that the brain is formulating (even in a split second) the motor plan which
> will eventually be realized in action. (p. 239)

Hackney notes that while clarity of intent can produce remarkable results in a movement pattern, it is wise to also acknowledge if we are being vague,

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without purpose, or exhibiting an unconscious intent which is actually counter to the stated aim of the phrase (p. 237). The effective use of touch requires that anyone touching—to use Donald Schön's (1987) term—be a 'reflective practitioner.' Reflective practitioners are compelled to consider the strengths and weaknesses of their practice of touch and to make the necessary revisions. A reflective attitude requires that when people engage in a touch experience they remain highly attentive to their—and their partner's—actions and reactions. This requires a flexible attitude. A fixed notion about what 'should' be occurring can produce results which are ineffectual and even destructive. Ed Groff demonstrated the value of a reflective attitude as he considered the effectiveness of his touch while observing himself teach on videotape. At the time of the initial interaction with the student he reflected on his teaching and altered it. He reflected a second time during his self-observation:

> I don't think I'm being crystal clear here. I think my hands are sort of fluttering about, with too many touches in a row in different locations. This second time I'm giving a clear indication of outward rotation; I get more determined and specific about why and where I'm touching her, and my verbal cues are congruent with what my hands are saying.

Through Ed's self-critique, the importance of self-reflection on one's use of touch becomes clear. When a teacher acknowledges her or his successes and failures in using touch, change is possible.

The Ramifications of Touch: Power and Empowerment

An effective pedagogy of touch requires teachers to understand that every touch interaction in a class has the potential for empowering the student. As

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teachers and their mentored students use touch with ever-greater awareness and care for clear intention, they will empower themselves and those they touch. Personal empowerment is, in part, experienced as increased self-knowledge. Teachers can be highly effective in empowering students when they move from the front of the studio—separated from the students—and into the student *mix*; here, they move among the students in close proximity, engaging in hands-on communication. Students often feel, through touch, that the *reins* of responsibility for learning are being turned over to them. This sensibility can lead students to more thoroughly hear and apply the corrections their teachers offer them; it can also move them to speak, dance, and touch with greater integrity and authenticity.

When students are allowed to speak in their own 'voices' they are empowered. Magna Lewis and Roger I. Simon (1996) write that 'voice' refers to one's authentic self-expression with an understanding that ". . . people are situated in personal histories of engagement with their surroundings/ communities through which voice is shaped by class, cultural, racial, and gender identities" (p. 256). When teachers create learning environments in which students are in positions to find and use their own voices they can encourage students to feel more than simply welcomed citizens in the class; voice has powerful ramifications for them in their artistic expressions as choreographers, performers, teachers, and critics.

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Personal empowerment also exists in the form of increased awareness of others. Experiences in student-to-student touch place students directly into an interactive community. Students are empowered because they have been recognized as vital members of the community. Personal empowerment has its own inside/outside nature—it comes in the forms of both increased self-knowledge, and in an enhanced awareness of the world, through rapport with others.

When the intent of a teacher's touch is clear and effective it informs the student of her or his current choices, and of new, more useful ones. Reflective teachers remain aware, however, of the possibilities for touch to promote a contrary engagement: Touch may intensify the hierarchical stratification that already exists between a teacher and student. This can occur when a teacher disguises touch as an act of friendship or love, or uses it to create a barrier between herself or himself and the student. Andrew Kaplan (2000) classifies these types of authority between teacher and student as *personal* and *impersonal*. He considers each to be dimensions of a relationship, noting that if we see the personal and impersonal as extremes, they become mutually exclusive. Kaplan writes, "When we settle on only one mode, we inhibit our capacity to relate. These inhibitions lead to two very different forms of authority" (p. 378). These forms of authority serve as excellent object lessons of potential outcomes when a teacher's touch lacks clarity of intent.

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Paternalism is Kaplan's (2000) term for a purely personal, "one-way street of power" based on the belief that the teacher—male or female—is in charge and, in a parental way, knows what is best for the child—the student. It appears to be a loving, caring relationship, but it is not; it is an interaction with one paternal figure having complete control (p. 378). This disempowering scenario can easily become a perceived reality by the student when touch is involved. It may occur if the teacher crosses the ineffable *boundary*: instead of enlightening students and guiding them towards making their own choices, the teacher convinces them that the teacher's touch is the only true agent for change. Because touch can bring remarkable epiphanies to students, and because it is powerful and intimate, some students will be convinced to relinquish their personal power to a paternalistic teacher.

Autonomy is a type of authority that is purely impersonal and arises out of recognition by both teacher and student that a complete division between them must not be compromised. Autonomy, writes Kaplan (2000) ". . . encourages us to be indifferent to each other as persons and to have regard instead for the expertness of the power we bring to any situation" (p. 378). Whereas paternalism creates a false caring and a boundary-free blending between teacher and student, autonomy builds a brittle barrier between the two which is difficult to permeate with touch in any truly effective way.

How do teachers find the balance of personal and impersonal interactions to enable a meaningful and ethical touch encounter—one which empowers the

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student to find her or his own awareness of choices? Effective encounters can occur when teachers practice the same principles of touch—soon to be discussed as 'tactile dialogue'—in which they mentor their students. These principles include attitudes which are caring, attentive, flexible, confirming, and empathetic; they involve acts of cultivating relationships and searching for appropriate responses.

An effective touch pedagogy requires teachers to recognize that touch has the potential for political, sociological, cultural, and psychological ramifications. A student's sense of identity and empowerment in relation to self and community—both inside and outside the studio—is informed by these contexts. When a teacher places a student in a position of authority by asking her or him to touch another student, the teacher honors that student's process of moving from a 'place of unknowing' into a 'place of knowing.' When a student does not feel as though he or she is expected to be perfect at every moment, there is potential for a more enlivened social engagement with fellow students, inside and outside of the class. Inviting a student to take on the role of teacher in a touch event can communicate to the student a message of, "I believe that you understand this" or, as Peggy Hackney has said to me, "Enter this experience from a place of knowing." Psychologically, that is empowering.

When students encounter their early experiments with touch it is not uncommon for them to worry about offending a partner, or to feel uneasy about whether or not they are touching in a correct manner. Teachers are responsible

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for maintaining a watchful eye as students engage in these interactions. They offer specific hands-on and verbal corrections as well as words of encouragement. As students become empowered their concerns have the potential to change. Students stop worrying, which opens them to the possibility of discovering new sensations in their—and their partners'—bodies.

Empowerment can also be facilitated when a student is invited to touch the teacher. By touching a teacher while the teacher demonstrates a particular action or quality a student can, in some cases, discover a missing piece of the puzzle in understanding a teacher's intent. Touching a teacher can lead a student to a reaction of, "Oh, now I get it!" At times a teacher may sense that whenever he or she approaches particular students to engage in touch, those students exude a sense of fear and paranoia that they are, in the words of one student, "doing something wrong." In these instances it may be highly effective to invite students to initiate touch on the teacher. This approach can provide students with a sense of power and control over the situation so that, ultimately, the teacher may effectively touch those students in the future.

Psychologically, touch may force emotional responses, literally, to the surface (of the skin). This may happen with any type of touch—from a light, gentle touch intended to release tension, to a firm, deep pressure into the femoral joint to help a student feel the action of the iliopsoas muscle. Effective use of touch requires the teacher to remain attentive to students' responses by asking

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such questions as, "Can you feel this? Is this too hard? Am I hurting you? Do you understand the sensation we are going for?"

Tomie Hahn (1996)—in her discussion of teaching classical Japanese dance (*nihon buyo*) through touch—prompts the reader to remember the contexts in which we teach, touch and learn. She comments,

> Touch is personal. The encounter negotiates the very boundaries of our physical self. Touch is political. Complex issues raised by tactile experience between self and other vary according to the culture and context of the experience. (p. 162)

In *nihon buyo* touch reinforces the relationship of dancers within the group. Teachers are of superior status; they may touch students, but students very rarely touch their teachers. Hahn writes, "The body as transmitter and conveyor of the art form is treated seriously and trained rigorously. Respect for experiential knowledge lies in what the older dancers offer and possess—as embodiments of mature, living artists" (pp. 168-169). Indeed, the students of Steven, Ed, Laurie, and Mary, touched their teachers, only on rare occasion. The infrequency of this touch relationship seems, however, to be less about the teacher/student hierarchy and more about the teachers' interest in other touch relationships, particularly student-to-student touch.

The body, as Hahn (1996) states, transmits and conveys the art form. It also <u>receives</u> it from those who teach it. Everything received through touch impacts the artistry of the dancer. The dancer's embodiment of the art is affected by how and where he or she is touched, and by her or his political, sociological, cultural, and psychological responses to touch. Touch can lead a dancer toward

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or away from particular manifestations of body image, fearlessness, fearfulness, metaphor, range of motion, movement qualities, anatomical understanding, use of breath, and tension release. Touch informs the dancer in all of her or his roles—such as choreographer, performer, teacher and critic.

In summation, creating an environment for the effective use of touch necessitates a teacher's recognition and utilization of her or his underlying educational beliefs as they interface with dance-making. Three pedagogical constructs which are particularly salient to the use of touch are the inside/outside nature of dancing and of learning movement, student narratives, and intentional touch. These three constructs function to empower the student, thus enabling the student to reap the benefits of touch. Within a setting for touch, teachers engage their students in the praxis of touch.

Theory and Practice: The Praxis of Touch

Praxis Explained

The effective use of touch entails a complex interweaving of acting, perceiving, and reflecting. Within this web it is the reflecting which moves teaching beyond simply a perceptive engagement between teacher and student. As teachers and students reflect on their uses of touch and the impact touch has on their dancing—and the dancing of those they touch—they develop new modes of touching.

Schön (1992) has delineated a number of ways in which teachers reflect on their work; three of these ways will be noted here in the context of touch. First,

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'reflection in action' is one's recognition of what is transpiring while in the midst of a touch interaction; it entails making on-the-spot sense of one's partner's response to touch and of her or his 'danced reaction' to it. As with the unquantifiable nature of a teacher's *presence*, reflection-in-action, as Schön notes, ". . . is an ephemeral episode of inquiry that arises momentarily in the midst of a flow of action and then disappears, giving way to some new event, leaving in its wake, perhaps, a more stable view of the situation" (p. 125).

Second, a 'conversation with the situation' is a type of reflection-in-action which occurs when teachers and students are faced with a surprise incident which they had not predicted, and which requires them to interrupt and change what they are doing (p. 125). For example, a partner's response to one's touch may be so yielding that the toucher is 'invited' to use more pressure and take greater risks. Conversely, a touchee may unpredictably stiffen under the toucher's hand which will necessitate a change of actions—perhaps a gentler touch, or a verbal explanation of the toucher's intent.

Third, 'reflection-on-knowing' is the process of teachers and students acknowledging new understandings which they form in the midst of action. Schön offers an example, writing that effective dance teachers, when explaining a new movement to students ask themselves, "What do I really do at this point?" This necessitates that teachers observe themselves as they move, and then communicate their discoveries. These discoveries can then be clarified for students through words, movements, and touch (p. 126).

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The interconnecting relationship and fluctuation between action, reflection, and new action is what Paulo Freire (1985) defined as *praxis*. The 'praxis of touch' is as much a verb as it is a noun: One 'does' praxis as well as considers its ramifications. Touchers reflect on how they are touching, to what purpose they are touching in a particular manner, and why their touch is eliciting a specific response. It is important to note that the effective use of touch requires teachers to not only reflect on their own use of touch, but to teach the act of reflecting to their students. Katherine S. Cennamo, Sandra K. Abell, and Mi-Lee Chung (1996) write that one of the conditions which should be incorporated into a constructivist learning environment—one which encourages students to construct their own knowledge—is the teacher's nurturance of a student's practice of reflecting on one's thinking and learning process (p. 40). The effective use of touch <u>necessitates</u> a constructivist approach.

James G. Henderson (1992b) notes the interactive relationship between reflective practice, caring, and constructivism. He writes,

> Reflective teachers willingly embrace their decision-making responsibilities, and they regularly reflect on the consequences of their actions. . . . The three key characteristics of reflective practice are an *ethic of caring*, a *constructivist approach to teaching*, and *artistic problem solving*. (p. 2)

Reflection prompts touchers to ask themselves a number of kinds of questions, including:

1. Questions of timing and coordination: "Am I timing the movement of my touch to create a wave-like action, enabling my partner to feel the cross lateral connection in her body?"

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2. Questions of care: "Am I supporting my partner's leg in such a way that he can fully relax and not fear that his joints will be taxed?"

3. Questions of ethics: "Am I touching my partner high enough on the leg so that she understands my intent of encouraging energy flow through the joints, but not so high that she may misconstrue any sexual overtones?"

4. Questions of content knowledge: "What do I understand to be the function of a cross lateral connection in the body for us as dancers?"

5. Questions of visual and tactile perception: "Do I see or feel my partner holding tension in his chest, constricting the flow of energy?"

6. Questions of application: "How can I alter what I'm doing or saying to assist in the release of my partner's tension?"

7. Questions of attitude: "Am I allowing my partner to experience a range of responses by remaining flexible, or am I limiting her experience because I expect a particular outcome?"

8. Questions of confirmation: "Does my touch let my partner know that I honor and value him for who he is, and that I want him to discover his own—not my—personal best performance?"

9. Questions of kinesthetic empathy: "Am I fully attending to my partner so that, through my touch I can actually participate in her sensory experiences of movement?"

When touchers respond to their own reflective questions by changing the ways in which they touch, they have moved to a pedagogical space where the

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theory and practice of touch intersect—that of praxis. At this place of

intersection reside the elements which are necessary for effective touch

interaction—the pedagogical imperatives for touch. They include students'

learning modalities, the ways in which classes are structured to facilitate touch,

the teacher's process of mentoring students, and the acts of tactile dialogue

which occur during a class.

Structuring the Learning Experience

Learning Modalities

In considering the structure a modern dance technique class in its

simplest terms, it is primarily a time and space of doing and moving; what

transpires in the class is that the teacher teaches movement and the students

learn about and move their bodies. Dance technique is imprinted on students in

the forms of muscle strength and flexibility, coordination of all parts of the body,

balance, integration of breath, qualitative range, and many more elements. This

imprinting occurs through the various ways in which students perceive and

process information—including touch—and through teachers' recognition of

those variables.

For teachers to be effective it is important that they acknowledge

individual learning styles, and design their learning environments accordingly.

Cheryl A. Coker (1996) specifies that 'learning style' is composed of such

variables as the immediate environment and a student's psychological,

sociological, and physiological needs. The avenue through which information is

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taken in and processed—the 'preferred perceptual mode'—is but one variable

which teachers can manipulate and which will impact their use of touch. All

people have access to all perceptual modes, but individuals have affinities for

one or more of these modes (p. 66).

Coker describes four types of learners who may be characterized by their

preferred modes of perception: the visual learner, the kinesthetic learner, the

thinker, and the listener. The visual learner learns best by watching someone

else demonstrate a movement. The kinesthetic learner desires to know what

movement feels like; for this learner the correct sensation becomes the frame of

reference by which he or she compares other versions of the performance. Touch

is particularly effective for the kinesthetic learner. Touch is also effective for

illuminating anatomical principles—assisting the thinker, who requires concepts

and principles to clarify the requirements of a particular movement. The thinker

likes to investigate, experiment, and analyze. The listener focuses on sounds and

rhythms to understand movement; the use of verbal cues, clapping and music

assist the listener (pp. 66-68).

It is noteworthy that even if teachers do not integrate touch into their

teaching—specifically addressing the needs of the kinesthetic learner—students

have an ongoing tactile relationship with the floor. Ed Groff commented on the

importance of a student's "partnering" with the floor. It stimulates tactile

sensitivity, and it provides a useful preparation for contact improvisation. He

also remarked that contact with the floor teaches dancers how to (a) assert their

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weight and push, (b) release their weight and yield, and (c) sense their use of breath.

Movement and Stasis

Taking into account these learning modalities, teachers move, talk, observe, and touch. And although technique class is about moving, using touch often requires a slowing or arresting of movement. The effective integration of touch into the class compels teachers to conscientiously structure their classes to include and interweave stasis, in combination with movement and touch. Touch may occur as someone is moving. For example, students may tactily guide their partners in movement sequences which travel across the floor. Or teachers may place their hands on a student's legs, spine, or abdomen while the student performs a plié, in order to bring the student's awareness to numerous issues such as outward rotation, abdominal support, and the initiation of the action.

A touch interaction/intervention might also occur when the touchee is completely still, or moving only slightly. The quietness, stillness, or total stasis of this sort of experience allows students to imagine actions and repattern movement habits more fully. To release tightness in a student's lower back the student might stand quietly while the teacher strokes downward on the student's lower back, buttocks, and backs of the legs. This touch can be aided through the use of Lulu Sweigard's (1974) imagery: "Visualize the buttocks as unbaked loaves of dough and watch them slide downward to the back of the heels" (p. 237). Sweigard asserts that in order to repattern movement habits one must

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do so with the imagination rather than through voluntary movement because ". . . the contribution of any voluntary effort negates the influence of the imagined movement on the subcortical patterning of muscle coordination" (p. 223).

In all three examples of simultaneous movement and touch, the touchee receives immediate sensory input regarding the clarity of her or his performance while the momentum of the class is maintained. Similarly, Hahn (1996) notes that a teacher of *nihon buyo* must decide, for particular students and movement phrases, which type of corrections would be most appropriate. Sometimes it is most useful to touch a student while the student is moving; Hahn refers to this as 'synchronous transmission via touch.' This style of correction gives the student instantaneous feedback, reinforces the continuity of the dance, and minimizes correction disruptions during class (p. 161).

The integration of movement/stasis/touch also occurs when teachers guide and observe students through new dance sequences, without using touch. This may occur over an extended period of time—during one particular class session or over a number of class periods. Then the teacher may arrest all movement during a class and, through touch, clarify a point about that sequence with one student while the rest of the class listens and observes. Depending on the detail involved, this instructive demonstration may take a few moments, or 5 or 10 minutes. All students have the opportunity to take advantage of this time to learn through their preferred modes of listening, analyzing, observing,

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and—on themselves or a partner—physically trying out the correction they are witnessing through movement or touch. While this sort of demonstration can be extremely beneficial, it has the potential to bring the momentum of the class to such a screeching halt that it adversely affects the student's energy, thereby compromising students' comprehension during the remainder of the class. Hahn (1996) notes that verbalizing a correction after the student has completed a performance offers another challenge. The teacher is faced with having to articulate what physically transpired, from memory, and also express the needed changes (p. 161).

Part of what shapes the structure of a class, and the students' experiences in the class, are its momentum and continuity. The momentum is the driving force which moves the class over the length of one meeting, or a week, semester, or year. The continuity of a class can as well be observed over the length of one class period or for a longer stretch. When a class has continuity students sense a stability of the teacher's philosophy, intent, style, or focus of the class; students are able to connect the materials of class together into an understandable whole. Momentum and continuity are subjective traits of a technique class, somewhat like the ephemeral qualities of a teacher's *presence* and her or his ability for reflection-in-action. Any two students may have opposing opinions on whether a class felt energizing and 'made sense' or if it seemed stilted and disconnected.

The use of touch necessitates periods of stasis within a class—and more so than classes that do not include touch. Using touch takes time. If touch is to be

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used effectively it is necessary for teachers to design their classes, in part, through balancing the momentum of the class, the continuity of the class content, and the comprehension of the students. There is no prescription for finding this balance. Touch moves students to greater levels of understanding about dance—such as its qualitative requirements, use of breath, or body-part relationships. Because of these greater levels of understanding, teachers may find that, through touch, they are able to work on the same material for longer periods of time and 'go deeper' with it. Repetition of sequences or concepts—possibly with variations on a theme—is one way to make certain that there is time to "... stop, go in, and feel. . ." as Mary Seereiter described it. And, because learning the correct technique for giving and receiving touch takes practice, repetition of the touch experience itself will assist the momentum of the class from collapsing altogether while it deepens comprehension and enhances continuity. Touch interventions can also be varied through (a) working with different partners, (b) transporting the touch to another area of the body, or (c) changing the position of the touchee from lying to standing, or from sitting to walking.

In large measure it is the teacher's attitude about student self-responsibility which will influence the students' perceptions of a class's momentum, continuity, and their own comprehension. Let us return to the potential problem of a teacher arresting the momentum of a class with a tactile demonstration on one student. Teachers can mitigate momentum problems which are caused by periods of stasis by setting a tone. This tone fully engages

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students so they do not feel as though they are simply standing around and waiting to dance again; they realize that they _are_ dancing during every moment of the class. Steven Chatfield, Ed Groff, Laurie Sanda, and Mary Seereiter built into their pedagogies expectations that students will take responsibility for themselves, and their learning—an essential element for the effective use of touch. Responsibility includes (a) staying focused and actively engaged with the task at hand, (b) self-monitoring and applying corrections, and (c) remaining aware of the group and the shared studio space. Student responsibility hinges on the teacher's conviction that students are capable of experimenting with their current knowledge and constructing new knowledge out of old. Students' level of self-responsibility is also dependent on the teacher's facility for empowering them as respected individuals—with their own authentic voices—and as members of a collaborative community.

Lilia I. Bartolomé (1996) describes an instructional model called 'strategic teaching' which explicitly teaches students to consciously monitor their own learning. She writes, "This is accomplished through the development of reflective cognitive monitoring and metacognitive skills. . . Readers monitor their understanding of a text by asking questions, making predictions, and testing their predictions as they read" (p. 244). Similarly and differently, dancers monitor their understanding of touch and the body by (a) verbally and tacitly asking questions, (b) maintaining a flexible attitude about possible outcomes,

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(c) observing their partners' responses to touch, and (d) continuing to experiment and self-monitor.

Mentoring Touch

For touch to be used effectively a teacher is required to take on the active role of mentor. A teacher cannot assume that students understand the complexities of touch. Touch is intimate and it has boundaries; it is matter-of-fact and it is personal; it is playful and it is emotionally charged; it can bring about new understandings and it can confuse or cause great discomfort.

One way in which teachers can mentor the use of touch is through their own self touch. Effectively mentored, teacher-self-touch is deliberate, not haphazard or vague. When teachers place their hands on themselves, their own bodies respond to the kinesthetic sensation and their movements become a more precise demonstration of their aesthetic intent. Students witness how teachers touch themselves and they note a teacher's own personal kinetic changes through self-touch. This teaches students not only how to move, but how to touch themselves and others; in fact, teacher-self-touch is a useful preamble to a student-self-touch exercise during which students repeat the actions of their teachers. Through self-touch, one receives primary and immediate proprioceptive feedback; this provides one with a realization about what touch can do for others and for oneself. Louise Steinman (1986) writes, "Proprioception is literally, how we 'sense ourselves'" (p. 11). She notes that one of three main sources of input into our proprioceptive system is kinesthesia, ". . . the feeling of

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movement derived from all skeletal and muscular structures. . . the feeling of pain or orientation in space, the passage of time, and rhythm" (p. 11).

Student-self-touch may be prompted by teachers through such cues as, "Place your hands on your two pelvic crests to sense a lengthening on both sides of the torso." And, when mentored clearly—technically and ethically—student-self-touch has the potential to evolve into a common occurrence without any prompting from the teacher. One student commented,

> I'll use my own hands, just to remind myself where my core is, or my rotation, or where a movement is initiating. It works pretty well to do it on yourself because your mind can draw back to when somebody else touched you.

A second way in which teachers are able to mentor touch is when they touch a student, and other students observe. Mentoring can be enhanced when a teacher's verbal instructions regarding touch accompany the act of touching; they clarify the placement of hands, degree of pressure, and the intent of the interaction. (Conversely, one of the primary reasons that teachers find themselves impelled to touch a student in the first place is to reinforce verbal information.) The importance of mentoring touch cannot be overestimated if teachers intend to incorporate student-to-student touch in their classes.

Teachers may verbally explain to students the placement of hands, the type of pressure or action (such as stroking, patting, or shaking), and the intent of a particular touch intervention which they assign to student partners. However, that is not enough to send them on their way as apprentice tactile-teachers. Students commented that their teachers' touch also uncovered for them deeply

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sensed, yet ephemeral phenomena: (a) instantaneous connections—to the toucher, and within their own bodies; (b) a sense of care and consideration from the toucher; (c) a clarity of intent of the touch without any extra, conflicting information; and (d) fearlessness—knowing what it is like to receive touch from someone who is not afraid of causing hurt or embarrassment. It is much easier to tell a student where to place her or his hands and how to move them than it is to convey the unquantifiable characteristics of practiced touch—or to use Steven Chatfield's' term—'expert touch.' Yet, teachers can mentor these skills through their actions and words.

The effective use of touch is enhanced when teachers permit students to speak (verbally and tactily) form their own vantage points. In fact, personal voice, with its empowering capabilities is a requirement for student-to-student touch. When teachers take on the mantle of touch-mentor, they also consent— consciously or not—to guide their students into apprenticeships. Bartolomé (1996) notes that teachers act as cultural mentors when they introduce students to, not only the culture of the classroom, but to the particular subject matter; teachers help students appropriate the skills to behave as insiders within the discipline (p. 246). This empowers students to take on greater degrees of self-responsibility.

For dance students, apprenticeship includes: (a) acquisition of a knowledge of touch, (b) ways to organize their acts of touching so they make sense to their partners and to themselves, and (c) means to speak about touching.

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Bartolomé writes about apprenticeship, noting that the languages, techniques, and ideologies of a subject [such as touch] are mastered in part ". . . through supported interaction with people who have already mastered the discourse. The apprenticeship can be immensely useful with subordinated students if it facilitates the acceptance and valorization of students' prior knowledge through a mentoring process" (p. 246). The author's last point is well taken when considering the fact that teachers who engage in touch may well have opportunities to work with students who have been silenced in some way, and who have experienced touch as an act of violence, abuse, and repression.

It is a simple fact that a modern dancer will do thousands of pliés over the course of a career. This fact is true for many movement activities which a dancer repeats; it is part and parcel of the rehearsal required for learning dance technique and perfecting a performance. In this discussion we will use the plié as an example. When teachers mentor touch they have the potential to not only make the unfamiliar familiar, but to make the familiar unfamiliar; in fact, it is questionable if those two acts are able to exist as separate entities. Teachers can penetrate students' habitual movements—pushing students to interrogate their typical choices and experience movement in new ways.

For some dancers a plié is a bending of the knees; for others it is a releasing of the pelvis downward; and still for others it is a stretching of the calf muscles. There are many ways to mentor touch to enable students to experience pliés in new ways. For example, placing one's hands on a partner's waist and

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pressing down/providing resistance as the touchee stretches her or his legs can accentuate the push of the lower body, a sense of grounding, and the use of the hamstring muscles. Or, tracking the distal end of a partner's femur over the mid-foot as the touchee descends in the plié can highlight a quality of lightness, and the spatial intent of the knees. The possibilities for touch to awaken dancers to alternatives to their usual patterns are limited only by students' and teachers' imaginations.

Kaoru Yamamoto (2001) notes that, with the guidance of a mentor a student can experience a transformation. This transformation represents a shift in the student's world view. He writes that a mentor induces in a student ". . . a reexamination of the known world, a broadening of the perspective, and a bearing of the attendant sense of ambiguity and uncertainty" (p. 187). Mentoring touch in ways which encourage student transformation requires teachers to find a balance between allowing and intervening. Teachers allow students to investigate, flounder, and invent en route to their new comprehensions. They also intervene, guide, and clarify.

Tactile Dialogue: A Spiraling Conversation through Multiple Layers

At the heart of an integrated use of touch in a modern dance technique class is tactile dialogue. Tactile dialogue is communication between two or more people—an exchange of information which occurs through touch. It may be supplemented by words, but words are only an accompaniment to the primary mode of communication—touch. Tactile dialogue is possible when a teacher

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touches a student, when a student touches a teacher, and when students touch each other. However, the tactile dialogue between two or more students invites students to take the greatest risks, to make the familiar unfamiliar, and to reexamine their assumptions about dancing and about touch. Working with a fellow student tends to push students to take more responsibility for themselves, and for others. Student-to-student touch places participants in positions of speaking (touching) in their own, authentic, empowered voices.

Tactile dialogue is a complex interaction because participants make meaning for themselves through multiple layers, simultaneously. They learn to care for another human being, and to recognize that—to quote Irmgard Bartenieff—"There are many possibilities" (Hackney, 1998, p. 1) when it comes to learning, understanding, and observing movement. To better appreciate the concept of multiple layers it is enlightening to refer to George Beiswanger's (1962) use of the term 'goings-on.' The term 'goings-on' describes the choreographic process/product, and the idea that a dance is more than muscular capacity. It is through the choreographer's imagination and use of metaphor that muscular movements become 'goings-on.' Beiswanger writes, ". . . dances are not made out of but *upon* movement, movement being the poetic bearer, the persistent metaphor, by which muscular material is made available for the enhanced, meaningful, and designed *goings-on* that are dance" (p. 88).

As with Beiswanger's 'goings-on'—which allude to the fact that a dance is more than simply muscular movement—a dance class is more than learning

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steps. It is built upon dance sequences, tactile explorations, aesthetic and practical choices, and the structure of the class. It contains movement and stasis—momentum, continuity, and the students' ever-evolving comprehension. A class is established through less tangible features such as the tone or character of the class; this is a quality which a student might say he or she can 'taste' but not fully describe; it is something that attracts students to attend one teacher's class but not another's. The *goings-on* progress far beyond the acts of doing and learning dance. Akin to the teacher's *essence*, and her or his dexterity with reflection-in action, the goings-on are simultaneously undergirded by conscientious, reflective pedagogy, and they are unquantifiable. With touch as an integral part of class, the goings-on exist in a milieu which is multi-layered. Students spiral through this environment as they participate in tactile dialogue.

There are likely as many ways to name and describe the layers of learning which occur through tactile dialogue as there are participants in these dialogues. Here we will consider seven layers of learning and experience which, by design, appear simultaneously and in overlapping occurrences. In fact, it is frequently difficult to distinguish where the qualities of one layer end and another begins: (a) an attitude of care, (b) acts of paying attention, (c) a search for appropriate responses, (d) a flexible approach, (e) the cultivation of relationships, (f) confirmation, and (g) kinesthetic empathy. They are necessary for the full experience of tactile dialogue, and they are outcomes of tactile dialogue that signify benchmarks of a student's growth.

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Care and Attention

Tactile dialogue occurs only when students maintain an attitude of care for each other. Nel Noddings (1991) writes, "The attitude of care is characterized by attention. . ." (p. 161). Caring, according to Noddings (1984) entails considering the other's point of view, her or his objective needs, and what she or he expects of us. "[When we care, our] mental engrossment is on the cared-for, not on ourselves" (p. 24). Caring goes beyond simply attending to the safety issues of touching another person—holding the weight of a body part, or manipulating the joints. It is a degree of attentiveness which many students may not experience from others (or in themselves) in other contexts of their lives— particularly not at school. Simone Weil (as cited in Noddings, 1991) describes the attentive disposition of care: "The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he [or she] is, in all his [or her] truth. . . " (p. 161).

Through acts of paying attention to another person, students learn how to assess situations, reflect on their assessments, self-monitor, and revise their actions. Paying attention teaches students to become reflective practitioners; their skills as performers, choreographers, teachers, and critics grow because they become better observers. Tactile dialogue provides students with experiences in what Ed Groff referred to as "listening non-verbally." This is the act of remaining so available to—and in tune with—the energy and movement between the person whom one is touching and oneself, that one can 'hear' and know—through the skin.

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Another metaphor for the sensitive use of touch, along with 'listening' is

'seeing.' Steinman (1996) recalls a teacher of Alexander Technique who had

developed 'eyes in her fingers;' she was able to reveal to those she touched where

to pinpoint their own attention in their bodies. This teacher stated, "'Your

eyes . . . can get in the way. If you look at something, it can look completely

different from how it feels. How it feels is more important than how it looks,

because looking can be very deceptive'" (p. 19).

Confirmation and Trust

If we are able to care, and willing to pay full attention to another person,

there is the possibility that we can engage in acts of confirmation. Confirmation

is an overriding attitude of acceptance of other people for who they are. Larger

than that, it is a compassionate outlook, genuine and from the heart, which

engages humans in acts of helping one another. Confirmation is as much a

psychological disposition as it is an activity, therefore, one may question whether

or not it can be taught. It can be mentored, and imparted—not just through

words, but more immediately, through touch.

Confirmation, according to Noddings (1998) sets caring apart from other

approaches to moral education. Through tactile dialogue, students have the

potential to develop their abilities for respecting and encouraging the ideal of

each partner. Noddings (1988) refers to one's partner as the "other;" this is

whom we should see, touch, engage with, and promote, rather than looking for a

shadow of ourselves (p. 194). Through acts of confirmation, students learn to

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value individual interpretation and experimentation. Confirmation may be seen as an important requisite of humane behavior. It also facilitates one's artistic growth. It has the capability of engaging us in taking stock of our parameters, expectations, and fixed notions of technique, art, body type, beauty, and movement potential. As students learn to apply their teachers' notions of inside/ outside, personal narrative, and intentional touch, confirmation becomes a greater possibility.

Over time, and with practice in touching, trust develops between students. With this trust students are able to give and receive confirmation, knowing that care and respect for the 'other' motivates that confirmation. Confirmation is only possible if students are able to work together and set aside—at least to some degree—the competitive attitudes which are an undeniable aspect of the dance technique class. Through conscientious mentoring by teachers, it is possible for students to release competitive notions when engaged in tactile dialogue, while at other times during a class they may compete with themselves, and strive to surpass the work of others. One of the outcomes and functions of touch is to develop a positive rapport among students and between students and teacher. As one student remarked, "Touch gives a sense of community—we're working together instead of competing with each other. We're helping each other out and trying for everyone to improve instead of just yourself."

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Flexibility

In order to engage in the open-minded/hearted behavior of confirmation a student is required to remain flexible regarding the outcomes of a touch interaction. When one enters a tactile dialogue with a fixed notion as to what mode of touching or what responses to touch are 'correct,' the touch dialogue moves from being two people in a give-and-take conversation to something more akin to a rancher brandishing a cattle prod (at a powerless steer).

The ability to be flexible pertains not only to open-ended outcomes, but to the notion of a malleable focus. When engaged in tactile dialogue the toucher feels/listens/sees through the hands (or other contacting body parts), eyes and ears. There are as many places to focus on a partner, and responses to her or him as there are parts of the body. For instance, as we touch the shoulders of a partner we may feel the muscles release, hear the breath change, sense the associated response of the spine, observe the change in elevation of the leg gesture, and note the quality of bound flow becoming free. And, the touchee has as many opportunities to practice a flexible awareness as does the toucher as she or he observes the myriad of changes in the body. When we can respond to the multiple changes in the body which are generated by touch we become adaptable, malleable dancers; we can center ourselves in the midst of losing our balance, or we can give into a 'mistake' and keep going in such a way that no one notices. When a teacher invites students to engage in tactile dialogue with a variety of partners, there is even greater possibility to learn flexibility. Any

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dancer who has traveled across a studio floor with 3 or 33 fellow dancers—or done the same on stage—knows that a flexible awareness is an absolute requisite to artistry within an ensemble.

Appropriate Responses

The act of searching for appropriate responses emphasizes tactile dialogue as a process of discovery, rather than a hunt for the teacher's one 'magic egg.' We can contemplate this search using the metaphor of a design project. Those engaged in the tactile dialogue are the architects, and the materials are touch and the dancing body; however, the client has not stipulated anything in particular—completely trusting the creative process of the designers. Using this metaphor of tactile dialogue as design project, Schön's (1992) statement rings true, that "Designing and discovering are closely coupled forms of inquiry" (p. 131). Schön writes, "When a designer reflects on the strategies and assumptions that underlie her [or his] choices, daring to disrupt them, she [or he] may learn critically important things about *herself* [or *himself*]" (p. 132). Schön's notions about designing remind us of the importance of maintaining a flexible attitude in our search for appropriate responses—if we hope to learn through touch. Deane Juhan (1987) reminds us that touch, itself brings our awareness to the possibilities for greater flexibility and appropriateness in our responses. He writes, "Practiced touch can . . . convey a smoother style, a larger repertoire, a greater flexibility, and a finer appropriateness to our movements. . . a whole new manner of sensing and behaving" (p. 342). The spiraling nature of learning

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becomes clearer: We touch to gain flexibility so that we may engage more fully in tactile dialogue, which teaches us to be more flexible.

Kinesthetic Empathy

Throughout this discussion it has been noted that the effective use of touch involves both specific, conscientiously developed, reflective pedagogy, and elements which are nearly ungraspable. The window which opens to allow two people engaged in tactile dialogue to enter fully into each other's space may be described as 'kinesthetic empathy.' Empathy, in a traditional sense involves people understanding each other's feelings and situations, and verbalizing that understanding with such statements as, "I know just how you are feeling." When empathy is kinesthetic it engages a person in <u>literally feeling</u>, inside her or his own body, what another person is experiencing.

Deidre Sklar (2001) writes that kinesthetic empathy refers to the ". . . capacity to participate with another's movement or another's sensory experience of movement. . . [It is] a mode of apprehending kinetic qualities, no more or less reasonable than the mode of apprehending words" (p. 199). Kinesthetic empathy is at once the most self<u>less</u> and self<u>ish</u> experience; in order to be fully engaged with another human being one must be fully engaged with oneself. This is but another manifestation of the inside/outside nature of learning movement. Kinesthetic empathy is not the end goal of tactile dialogue; it is the full experience of that dialogue. Sklar writes,

> The body does not hold experience; rather, it *is* experience, a process rather than an object. Somatic understandings emerge as a process of

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incorporating and configuring information into the body one is always in process of becoming." (p. 193)

As we watch a performance of "Romeo and Juliet" we might see Juliet sink in her chest and release her head back in anguish when she finds Romeo's body. We then realize that we, too are feeling anguish and doing the exact same movements in our seats. This is kinesthetic empathy. Yet when we have made physical contact with another person and our intention is to tactily listen to the needs of her or his muscles, bones, blood, and organs, our kinesthetic empathy can go much deeper.

Relationships

Tactile dialogues can be described metaphorically; they come in as many shapes and sizes as those who engage in them. We can experience an intimate conversation where our skin is contiguous to another's—the meeting of two country's borders. We may be confused and chatter away, dabbing all over someone's map, but no place in particular. We might be caressed by a whispering brush, pressed with a sermon, or shaken by a harangue. We may be stroked by a spellbinding storyteller whose metaphors lead us to new, palpable realities. However they are described, tactile dialogues involve relationships.

If we alternately look at tactile dialogue as an interaction between dance students and teachers in the studio, and then we consider it as an interaction on stage or in everyday life, we will realize that touch engages us in cultivating a number of types of relationships which facilitate growth. If, however, we have no interest in cultivating relationships it will be difficult to engage in any sort of

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tactile dialogue. The relationships that occur through touch in a dance class are prototypes for other relationships.

Noddings (1992) places the cultivation of relationships between people above nearly every other aspect of learning. She writes, ". . . at bottom, subject matter cannot carry itself. Relation, except in very rare cases, precedes any engagement with subject matter" (p. 36). When people are engaged in tactile dialogue they are involved in relationships founded on communication and cooperation. It is unlikely that every fellow student whom one touches in class is destined to be a close friend. However, experiences with the care, intimacy, and listening quality of touch are carried beyond the studio walls. They inform our comfort levels with touch and our ability to truly listen to someone during a conversation; indeed, this was one of Mary Seereiter's specified goals for the use of touch.

One's personal life notwithstanding, tactile dialogue impacts a dancer's artistic life. An ensemble performer has a relationship with each and every member of the group. Even a solo dancer engages the audience in a relationship. Tactile dialogue teaches students about partnering—its sensations, risks, give-and-take of weight, and attentiveness. As one student noted, "These are the people you need to be with every day and essentially trust your life to—if they're holding you in the air."

Tactile dialogue engages students in a discovery of the relationship between internal sensation and outside performance. Glenna Batson (1994)

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describes this process as she experiences it through the Alexander Technique; this process awakens one to an internal movement impulse and to an external direction. She writes, "By clarifying the relationship between kinesthetic sensing (where the dancer is) and directional intent (where the dancer can move toward), the dancer can improve movement quality and efficiency" (p. 40).

Let us consider an earlier example from our discussion of the flexible nature of tactile dialogue in order to understand another aspect of cultivating relationships. Imagine that a dancer is attempting to perform a side leg extension (développé in second position) but he is having difficulty getting his leg to the desired height. His partner notices his difficulty and she is particularly aware of his shoulder tension. When she places her hands on his shoulders he releases his tension and feels a chain reaction in the body. He notices that as his shoulder tension releases he hears himself exhale; he had been holding his breath. He energizes the verticality of his spinal alignment. His femoral joint relaxes, his leg moves higher and he senses the overall dynamic or quality of his flow change from *binding* to *freeing*. Tactile dialogue brings our awareness to the relationships between all parts and actions in the body. The notion that to change one thing in the body changes everything is part of the framework of somatic and repatterning systems such as Bartenieff Fundamentals (Hackney, 1998).

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The Multiple Amphibian

An amphibian is an adaptable creature that spends part of its life on land and part in the water; skills in malleability are essential for its growth and development. Aldous Huxley (1964) describes humans as "multiple amphibians" (P. 67) that exist at one and the same time in a number of universes. He compels educators to keep in mind that an education is inadequate if it cannot prepare humans to make the best of all the worlds in which they live. Huxley writes that a human

> . . . is at once an animal and a rational intellect; a product of evolution closely related to the apes and a spirit capable of self-transcendence; a sentient being in contact with the brute data of his [or her] own nervous system and the physical environment and at the same time the creator of the home-made universe of words and other symbols, in which he [or she] lives and moves. . . (pp. 67-68)

Tactile dialogue can assist humans in negotiating their multiple worlds—worlds which are more varied than an amphibian's two worlds in water and on land— and in recognizing the relationships between all of those worlds. Humans have worlds inside the studio and outside of it. They understand through the solid feel of a contracting muscle and through the ephemeral *presence* in someone's hand. Through touch, dancers learn technique and steps, and they also discover what it means to be caring, attentive, and observant individuals. Everything learned—be it technique or meta-dance (beyond technique)—is learned because of the process of dancing; teaching dance through touch avails humans to construct their own understandings of their worlds. Touch can lead us to see the relationships between—and embrace the seemingly unrelated parts of—our

natures. We are sentient beings who dance in the physical environment while we are simultaneously making up the environment in which we are dancing.

We are concluding this exploration with a similar concept as one which launched this journey—simultaneity, or, to be more specific—multiple simultaneous realities. It is clear that the effective use of touch in teaching and learning dance entails an approach which continually interweaves and intersects the simultaneity of time—past, present, and future—with the simultaneity of one's experiences in multiple worlds—both inner and outer. Teachers and students work within this temporal and geographical web. Within the web, teachers and students rely on a flexible awareness in the pursuit of multiple simultaneous responses—both in themselves and in their partners—which moves them toward greater understanding of others' and their own dancing bodies.

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CHAPTER VI

META MEANS 'MOVING BEYOND'
****
ENCOURAGING TOUCH FORWARD

Summary

Through this research I have developed a pedagogical theory of touch. As a theory, versus <u>the</u> theory of touch, it is firmly and specifically grounded in my particular research data—observations of, and interviews with teachers and students from four specific higher education settings. Dance teachers have been incorporating touch into their teaching practices long before I chose it as a research topic. My hope is that this inquiry can promote a discussion and exploration of the use of touch in teaching, and enable teachers and students to use it as—and in—their conscious and <u>conscientious</u> practice.

I entered this process with interests in how teachers use touch, and in their understanding of how touch functions in teaching dance technique. Also, I hoped to understand students' perceptions of how touch affects their learning and artistry. My concern went beyond the 'nuts and bolts' of touch when I realized that what loomed even larger than <u>how</u>, was <u>what else</u>—what else <u>besides</u> dance was being learned through touch. I chose to call this 'what else' **meta-dance practice**—'beyond' dance practice. Steven Chatfield, Ed Groff, Laurie Sanda, Mary Seereiter and their students showed me that what could be

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learned in an educational setting went beyond the particular subject matter; in their cases the setting was the dance studio and the subject matter was modern dance technique. This notion took me on an excursion into the literature on moral education. On this route I was introduced to the work of Nel Noddings (1984, 1991, 1992, 1998, 2002) whose theories about moral education from a care-perspective 'rang loud and true' for me—and for the data. Her four major theoretical concepts of modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation paralleled many ideas which the teacher and student participants had expressed, and which I had observed.

I discovered that 'meta' means more than 'beyond,' and the meanings I found provided useful frames for looking at my theory of touch as it was emerging from the data. Meta also means 'behind,' 'transformation/change,' and 'later/more specialized form.' The past-present-future aspect of 'meta' focused me on the concept of the "simultaneity of time" (Hanstein, personal communication, October, 2000) which coursed throughout the data. I became aware of the importance of (a) student and teacher backgrounds, (b) the disposition of remaining 'present' and in-the-moment during touch interactions, and (c) the effects of past and present on students' progressions forward into their futures as artists. After I cast a wide net, reaching beyond dance technique, I returned to touch, uncovering the specific acts and attitudes of teachers and students.

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Significance of the Study

The significance of this research lies in the fact that it offers teachers ways to understand and clarify what they already do, or to discover inroads to teaching and learning which they may not have considered. It is clear from this study that touch can play a significant role in teaching dance technique. Some teachers may have limited their use of touch to manipulating students through the pathways of a dance sequence, or moving a limb to a specific position while verbalizing simultaneous statements such as, "Put your arm here." It is valuable for teachers to know that touch can promote a student's learning in many other areas including—but certainly not limited to: (a) understanding anatomical principles and movement qualities/dynamics; (b) developing a positive rapport with the teacher and/or between students; (c) receptivity to the teacher's instructions; (d) perceptiveness to the activities in class; (e) ability to use imagery, to clearly observe, and to balance; and (f) awareness of alignment, spatial orientation, tension, breathing, the three-dimensional nature of movement, site of movement initiation, and inward and outward rotation of the limbs.

This study also offers teachers specific ideas on how students may be touched such as: (a) surrounding/molding around a dancer's body, (b) touching bony landmarks, (c) tracing a pathway, (d) holding, (e) guiding, (f) stroking, (g) massaging, (h) jiggling, (i) simultaneously touching two areas, (j) adjusting or realigning body parts, (k) providing resistance to a motion, (l) supporting, (m) pressing, (n) rocking or rolling, (o) shaking, (p) tugging/pulling, (q) ledging

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and draping, (r) carrying, and (s) manipulating. Teachers may feel they have a license to explore and invent with touch simply by having a vocabulary for describing its 'why' and 'how.' Sometimes all it takes is naming our ideas to give us the confidence to try them out.

This research is significant because it demonstrates to teachers that touching leads to a range of consequences. The ways in which touch is utilized in class—such as who is touching whom, and how carefully or haphazardly touch is mentored—has ramifications which impact students far beyond how well they learn dance steps. Yes, it is unlikely that a touch which is ". . . not crystal clear and which flutters about with too many touches in a row in different locations"—as Ed described his own ineffective touch—will help a student achieve the teacher's dance technique goals. But the message to the student who receives that imprecise touch goes beyond the teacher's ineffectiveness in transmitting dance information. Touching with clear intent—technically and ethically—empowers students. I believe that a touch which has a clear intent for specific goals of dance technique also has a clear ethical intent because the purpose is clearly experienced as pedagogical. I have differentiated the two terms here to highlight for teachers the importance of questioning their intentions, on all levels.

This investigation presents to teachers and students the value of reflective practice, and it offers them specific types of questions to interrogate their practice. These include questions of care, ethics, content knowledge, attitude,

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confirmation, and kinesthetic empathy. Part of reflective practice is a teacher's recognition that students enter their classes with numerous issues which impact learning. Issues of gender, body image, sexual orientation, cultural background, and positive/negative experiences with touch are the materials with which students will construct their new understandings of dance—and of touch—in the milieu of a dance class.

In this study, teachers are reminded that every experience in a dance class, including touch, is not only interpreted through political, sociological, cultural, psychological, and artistic lenses, but that every experience carries with it ramifications in each of those contexts. Hopefully readers will regard the teachers and students' comments herein without panic. Their remarks regarding the (a) difficulties with touch, (b) remedies for inappropriate touch and (c) sexual harassment concerns, not only give us a realistic picture of the complexity of using touch, they allow us to recognize the merits of touch and the ways in which touch is absolutely appropriate.

This research parallels and supplements current educational discoveries supporting constructivist learning paradigms in which students become part of the teaching/learning process as agents of their own growth (Belenky et al., 1997; Black & McClintock, 1996; Eisner, 2000; Henderson, 1992; Cennamo et al., 1996). Teachers give students ample opportunities to construct knowledge when they include student-to-student touch events in their classes. In this study I have elucidated both the potential for positive growth, as well as the pitfalls of students touching each other.

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For some modern dance teachers the lines have begun to blur between modern dance technique, somatics, bodywork, fitness/conditioning, gymnastics/dance sport, martial arts, world dance forms, and a host of other studies. Some of these practices already engage hands-on techniques, such as Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Technique (Alexander & Maisel, 1989; Feldenkrais, 1977). The research presented here can open up a dialogue among practitioners, enriching the methodology of touch in each sector. Also, touch imparts many aspects of movement knowledge without need of the spoken word. Therefore, touch can serve as a connecting thread to assist dance students and teachers in their investigations of other forms—even in parts of the world where their own language is not spoken.

Further Study

There are two avenues for further study which particularly interest me as I bring this study to a close. The first is to investigate the relationship between the paradigm of meta-dance practice and touch in other ways. For instance, if touch is an inroad to meta-dance practice, thereby teaching students to (a) take responsibility for their own learning, (b) observe with clarity, and (c) behave as caring individuals, what else might be an inroad to such qualities? Besides touch, what other endeavors could move students into and beyond technique?

Touch can be explored to facilitate growth and personal agency in other learning contexts besides technique. Ann Cooper Albright (2000) has similarly experimented with movement, bringing it into the dance history classroom and

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asking her students to "... use their bodies not simply to follow or imitate—but as vehicles for historical thinking" (p. 7). She wanted to teach aspects of Classical Indian Dance without "... tokenizing the experience" (p. 7). Albright questioned, "... how do we think through a body that is centered in another cultural matrix? ... I decided that I wanted my students to take the risk and launch their bodies into a somatic exploration of this material ..." (p. 7). Albright's somatic history lesson gave her students the opportunity to listen to, and trust that—in a very literal as well as metaphorical sense—knowledge is housed in the body. Is movement an inroad to meta-dance history practice? Is touch?

Teachers within college dance programs can examine their curricula and brainstorm the goals and objectives of their course offerings. If they decide that their goals and objectives for student learning should embrace and move beyond the subject matter, they can explore numerous routes toward meta-dance practice.

The second avenue for further research that is of particular interest to me is the idea that touch enables the student to take a journey that migrates beyond the meta-facets thus far explored: Touch enhances the learning of movement as a living metaphor for everyday life. 'Everyday life' refers to the ways in which we interpret and respond to our environments and relationships on a daily basis. This term is used to contrast those particular states of heightened awareness that may occur when one is dancing or performing. Exploring the ways in which movement may be understood as a living metaphor for everyday life is

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worthwhile because through recognition of our metaphors we can expand

ourselves as dancers—and as humans. This expansion comes through venturing

beyond our 'somatic prejudices'—the limiting biases that we develop through

our bodily experiences. Deane Juhan (1987) notes that the tactile surface of the

skin teaches us about ourselves in relation to the world. He writes,

> The dialectic [between the body and world] is life-long, and its formative
> power can hardly be overstated. It establishes preferences and aversions,
> habits and departures, becomes the very stuff in which attitudes are
> ingrained. The "feel" in my skin and the "feelings" in my mind, what I
> "feel" and how I "feel" about it, become so confounded and ambiguous
> that my internal "feelings" can alter what my skin "feels" just as
> powerfully as particular sensations can shift my internal states. (p. 34)

During my research process, the pedagogical use of metaphor—facilitated

through touch—began to surface in the data, and in my interpretation of it. This

was clearly tangential to my current work on touch, yet even as I reach closure

with this study, issues of metaphor loom large—pertinent to the practice of

teaching technique. I have started to delve into this idea, and will introduce it

here in some detail. Let us recall Ed's theme for improvisation involving the

architecture of support and the gift of surrender in ledging and draping forms.

During these tactile explorations Ed's hope was to build students' physical skills

as receivers and givers of body weight. He also wanted to give students more

strategies for coping in the world by enhancing their confidence and enjoyment

of both ends of the supporting/yielding continuum. Ed acknowledged the

underlying metaphors in the acts of supporting/surrendering, receiving/giving,

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and grounding/releasing. He believed the students' own recognition of these metaphors would contribute to their growth as artists and as humans.

To understand the teaching and learning potential of metaphor, we may consider just one of the functions of touch: bringing awareness to, and stimulating the use of breath. When exploring breath, teachers might lead students to consider such questions as: "What does it mean when I hold my breath? Does holding mean possessing and owning, rather than losing something? Do I value ownership of things? If I release my breath am I giving up something? Is that a sign of my weakness and vulnerability? Do I feel free? When I let my breath move in and out am I nourishing my body? Is breath food? How do I feel about food?" It is apparent that with just one concept—breath— the metaphorical imagination has many possibilities for exploration and growth.

Understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another is the essence of metaphor. Sondra Fraleigh (1987) writes,

> Dance is metaphorical in the sense that metaphor involves us in transferred usages of expressions. . . It is an open, nonrestrictive symbol through which we interpret ourselves in our world, poetically. The metaphor is poetic because it is open to interpretation and because it binds us to ourselves and our world in an open, metaphysical leap from the word to the world. Movement functions metaphorically in dance. (p. 171)

George Lakoff and Mark Turner (1989) refer to ideas such as Fraleigh's 'binding'—this metaphysical leap from word (or movement) to world—as 'mapping.' People use metaphors to map certain aspects of one domain into another, thereby producing new understandings. The authors write that metaphor ". . . is central to our understanding of our selves, our culture, and the

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world at large. . . . It is vital that we understand our own worldviews and the processes that guide both our everyday understanding and our imagination" (p. 214).

Let us consider the imagination: Student and teacher participants noted that touch facilitates a dancer's ability to use imagery. Imagery is an important inroad to developing greater functional and expressive use of the body—which is one way of defining dance technique. For this study, imagery (when discussed with teacher and student participants during interviews) was defined as *a qualitative or abstracted mental picture, which clarifies, alters, or enhances a desired physical activity. A visualized image supports and guides a physical action. Its forms include energy patterns, creatures, objects, and human anatomy.*

In their own way, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) make the link between dance and imagery. They claim that how we come to know [or imagine] the world depends on embodied understanding. They write, "What we call 'mind' is really embodied. There is no true separation of mind and body" (p. 266). Notions of inside/outside, image/body-movement, and mind/body are unified dualities. Therefore, how one thinks about one's dancing and the images one uses to give texture and clarity to one's dancing are inseparable from how one is actually dancing. This attitude is counter to a central point of Western philosophy—a belief in the existence of the Cartesian dualistic person for whom the mind is separate from the body (p. 5).

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Steven described the integral relationship between mind, body, imagery, metaphor, and touch:

> I think touch helps with visualization. You can use touch to reinforce an image—a mental representation of places in the body, and connections through the body. Touch can support metaphorical ideas of electric energy flowing through the body, or water shooting through the body, or a hollowness of bones at the core of the skeleton.

If we let our metaphorical imaginations ponder Steven's *bones are hollow* image we might think about things that are hollow and come up with the metaphor: *bones are tubes*. Tubes have a variety of qualities: They are empty, contain inner space, and resonate sound. They are musical, like a didgeridoo, and have a deep tone—one that may be sensed in the pelvis. If, through touch we are compelled to intellectualize/physicalize, or imagine/dance these metaphors we have the potential to make sense out of our current paradigms and develop new ones; we have the possibility of developing a new body image, and new ways to dance. Ed Groff (1990) writes, ". . . bodily experience provides an excellent ground for symbolic reference. Physical experiences of opening/ closing . . . balanced/imbalanced . . . tensed/released . . . all provide sensory distinctions that form the bases for conceptual schemas" (p. 16). Groff notes that we create "image schemata" that are abstract structures of images. "They are gestalt structures, consisting of parts standing in relation and organized into unified wholes, by means of which our experience manifests discernible order" (p. 16).

Modern dance teachers travel an ongoing journey of finding new and more effective ways to help their students understand and embody dance to its fullest. Teachers who use touch, and who embrace the paradigm of meta-dance

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practice take this one step farther by encouraging students to understand/ embody their worlds and worldviews, and to break ground on new worlds and points of view. This process can occur through the use of metaphor. During their classes, teacher participants used numerous metaphors in conjunction with touch, including the following: (a) The dancer you are pushing away is a baby bird (Ed), (b) The pelvis is a vase and the bouquet of flowers is the hair on top of your head (Laurie), and (c) The acetabulum/femur connection is a rotary baby rattle (Mary used a rattle as a kinesthetic/visual reference for the hip socket). When dancers fully engage their imaginations they discover the movement possibilities within metaphors, and the metaphors inside their movements.

Doris Humphrey conceived her modern dance technique on a number of primary concepts which can be mined for their rich metaphors. These include the concept of fall and recovery. Humphrey (1959) writes, "All life fluctuates between resistance to and yielding to gravity" (p. 106). Adopting and adapting Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian thesis of extremes, Humphrey developed physiologically-, psychologically-, and metaphorically-rich theories of movement (Stodelle, 1978, p. 14). Ernestine Stodelle writes, ". . . Apollo and Dionysus represented two conflicting, yet intertwined impulses in man: the first, to achieve perfection and stability; the second, to experience the ecstasy of abandon" (p. 14). Metaphors for Apollo include wisdom, light, fairness, measured limitation, calmness, rational behavior, clear judgment and serenity. For the dancer he is repose, stability, and balance. Dionysus evokes wine, song, one's instinct for adventure, licentiousness, growth, the act of tempting fate, exploration, and imminent danger. Dionysian movement is off-balance and

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falling (Stodelle, p. 15). Humphrey notes the metaphors inherent in movement, writing,

> Falling and recovering is the very stuff of movement, the constant flux which is going on in every living body, in all its tiniest parts, all the time. Nor is this all, for the process has a psychological meaning as well. I recognized these emotional overtones very early and instinctively responded very strongly to the exciting danger of the fall, and the repose and peace of recovery. (cited in Stodelle, 1978, p. 15)

Through the data it is clear that touch can assist dancers to balance and to take risks. It is appealing to consider the possibilities of using touch to specifically invoke metaphorical images tied to Humphrey's principles of fall and recovery.

One final aspect of the intersection of metaphor and touch which deserves further consideration is body knowledge/body prejudice. Carol-Lynne Moore and Kaoru Yamamoto (1988) write,

> The body knowledge we have regarding movement meaning is based upon generalizations drawn from our own embodied experiences. . . we start with a specific visceral happening and by gradually abstracting from it, we construct a lexicon of generalized movement meanings. Our body knowledge becomes the guidebook we use to organize the world beyond words, to judge actions and to gauge our reactions to the movements of others. (p. 88)

Moore and Yamamoto offer an example of the way our meaning-making process frequently occurs spontaneously. They describe our potential for feeling uneasy while in the presence of a loitering stranger in a lobby; our first movement thought, based on body knowledge (rather than conscious deliberation) would likely be a quick exit. They remark, "Because body knowledge blends the perception of movement behavior with its interpretation, it facilitates swift reaction" (p. 88). An automatic interpretation of movement can

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also lead to a prejudicial misjudgment of situations and people. "Like body knowledge, body prejudice originates from our capacity to abstract and generalize on the basis of our own movement experiences" (p. 89).

Moore and Yamamoto's exploration of both the efficient and sometimes dangerous consequences of body knowledge and body prejudice is intended to broaden our horizons when we observe movement. They contend that there is no simple, one-to-one correspondence between a movement and what it means. How does an understanding of the relationship between touch, metaphor, and body knowledge/body prejudice enhance our lives as dancers?

Let us consider how touch might influence one's responses and interpretations of a dance performance—in this example, a performance of *Sankai Juku*, a Butoh dance company from Japan. Imagine that, for a particular member of the audience, *lazy* and *boring* are the overpowering metaphors for the time quality of slow motion. Then consider—through the words of writer, Brett Johnson (1997)—that the performance is composed of "slow contortions" during which dancers "slowly uncoil their tucked bodies," flow "slowly but inevitably across the mouth of the stage" and move with a "slow-motion bobbing and weaving." It may be difficult for the viewer to interpret the performance as anything but lazy and boring. An ability to see fully and appreciate Butoh will by hampered by a body prejudice founded on limited metaphorical associations. If the viewer has a larger sphere of embodied experiences and has been encouraged towards a greater range of metaphorical associations, then she or he is more apt to be fully disposed to the event. A larger sphere of embodied

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experiences occurs through touch, as touch can provide dancers with a deeper understanding—and personal 'palette'—of movement qualities/dynamic range.

One can begin to gain an appreciation of an unfamiliar movement style, such as Butoh, by personally embodying different movement qualities. The term 'quality' is used here in a broad sense. It encompasses Rudolf Laban's Efforts of light and strong weight, free and bound flow, sustained and sudden time, and indirect and direct space. All four teacher participants were versed in those concepts and terminology. Quality, in this research, also includes any descriptors which students or teachers used to explain the character, tone, texture, or flavor of a movement. Many teacher and student participants commented that touch enhances their awareness of movement qualities.

Body knowledge and body prejudice impact how we interpret ourselves and others. What we understand through our somatic experience is manifested in our cognitive structures—the ways in which we make sense in the world. Because of the embodied nature of our understanding, the modern dance technique class is an ideal place for students to learn—through touch—about their current cognitive structures, and develop new ones.

Two body-metaphor constructs emerged as particularly significant in this study: (a) understanding where and how a movement initiates, and (b) finding ease/releasing tension. Student and teacher participants overwhelmingly concurred that these were two of the most prevalent learning areas that were facilitated through touch. It is not a difficult leap to notice how the constructs of

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initiation and *release*, in their metaphorical richness, cross-over from dance to everyday life; nor is it hard to recognize that they are actual skills of meta-dance practice: (a) knowing where and how to begin an action, or a course of events; and (b) understanding how to use only what we need, letting go of what we do not need, and doing so in a relaxed, unstressful manner.

The work of Joan Skinner deserves mention. She has developed an entire approach to movement training which is based on the release of tension through the use of touch and metaphorical imagery. *Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT)* ". . . utilizes image-guided floorwork to ease tension and promote an effortless kind of movement, integrated with alignment of the whole self" (Skura, 1990, p. 11). It incorporates tactile exercises to give the imagery "immediate kinesthetic effect" (p. 11). Skinner believes that the images she uses take a poetic form which she likens to haiku; these *image clusters* are brief and, she hopes, send out a resonance or reverberation. Skinner states that the images represent archetypes—archetypes which reside beneath the images and which ". . . need some kind of poetic metaphor to represent them, to *pre*-sent them to one's experiencing" (p. 11). Student-to-student-touch, termed *partner-graphics*, is an important aspect of SRT. Partners assist each other in releasing tension, frequently using a light touch. For example, one might focus on releasing tension in the tissues around the hip joint. Or, in order to sense the process of realigning the body in a multidimensional, multidirectional way, a partner will

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use delicate fingers to trace continuous flows of three-dimensional energy patterns along the surface of the body (p. 17).

Through touch, dancers have the ability to gain an awareness of the affinities, prejudices, paradigms, and schema which frame their choices, impact their dancing, and govern their lives. Teachers have an invaluable opportunity to open students to their paradigms and guide them into a much greater range of options—conceptual, aesthetic, and somatic. This is possible when teachers encourage the use of metaphor and engage the students' imaginations. Through their imaginations, dancers learn to find metaphors in movement and movement in metaphors. As a dancer's range of metaphors grows so does her or his range of movement possibilities—those which the dancer performs and those which the dancer is able to observe and interpret as a viewer of another's movement.

A modern dance class offers teachers and students a seemingly infinite array of movement constructs that may be understood through touch, physical embodiment, and metaphor. One of them is the *vertical dimension*. The metaphors housed in images and actions of the vertical dimension, and in such concepts as up/down and high/low provide a window on our embodied biases. A number of authors (Shahn, 1957; Bloomer & Moore, 1977; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Johnston, 1986; & Groff, 1990) have taken note of the cultural import of metaphors for the vertical dimension.

Using touch enhances the possibilities for the imagination to embrace metaphorical realities. While touch is often accompanied by the spoken word, it

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also allows for a great deal of silence, and for working with the eyes closed. In silence, and in the dark, touch awakens our proprioceptive and kinesthetic senses. With our awakened senses we are more available to tactile images. Steven used tactile images, such as instructing students to find a level of awareness during a movement ". . . like you were feeling when somebody was holding your pelvis." He used touch to establish sensations that can be employed as memory cues for images, later. Similarly, after a student-to-student touch exploration Laurie asked students to work solo and to sense the hands of an imaginary partner supporting them in their dancing.

Teachers who use touch, and who consider the possibilities for a paradigm of meta-dance practice teach their students to be cartographers by giving them experiences in mapping their journeys toward new understandings. Students build their own, uncharted highways. They may connect the sensation of a teacher's firm pressure in the femoral joint, first to an exhale, next to a release of tension, then to an image of water, and then to a body-mind epiphany of how this new choice may affect their dancing and their lives. In an environment of touch, students have the opportunity to take an immense amount of responsibility for constructing their interpretations and knowledge.

I will leave the reader with three comments from participants. In the first, a student notes the pedagogical power which is generated through a teacher's touch. In the second and third statements two of the teacher participants remark on how touch decreases a student's dependence on a teacher through increasing the student's own personal power.

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The student commented,

> Being dancers, we are often told to _feel_ the music or to _feel_ our movement, or to create a _feeling_ within the audience. If there is a movement we do not understand it is difficult to feel it with just instructional words. But to use touch makes all the difference.

Ed Groff noted,

> Touch is the most reliable means to communicate with students. If I've been able to help facilitate a certain kind of sensation relative to a concept, then touch empowers them to relocate that for themselves. . . that sensation becomes automatic—a home base—so they don't need me touching them all the time.

Mary Seereiter stated,

> The purpose of touch is to facilitate their own awareness and knowledge that's already there. I'm just reminding them. If they can learn to trust their bodies and learn to value tuning in and listening, they'll go through their own learning experiences in a lot of other places, other classes, and when they're walking to the bus.

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APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Introduction

January 14, 1998

Dear Dance Student of Laurie Sanda,

Laurie Sanda has consented to participate in my research project which I am conducting as part of my Doctoral Degree in dance at Texas Woman's University. The purpose of my study is to uncover if, how, and why human touch works in the teaching of dance, and how it contributes to student learning. Because, in the past few years, the topic of human touch in settings such as schools and businesses has become quite controversial, this research is particularly pertinent. This study involves interviewing and observing dance instructors, as well as interviewing and collecting questionnaire responses from their students regarding the use of touch in the dance technique class. This research can ultimately benefit both the teachers and students of dance.

I will be observing your class for approximately 10 hours during this school term, beginning on January 21. Please understand that the purpose of my presence in your class is to observe Laurie's teaching strategies and her interactions with the students. Rest assured that I am in no way evaluating or judging your dancing. In fact, I am particularly pleased that I will be observing your class which has students with a wide variety of interests and who are majoring in a multitude of fields of study.

I will be asking you to sign a consent form. The purpose of the form is to ensure that you understand that I will maintain your confidentiality and treat you with respect. I will ask you to fill out a questionnaire regarding your experiences in this class, however, filling out the questionnaire is completely voluntary. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire, and your responses will remain anonymous. I will also ask a number of students if they would be willing to be interviewed so that I may discuss with them their experiences in this class. Again, your participation in an interview is completely voluntary. Your opinions are extremely valuable for this study. The results of this research will be documented in my Doctoral Dissertation, from Texas Woman's University.

I look forward to meeting you and will be happy to answer any of your questions while I am in Ames, and after I leave. Many thanks.

Sincerely,

Robin Collen
1707 Midvale Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-479-1523

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APPENDIX B

Consent Form: Teacher Participants

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TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
SUBJECT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Significance and Role of Touch in Dance Pedagogy:
Tactile Communication for Aesthetic Development

Investigator: Robin Collen   (310) 479-1523
Advisor: Penelope Hanstein   (940) 898-2087

As a participant in the study, I understand the following to be true:

<u>Purpose and Procedures:</u>

- I will be involved in a data gathering process, the focus of which will be the role of touch in teaching dance.

- The data gathered during this study will be utilized for the investigator's doctoral dissertation, and possibly, subsequent publications and presentations.

- I will **not** remain anonymous, nor will the name of the institution at which I teach.

- My confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data gathering process.

- Participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

- An offer has been made to answer all of my questions and concerns about the study.

- I have been mailed two copies of the consent form. I will sign both and mail or FAX the other to the investigator.

- The investigator will ask some of my students to be interviewed. I will not be informed of any discussions between the investigator and my students.

- The investigator will ask my students to fill out anonymous questionnaires. I will not be informed of any responses of particular students by name, although I will receive a summary of the results of the questionnaire.

- My time involvement with the study will consist of two or three interview sessions, lasting a total of from three to five hours.

- The interviews will be tape recorded.

- The purpose for tape recording the interviews is to provide the investigator with reliable data, through a verbatim transcript. The credibility of the study would be weakened if the data was gathered only through written notes and the memory of the investigator.

- The investigator is the only person who will hear the tapes.

- The tapes will be kept for five years after the investigator's dissertation is completed, at which time they will be erased.

- During the interviews I may refuse to answer any questions and I may terminate the interview at any time.

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- I will have the opportunity to review and edit the transcript of my interviews prior to their usage as data for this study.

- The investigator will be observing one of my dance technique classes for a minimum of ten hours. Depending upon my teaching schedule, the investigator may be at the research site—my institution—for up to three weeks.

- The investigator will be unobtrusive during her class observations.

- The investigator will be writing notes during her class observations.

Risks:

- One of the possible risks to my safety is public embarrassment.

- The investigator will minimize this risk by giving me the opportunity to review and edit the transcript of my interviews prior to its use as data.

- The investigator will inform me if she perceives that her data from our interviews or her observations (without compromising the privacy of the student participants) includes particularly sensitive materials, so that we may discuss these matters.

- The investigator understands that I have a professional reputation to maintain and she will respect this in every way possible.

- My students' remarks will remain unknown to me so that my rapport with them will not be adversely affected by this study.

- To insure that the data from this investigation is not improperly released, and to maintain my privacy, the investigator will secure written and electronic files in a locked file cabinet in her home, to which only she will have access. All written notes will be burned, and audiotaped recordings will be erased, on or before March 1, 2007.

Potential Benefits:

- My work as a teacher will be featured in a dissertation which will be presented to the scholarly community. Such a dissemination of my work could lead to future professional engagements for myself, and further contributions to the artistic and educational communities.

- This research endeavor is designed to encourage self-reflexivity by examining my process of teaching from a unique perspective from which I can explore my own work. Therefore, the study may benefit me by involving me in the union of theory and practice.

- This study will allow me to contribute to the expansion of the literature in the field.

- My students will be afforded the opportunity to observe and speak with a dancer/researcher. This situation may provide them with opportunities for exploring and questioning their artistic and theoretical studies in ways which would otherwise not be available to them.

If I have any questions about the research or about my rights as a subject, I should ask the researcher: her phone number is at the top of this form. If I have questions later, or wish to

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report a problem, I may call the researcher or the Office of Research & Grants Administration at 817-898-3377.

The researcher will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. I should let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and she will help me. I understand, however, that TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because I am taking part in this research.

I hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned party acting under the authority of Texas Woman's University from any and all claims arising out of such taping, recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

****

- My image will be recorded on videotape, while teaching technique class, if I provide written consent below. Not signing the consent form does not disqualify me from participating in this research.

- The purpose for videotaping the classes is to provide the investigator with reliable data, through observable videotapes. The credibility of the study would be weakened if the data was gathered only through written notes and the memory of the investigator.

- The investigator and the dance instructor are the only people who will look at the videotapes, except in the following circumstance. If the instructor feels that the students in the videotaped class would find it educationally beneficial to view the tapes, students will view them, as well.

- The videotapes will be kept for five years after the investigator's dissertation is completed, at which time they will be erased.

I do hereby consent to the recording of my image by Robin Collen. I hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned party acting under the authority of Texas Woman's University from any and all claims arising out of such videotaping, video recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

The above consent form was read, discussed, and signed in my presence. In my opinion, the person signing said consent form did so freely and with full knowledge and understanding of its contents.

_____   _____
Representative of Texas Woman's University   Date

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APPENDIX C

Consent Form: Student Participants

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TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
STUDENT SUBJECT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

The Significance and Role of Touch in Dance Pedagogy:
Tactile Communication for Aesthetic Development

Investigator: Robin Collen   (310) 479-1523
Advisor: Penelope Hanstein   (940) 898-2087

As a participant in the study, I understand the following to be true:

<u>Purpose and Procedures:</u>

- I will be involved in a data gathering process, the focus of which will be the role of touch in teaching dance.

- The data gathered during this study will be utilized for the investigator's doctoral dissertation, and possibly, subsequent publications and presentations.

- I will remain anonymous.

- My confidentiality will be maintained throughout the data gathering process.

- Participation in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

- An offer has been made to answer all of my questions and concerns about the study.

- I have been given a copy of the dated and signed consent form to keep.

- The investigator may ask me to be interviewed, my participation in which is completely voluntary. My dance instructor will not be informed of any discussions between the investigator and myself.

- I will be asked to fill out an anonymous questionnaire.

- My time involvement with the study will be completely up to me.

<u>Risks:</u>

- One of the possible risks to my safety is public embarrassment.

- The investigator will maintain my anonymity and will word my, and other students' responses and reactions in such a way that particular comments cannot be traced by to particular students.

- My identity will remain anonymous. My real name will not be used, and I may be referred to in the study by another name.

- The investigator will treat me with respect.

- My, and other students' remarks and questionnaire responses will be organized thematically, amongst all of the student responses from each of the research sites.

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Therefore, no faculty member will be able to identify the comments as belonging to particular students.

- To insure that the data from this investigation is not improperly released, and to maintain my privacy, the investigator will secure written and electronic files (audio and video) in her home, in a locked file cabinet, to which only she will have access. All written notes will be burned and audiotaped and videotaped recordings will be erased, on or before March 1, 2007.

- Upon my request, the investigator will provide me with the opportunity to read transcripts of my interviews as well as summaries of non-recorded discussions to ensure that I have not been misquoted or misunderstood. For my own educational purposes, the investigator will provide me with the opportunity to view the videotapes and read a summary of the questionnaire results, if I request to do so.

Potential Benefits:

- I will benefit through developing a heightened awareness of my role as a student, and the relationship between student learning and teaching practice.

- I, like many dance students, am currently, or will in the future become a teacher of dance. I can apply this heightened awareness to my current and/or future pedagogical expertise.

- I may gain a comfort through discussing, with a dance professional who is not associated with my learning environment, problems which I am having in class.

- My self-esteem may be enhanced through the investigator's special attention.

- This study will allow me to contribute to the expansion of the literature in the field.

- I will be afforded the opportunity to observe and speak with a dancer/researcher. This situation may provide me with opportunities for exploring and questioning my artistic and theoretical studies in ways which would otherwise not be available to me.

If I have any questions about the research or about my rights as a subject, I should ask the researcher. Her phone number is at the top of this form. If I have questions later, or wish to report a problem, I may call the researcher or the Office of Research & Grants Administration at 940-898-3377.

The researcher will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. I should let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and she will help me. I understand, however, that TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because I am taking part in this research.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

****

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- My informal discussions with the investigator will be audiotape recorded, if I provide written consent below. Not signing the consent form does not disqualify me from participating in this discussion.

- The purpose for tape recording the interviews is to provide the investigator with reliable data, through a verbatim transcript. The credibility of the study would be weakened if the data was gathered only through written notes and the memory of the investigator.

- The investigator is the only person who will hear the tapes.

- The audiotapes will be erased, on or before March 1, 2007.

- During the discussion I may refuse to answer any questions and I may terminate the discussion at any time.

- If our discussion is audiotaped, I will have the opportunity to review and edit the transcript of our discussion prior to its usage as data for this study.

- My image will be recorded on videotape, while participating in technique class, if I provide written consent below. Not signing the consent form does not disqualify me from participating in this research.

- The purpose for videotaping the classes is to provide the investigator with reliable data, through observable videotapes. The credibility of the study would be weakened if the data was gathered only through written notes and the memory of the investigator.

- The investigator and the dance instructor are the only people who will look at the videotapes, except in the following circumstance. If the instructor feels that the students in the videotaped class would find it educationally beneficial to view the tapes, students will view them, as well.

- The videotaped recordings will be erased, on or before March 1, 2007.

I do hereby consent to the recording of my voice by Robin Collen. I hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned party acting under the authority of Texas Woman's University from any and all claims arising out of such audio taping, audio recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

I do hereby consent to the recording of my image by Robin Collen. I hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned party acting under the authority of Texas Woman's University from any and all claims arising out of such videotaping, video recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

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I **do not** consent to the recording of my image and I understand that, if the class is videotaped, Robin Collen will distort my image beyond recognition through a process known as "fuzz out," as well as make every effort to angle the camera away from where I am dancing in the studio.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

The above consent form was read, discussed, and signed in my presence. In my opinion, the person signing said consent form did so freely and with full knowledge and understanding of its contents.

_____   _____
Representative of Texas Woman's University   Date

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APPENDIX D

Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

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TEXAS WOMAN'S
UNIVERSITY

July 12, 2001

Ms. Robin Collen
670 State Highway 11-B
Potsdam, NY 13676

Dear Ms. Collen:
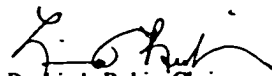
Re: The Significance and Role of Touch in Dance Pedagogy: Tactile Communication for Aesthetic
       Development

The request for an extension for the above referenced study has been reviewed by a committee of the
Institutional Review Board (IRB) and appears to meet our requirements in regard to protection of
individuals' rights.

If applicable, agency approval letters obtained should be submitted to the IRB upon receipt prior to any
data collection at that agency. The signed consent forms and an annual/final report are to be filed with
the Institutional Review Board at the completion of the study.

This extension is valid one year from July 28, 2001. Furthermore, according to HHS regulations,
another review by the Committee is required if your project changes. If you have any questions, please
feel free to call the Institutional Review Board at the phone number listed above.

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Rubin, Chair
Institutional Review Board - Denton

cc   Dr. Richard Rodean, Department of Performing Arts - Dance
     Dr. Penelope Hanstein, Department of Performing Arts - Dance
     Graduate School

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APPENDIX E

Interview Guide: Teacher Participants

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<u>Interview Guide for Teacher Participants</u>

Describe your background as a dance student and teacher.

Did your teachers use touch? When, as a student, were you first aware of this?

Tell me about your approach to teaching modern dance.

How would you describe your current group of students in Modern Dance class?

How do the following issues effect your use of touch in your current Modern Dance class?

> The students' experience level
> Your history, or lack of it, with them
> What they have been exposed to, regarding touch, partnering, etc. in other classes
> The fact that class lasts 1 hour and 20 minutes, 5 times a week (for example)
> The fact that you are (or are not) available for 1 on 1 meetings outside of class

What sorts of activities actually occur in your class? How would you describe the class content and progression?

How would you describe the purpose which touch serves for you in your teaching?

How does touch effect the learning process of the students?

Have you discovered certain limitations in the use of touch—when it is appropriate or inappropriate—and, if so, how would you describe these limitations? Consider *limitations* and *inappropriateness* in two different ways: one being when touch is simply not an effective choice as a tool for teaching a particular movement, quality, or concept in class; the other being when touch is somehow not the right choice in a human-relations or person-to-person realm.

In what ways do you feel gender plays a role in the use of touch in your class?

In your various ways of using touch in your class, do you, for example, tend to touch the students; do they touch you; do they touch each other; do they use self-touch?

How would you describe, more specifically, the types of touch you use? [Refer to number IV on the questionnaire.]

How do you feel each of these types of touch function to help or hinder the student? [Refer to number V on the questionnaire.]

How, if at all, has your participation in this study influenced your use of touch in technique class?

What is the sexual harassment policy at your school, and how, if at all, does that affect your behavior as a teacher?

What is your history at this institution? How would you describe the dance program?

Is there anything else you would like to say regarding the use of touch as a method for teaching and learning dance?

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APPENDIX F

Interview Guide: Student Participants

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Interview Guide for Student Participants

Please describe your background as a dance student.

Did/do your teachers use touch? When, as a student, were you first aware of this? What experience, if any, have you had teaching dance?

How would you describe Mary's approach to teaching modern dance--from your experience as a student in her class, what is her philosophy about modern dance--what's important to her?

How would you describe the purpose which touch serves for you in your learning of dance--in other words, how does touch affect your learning process?

I've noticed that touch is used in various ways in your class, for example, Mary sometimes touches the students; students also work as partners and touch each other. I call these "touch relationships." How do various touch relationships affect your learning?

Regarding other touch relationships, does Mary ever ask the students to touch her, or does she have you use self touch to assist you in learning? How do you feel these work?

When Mary brings the skeleton into class and touches it (or when you touch the skeleton) how does that affect your learning?

How do you feel your cultural, religious, ethnic, or family backgrounds (or any other influences) contribute to or detract from the effectiveness of touch as a way for you to learn dance?

Have you discovered certain limitations in the use of touch--when it is appropriate or inappropriate--and, if so, how would you describe them?

In what ways do you feel gender plays a role in the use of touch in your class--meaning, the fact that in Mary's class the teacher is female and all of the students are female?

How would you describe, more specifically, any of the types of touch which you have experienced in Mary's class? [Refer to number IV on the questionnaire.]

How do you feel each of these types of touch function to help or hinder you as a student? [Refer to number V on the questionnaire.]

Has your participation in this study influenced your awareness of the use of touch and how it functions as a learning tool in your class? If yes, how?

I would be interested in hearing any other thoughts, feeling, or beliefs you have on the issue of touch as a method for learning dance.

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APPENDIX G

Student Questionnaire

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Dance Student of Laurie Sanda
Department of Health and Human Performance
Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011

In my experience, many modern dance teachers touch their students to facilitate learning. You may have experienced a dance teacher molding her arms around yours, into a desired shape, or resting his hands on your shoulders to ease tension. Many teachers are guided by an intuitive sense, a tacit knowing that touch works. However, there is a need for explicit research in this area. The purpose of this study is to uncover how and why touch works in the teaching of dance, and how it contributes to student learning. Because, in the past few years, the topic of human touch in settings such as schools and businesses has become quite controversial, this research is particularly pertinent. While some dance teachers have chosen to curb their use of touch, others refuse to give up what they believe to be an absolutely essential aspect of teaching dance. This study involves interviewing and observing dance instructors, as well as interviewing and collecting questionnaire responses from their students regarding the use of touch in the dance technique class. This research can ultimately benefit both the teachers and students of dance.

Laurie is one of only four teachers, at the most, whose entire class will be involved in this study. I asked Laurie to participate because, knowing her background as I do, I felt that her expertise as a teacher would provide invaluable data for this study. She has consented to participate because she believes in the merit of this research. Your participation in completing this questionnaire is completely voluntary. However, your opinions are extremely important to this study. In order that the results will truly represent the thinking of Laurie's students, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing (or handing-in) purposes only. This is so that I may check your name off of the list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will never be placed on the questionnaire. Laurie will see the completed analysis of the questionnaires, however, she will never be able to trace any information gained from the questionnaires back to individual students.

The results of this research will be documented in my Doctoral Dissertation, from Texas Woman's University. You may receive a summary of the results of the questionnaire by writing "copy of results requested" on the back of the return envelope, and printing your name and address below it. Or, if you plan to personally hand me your questionnaire while I am at Iowa State University, you may also hand me a paper with the same information. Please do not put this information on the questionnaire itself.

Please read the questionnaire as soon as possible so that you may ponder the questions during your classes in the next couple of weeks. I would prefer that you do not fill out the questionnaire now and immediately hand it in, but rather, notice what transpires in the next few classes before filling it out. **Please return the questionnaire to me in the envelope provided, during your class on Monday, February 9th.** If this is not possible, please mail it to me by the end of February, in the envelope provided. I will be in Ames through February 11th.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call. While in Ames I can be reached at: (515) 233-0939. My permanent address is: 1707 Midvale Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90024; (310) 479-1523.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Robin Collen
Doctoral Candidate

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Student Questionnaire
(N=46)
(Note: Some respondents left questions unanswered.)

I. In general, do you feel your ability to learn dance is increased or decreased through the use of touch in technique class?

(Circle the Number of Your Answer)

1. Strongly increased   (n=32)

2. Mildly increased   (n=12)

3. Neither increased or decreased   (n=0)

4. Mildly decreased   (n=1)

5. Strongly decreased (n=0)

II. How frequently does your teacher use the following touch relationships in your class?

1. Multiple times during each class
2. Approximately one time during each class
3. In more than half the classes
4. In less than half the classes
5. Never

(Circle the Numbers of Your Answer)

A. The teacher touches the students   1 (n=29)   2 (n=7)   3 (n=3)   4 (n=6)   5 (n=1)

B. The teacher touches her/himself   1 (n=38)   2 (n=4)   3 (n=1)   4 (n=2)   5 (n=1)

C. Students touch the teacher   1 (n=0)   2 (n=3)   3 (n=8)   4 (n=24) 5 (n=10)

D. Students touch each other   1 (n=11)   2 (n=19) 3 (n=11) 4 (n=3)   5 (n=2)

E. Students touch themselves   1 (n=24)   2 (n=13) 3 (n=5)   4 (n=3)   5 (n=1)

III. How would you rate each of these "touch relationships" as they function to enhance your learning in technique class?

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Poor
5. Not applicable: Not used

(Circle the Numbers of Your Answer)

A. Teacher touching Student   1 (n=33)   2 (n=8)   3 (n=2)   4 (n=1)   5 (n=1)

B. Teacher touching Self   1 (n=10)   2 (n=21)   3 (n=12)   4 (n=3)   5 (n=0)

C. Student touching Teacher   1 (n=6)   2 (n=9)   3 (n=12)   4 (n=4)   5 (n=13)

D. Student touching Student   1 (n=17)   2 (n=17)   3 (n=7)   4 (n=4)   5 (n=1)

E. Student touching Self   1 (n=27)   2 (n=16)   3 (n=1)   4 (n=2)   5 (n=0)

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IV. Which words best describe the types of touch that are used in your class, and their effect on your learning?

1. Has a positive effect on my learning
2. Has no effect on my learning
3. Has a negative effect on my learning
4. Not applicable because it is not used in class

(Circle the Numbers of Your Answer)

A.	Surrounding or molding around a dancer's body	1 (n=29)	2 (n=11)	3 (n=0)	4 (n=4)
B.	Touching bony landmarks	1 (n=40)	2 (n=3)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=2)
C.	Tracing a pathway	1 (n=40)	2 (n=1)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=4)
D.	Holding	1 (n=35)	2 (n=5)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=4)
E.	Guiding an area of the body	1 (n=42)	2 (n=3)	3 (n=0)	4 (n=0)
F.	Stroking	1 (n=29)	2 (n=7)	3 (n=3)	4 (n=6)
G.	Massaging	1 (n=30)	2 (n=10)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=5)
H.	Jiggling	1 (n=23)	2 (n=14)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=8)
I.	Simultaneously touching two areas of the body	1 (n=36)	2 (n=5)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=3)
J.	Adjusting or realigning body parts	1 (n=43)	2 (n=1)	3 (n=0)	4 (n=2)
K.	Providing resistance to a motion	1 (n=42)	2 (n=0)	3 (n=0)	4 (n=4)
L.	Supporting a body area such as the head or leg	1 (n=45)	2 (n=0)	3 (n=0)	4 (n=1)
M.	Pressing	1 (n=33)	2 (n=8)	3 (n=0)	4 (n=5)
N.	Rocking or Rolling a body area	1 (n=33)	2 (n=6)	3 (n=2)	4 (n=5)
O.	Shaking	1 (n=23)	2 (n=14)	3 (n=4)	4 (n=5)
P.	Tugging or Pulling	1 (n=34)	2 (n=5)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=6)
Q.	Manipulating	1 (n=39)	2 (n=3)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=3)
R.	Please list as many others as you can think of.				

(You may continue this list on the back page.)

•	Yanking			3 (n=1)
•	Pushing for momentum		2 (n=1)	
•	Lifting/weight transfer	1 (n=1)		
•	Lying on floor (awareness of parts of body touching floor)	1 (n=1)		
•	Tapping bony landmarks	1 (n=1)		
•	Lifting entire body off the floor; leaning on someone for support	1 (n=1)		
•	Another student doing any of the above to me		2 (n=1)	
•	Me doing any of the above to another student		2 (n=1)	
•	Unskilled touch			3 (n=1)
•	Poking, i.e. causing the body to react in a reflex that can lead to a dance move	1 (n=1)		

V. To what degree does the inclusion of touch in your modern dance technique class contribute to or detract from your learning in the various areas listed below?

1. Strongly contributes
2. Mildly contributes
3. Neither contributes or detracts
4. Mildly detracts
5. Strongly detracts

(Circle the Number of Your Answer)

A.	Understanding anatomical principles	1 (n=31)	2 (n=13)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=0)	5 (n=0)
B.	Understanding movement qualities or dynamics	1 (n=25)	2 (n=18)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=1)	5 (n=0)
C.	Ability to use imagery to assist your performance of movement	1 (n=20)	2 (n=18)	3 (n=7)	4 (n=0)	5 (n=0)
D.	Developing a positive rapport with your teacher	1 (n=16)	2 (n=14)	3 (n=12)	4 (n=3)	5 (n=0)
E.	Developing a positive rapport with other students in the class	1 (n=18)	2 (n=13)	3 (n=13)	4 (n=1)	5 (n=0)
F.	Receptivity to your teacher's instructions	1 (n=28)	2 (n=9)	3 (n=4)	4 (n=2)	5 (n=0)
G.	Perceptiveness to the activities in class	1 (n=26)	2 (n=13)	3 (n=4)	4 (n=2)	5 (n=0)
H.	Awareness of alignment	1 (n=39)	2 (n=5)	3 (n=1)	4 (n=0)	5 (n=0)
I.	Awareness of tension in the body	1 (n=36)	2 (n=5)	3 (n=3)	4 (n=1)	5 (n=0)
J.	Awareness of spatial orientation	1 (n=24)	2 (n=15)	3 (n=4)	4 (n=1)	5 (n=0)
K.	Ability to clearly observe	1 (n=22)	2 (n=17)	3 (n=6)	4 (n=0)	5 (n=0)
L.	Ability to balance	1 (n=24)	2 (n=14)	3 (n=4)	4 (n=1)	5 (n=0)
M.	Awareness of breathing	1 (n=21)	2 (n=20)	3 (n=4)	4 (n=0)	5 (n=0)
N.	Awareness of the three-dimensional nature of movement	1 (n=23)	2 (n=15)	3 (n=7)	4 (n=0)	5 (n=0)
O.	Awareness of the site of movement initiation	1 (n=31)	2 (n=14)	3 (n=0)	4 (n=0)	5 (n=0)
P.	Awareness of inward and/or outward	1 (n=30)	2 (n=8)	3 (n=6)	4 (n=1)	5 (n=0)

Q. Please list as many others as you can think of.

(You may continue this list on the back page.)

• Develop awareness of own body	1 (n=1)
• Ability to communicate with movement through self-touch	1 (n=1)
• Awareness of realistic goals, both spatially and physically	1 (n=1)

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VI. How would you prefer your technique teacher to address the issue of using of touch in class?

(Circle One Number)

1. Discuss the idea of touch, and its functions, with the entire class at the beginning of the quarter (semester).   (n=28)

2. Discuss the issue privately with me.   (n=0)

3. Demonstrate the use of touch on students with whom the teacher is already familiar, and who are comfortable with touch, before touching me.   (n=2)

4. Incorporate touch into the teaching of the class without discussing it as a separate issue.   (n=9)

5. I don't have an opinion.   (n=3)

6. Other (explain):

• A combination of #1 and #3 above.   (n=2)

• Spend a day session discussing touch with the class and practicing different kinds of touch with the group so students learn how touch can be most effective.   (n=1)

• #4, above, but discuss touch privately with anyone is who uncomfortable with it.   (n=1)

VII. In the space below, please describe the way in which your teacher addressed the issue of using touch in your class?

• As in #4, above.   (n=7)

• Never addressed it, but always asks permission before touching.   (n=1)

• Discussed touch with entire class at beginning of quarter and said if anyone felt uncomfortable with touch to please address it with the instructor.   (n=10)

• As in #1, above.   (n=11)

• The instructor started the quarter by frequently using self-touch, and addressing the importance of touch; this was followed by (a) student-to-student touch activities, (b) the instructor's demonstration of touch with one student in front of the class, and (c) the instructor's movement throughout the studio, instructing students in touch.   (n=1)

• The instructor incorporates it into class; then the instructor discusses it while students are exploring it.   (n=1)

• A combination of #1 and #3, above.   (n=1)

VIII. In your opinion is your teacher sensitive to your needs and feelings as a student when she or he touches you in the context of teaching dance technique?

(Circle Number of Your Answer)

1. Always yes (n=31)   2. Usually yes (n=13)   3. Sometimes (n=2)   4. Almost never (n=0)   5. Never (n=0)

Questions IX, X, and XI pertain to your experiences with _any and all_ dance classes you have taken, from any teacher, not only to the particular modern dance class we have been discussing, so far.

IX. What statement best indicates your personal feeling towards being touched during any dance class—that is, when touch is used as an aid to learning? (This does not apply to the partnering that regularly occurs in ballroom dance, folk dance, or contact improvisation.)

(Circle Number of Your Answer)

1. I like it very much. (n=27)

2. I like it to a moderate degree. (n=16)

3. I am neutral. (n=1) This response was given with the qualification that it depends on the teacher whether or not the student sees the teacher's touch as intimidating.

4. I mildly dislike it. (n=0)

5. I have an extreme dislike of it. (n=0)

X. In your opinion, have you ever been touched inappropriately by a teacher during any dance class?

(Circle Number of Your Answer)

1. Yes (n=12)

2. No (n=34)

XI. If you answered "Yes" to number XI, what words best describe the nature of the inappropriateness?

(Circle Number (s) of Your Answer)

1. The teacher tried to over-stretch me. (n=7)

2. The teacher manipulated me in a physically painful way. (n=7)

3. Please describe as many others as you can think of.

- One teacher I had used to hit our legs with a stick if we weren't properly turned out. Another teacher I had, who was male, put his hand between the top of my thighs to get me to squeeze my legs together, without asking first. (n=1)

- The teacher touched my body before letting me know he was going to. It felt like my boundaries were crossed without asking. (n=1)

- The teacher manipulated my body without telling me how to help him, or what he was doing. This is frustrating and hard to learn from. (n=1)

- A teacher has pushed me too hard, stretching me, and pressing so hard on my body that my hip popped. (n=1)

- A teacher hit, slapped, and kicked me. (n=1)

- My teacher did not touch me long enough, or firmly enough. (n=1)

- My teacher pushed me back across the room when I was doing a combination incorrectly. (n=1)

- My teacher tried to beat my body into the right position by hitting my arms and legs. (n=1)

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XII. Please describe yourself.

A. What is your gender?

    1.   Female   (n=42)

    2.   Male   (n=4)

B. What is your present age?

    1.   Under 20 years old (n=10)

    2.   20-25   (n=30)

    3.   26-30   (n=2)

    4.   31-35   (n=2)

    5.   over 35   (n=2)

C. How would you describe your ethnicity or race?

- Caucasian or White   (n=33)
- Asian/Chinese   (n=1)
- Mexican   (n=1)
- Asian American   (n=1)
- Caucasian/Alaskan Native   (n=1)
- Asian   (n=2)
- Spanish/Basque   (n=1)
- Hispanic   (n=1)

D. How long have you studied dance? Put an "X" on the appropriate line to show length of time in each style.

	less than 1 yr.	1 - 3 yrs.	3 - 5 yrs.	more than 5 yrs.
modern	(n=6)	(n=18)	(n=9)	(n=11)
ballet	(n=4)	(n=4)	(n=5)	(n=29)
jazz	(n=7)	(n=9)	(n=8)	(n=13)
tap	(n=24)	(n=7)	(n=0)	(n=7)
international folk	(n=28)	(n=7)	(n=0)	(n=1)
ballroom	(n=31)	(n=3)	(n=0)	(n=0)
African	(n=28)	(n=8)	(n=1)	(n=0)
contact improvisation	(n=25)	(n=6)	(n=4)	(n=2)

other (please name)

	less than 1 yr.	1 - 3 yrs.	3 - 5 yrs.	more than 5 yrs.
•Cheerleading				(n=1)
•Clogging				(n=1)
•Hip Hop			(n=1)	
•Gymnastics		(n=1)		
•Improvisation	(n=1)	(n=1)		
•Renaissance	(n=1)			
•Chinese Folk Dance				(n=1)
•Belly Dancing		(n=1)		
•Acrobatics				(n=1)

XIII. Is there anything else you would like to write which might assist in the understanding of how touch may be used in dance technique class to promote student learning? Please write as much or as little as you wish.

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APPENDIX H

Sample of Field Notes with Motif Description

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Phenomenological Revisitation: May 31, 1999 (reviewing videotape)
Mary Seereiter's class: November 12, 1997

Mary speaks rhythmically, fully demonstrating, using a calm voice. She uses such words as "wide awake" "wrap" "melt" "push"—obviously she is looking for quality. She is rhythmically clear. She says, "Fill the back space" and watching her move I see that she gives texture to the space. Mary touches Lee on the shoulder, and the touch, as well as the words, asks her to sit on the floor so she can be assisted. Mary uses self-touch to explain to the class what she demonstrated with Lee; she taps her own shoulder saying, "It's upper body strength." The students seem like cubs and Mary is the mother bear. The cubs are experimenting and Mary is watching and teaching them how to walk. There is much laughter throughout class, from Mary and primarily 2 of the 4 students present. Mary picks a small element out of the whole of a combination and clarifies what it is and then the class dances the combination in its entirety. Mary stays in front and guides them through 2 times, and then she walks around and verbally encourages: She is teaching babies to walk.

Motif with written description: (Movement is a prone, upper body push, *cobra*-action.)

Mary's hand touches student's back, light/indirect.

She says, "You're so much more in control now."

Mary strokes student's shoulders, free/sudden/ light

Mary places one hand on student's abdomen and one on lumbar spine with strong/direct touch. She says, "Go all the way through to engage the abdominals."

Mary strokes across student's back - strong/free.

Mary assists again with student's elbow action. She says, "Push down while you're coming up." — sinking/advancing/strong/ direct

Mary moves away, rising and retreating. She moves out of student's kinesphere.

Mary advances and sinks into student's kinesphere. She uses a strong/direct push on elbows.

Mary encourages student to sit — carving/indirect/free.

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Vita, 2002

Robin Collen, M.S., C.M.A.
27 Hamilton Street
Potsdam, NY 13676
(315) 265-0758
(315) 267-2233 (W)
collenrl@potsdam.edu

Education:

Ph.D.	1994-present	Texas Woman's University (TWU) (Dance). Expected date of completion, December, 2002 (Defense scheduled for 10/11/02).
C.M.A.	1988	Certified Laban Movement Analyst; Seattle, WA
M.S.	1984	University of Oregon (Dance)
B.A.	1976	University of Oregon (Dance)

Academic and Professional Appointments:

1998-present State University of New York, Potsdam, Department of Dance and Drama; Visiting Assistant Professor (three years), currently Assistant Professor of Modern Dance, Ballet, Jazz, Movement Theory and Notation, Dance as an Art Form (History/Appreciation), Composition, Pilates-Based Dance Conditioning, Anatomy, New Repertory.

1998 Iowa State University -- Guest teacher and performer.

1994-1997 Texas Woman's University
Graduate Teaching Assistant
Teacher of Record for non-major courses in Ballet, Modern Dance, Ballroom Dance, and Dance Appreciation.
Teacher of Record for major courses in Modern Dance, Pilates-based Dance Conditioning, and graduate level Laban Movement Analysis.
Assistant to Faculty Director of Program of Pilates-based Dance Conditioning -- developed and implemented program, scheduled staff and students, organized staff development workshops, maintained student and staff records, facilitated development of assessment program.

1994 Center for Shakespeare Studies, Southern Oregon University, Ashland Part-time Instructor of Renaissance Dance -- middle school and high school students.

1993 Movement Analysis Consultant to doctoral music student (Therees Tkach Hibbard, D.M.A.) -- *The Use of Movement as an Instructional Technique in Choral Rehearsals.*

1993 Oak Street Dance Studio, Ashland, Oregon
Part-time Modern Dance Instructor.

1992 Willamette University, Salem, OR
Guest Instructor, Workshop in Laban Movement Analysis.

1992 Western Oregon State College
Guest Instructor, Modern Dance Partnering.

1990-1992 Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland, OR
Company classes in Modern Dance for Green Show Dancers.

1990 Southern Oregon State College, Ashland, OR
Part-time Modern Dance Instructor.

1990	University of Washington, Seattle Assistant Instructor to Peggy Hackney, *Exploring Your Articulate Body* .
1988-1989	The Center For Exercise and Dance, Issaquah, WA Part-time Instructor of Modern Dance and Jazz.
1984-1987	University of Oregon, Eugene Full-time Visiting Instructor of Modern Dance, Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Pedagogy, Ballroom Dance, Choreography, Folk Dance, Movement for the Actor, Careers in Dance. Academic Advisor to Dance Minors. Producer/Director of Concert Dance Theatre. Residency Coordinator for guest artists. Advisor for Student Dance Board. Member of Dance Department Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. Summer Session Coordinator. Director of Student Performing Tour.
1981-1984	University of Oregon, Eugene Graduate Teaching Fellow Teacher of Record for non-major courses in Ballet, Modern Dance, Ballroom Dance, and Tap Dance.

Performance Companies:

1990-1992	Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland Green Show Dancer (three seasons) -- performed English Country Dance, Italian Court Dance of the Renaissance, and Morris Dance; included character speaking roles.
Fall, 1991	Mary Miller Dance Company Pittsburgh, PA Dancer Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.
1985	Counterpoint Dance Ensemble, Susan McFadden, Director Eugene, Oregon Dancer and Choreographer Artists-in-the-Schools Programs in Lane County, Oregon.
1978-1981	Mary Miller Dance Company Eugene, OR Dancer, Choreographer, and Company Management Duties Five member company which performed concerts and lecture demonstrations in schools, universities, art galleries, churches, and outdoor settings.
1973-1975	Dobre Folk Ensemble, University of Oregon, Eugene Toured Oregon and Washington -- performed suites from Rumania, Mexico, Hungary, The Ukraine, Israel, Croatia, and North America.

Choreography and Performance:

Currently choreographing 12-minute modern dance work (Vivaldi) for 6 student dancers.
Performance: November, 2002, Faculty Dance Concert, College Theatre.
"Cabaret" Co-Choreographed with Don Borsh. Collaborative musical theatre production with
Dance and Drama, and Crane Opera and Orchestra; May 2002, College Theatre.

"Tanggone" Co-Choreographed and Performed with Bruce Brownlee. Score includes Tom
Lehrer's *Masochism Tango*. "Shooting Gallery" Performance. Choreography by and
performed with Don Borsh. Department of Dance and Drama, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam,
March, 2001.

"Birds" Co-Choreographed with Nola Rocco. Play by Aristophanes, directed by Kimberly
Bouchard. Department of Dance and Drama, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, April, 2000.

"La Ronde" Choreography. Play by Arthur Schnitzler, directed by Michael Wilson.
Department of Dance and Drama, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, November, 1999.

"Duet" Choreography. Performance with Don Borsh. "Saying Goodbye . . . Remembering"
Choreography. Performed by students. Department of Dance and Drama Faculty
Concert, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, March, 1999.

"The Unicorn, the Gorgon and the Manticore" Performance--role of The Countess.
Choreography by Don Borsh. Opera by Gian Carlo Menotti, Crane School of Music,
S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, November, 1998.

"Twelfth Night" Choreography and movement coach. S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, October, 1998.

"Sheldon Hears the Mating Call" Performance. Choreography by Marta Lichlyter.
Re-choreographed two earlier works: "In for Observation" & "Testing the Water"
Where's the Studio? Doctoral Student Concert, Texas Woman's University,
Denton, 1997; Iowa State University, 1998.

Excerpt from"Suite #2 X 3" Performance. Choreography by Marta Lichlyter. Studio Concert,
Texas Woman's University, Denton, 1995.

"Dancing Through Dreamtime" Performance. Choreography by Marge Maddux. Dance and
Storytelling inspired by Native Northwest Myths. Southern Oregon State College,
Ashland, 1992 and 1993.

"Testing the Water" Performance and Choreography. A 3 minute solo -- original musical
score by Edward Givens. Carpenter Hall Concerts and The Daedalus Project AIDS
Benefit, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 1992.

"In For Observation" Choreography. A 12 minute solo for a dancer/actor, using movement,
sound, and text. Carpenter Hall Concerts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 1991.

"A Tangled Web We Weave" Performance. Choreography by Bruce Brownlee. A 12 minute
duet on and around a 12 foot diameter spider web. Carpenter Hall Concerts, Oregon
Shakespeare Festival, 1991.

"The Battle of Tancredi and Clorinda" Choreography and Performance with Bruce Brownlee.
Monteverdi opera -- involved dance and sword fighting. Carpenter Hall Concerts,
Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 1991.

"The Permanence of Change" Choreography and Performance. A 6 minute quartet to *Vocalise*
by Rachmaninoff. Carpenter Hall Concerts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 1990.

"The Wind, Patience, and Contentment" Performance. Choreography by Donna (Brandstrom)
Hunt. Carpenter Hall Concerts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 1990.

"Can't A-Leave Her" Performance. Choreography by Bruce Brownlee. Carpenter Hall
Concerts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 1990

"Keepers of the Void" Performance. Choreography by John Leistner. Appalachian clogging.
Carpenter Hall Concerts, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, 1990.

"Tomfoolery" Choreography. A musical revue of the songs of Tom Lehrer. Everett (WA)
Community College, 1990.

"Negro Spirituals" Performance. (*Crucifixion* solo). Choreography by Helen Tamiris,
Reconstruction by Peggy Hackney. Faculty Dance Concert. University of Washington,
Seattle, 1990.

"Dream Recurring" Performance. Choreography by Michael S. Geiger. Faculty Dance Concert.
University of Washington, Seattle, 1990.

"The Amazon All-Stars" Choreography. An original musical comedy by Carolyn Gage and
Sue Carney. Ashland, Oregon, 1990.

"Incantation and Dance" Performance. Choreography by Gail Gustafson. Women in the Arts
Festival Dance Concert. Seattle, WA, 1989.

"The Shakers" Performance. Choreography by Doris Humphrey, Reconstruction by Peggy
Hackney. Faculty Dance Concert. University of Washington, Seattle, 1989.

"The Tragedy of Tragedies - or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great" Choreography.
A play by Henry Fielding. Drama students, University of Washington, Seattle, 1989.

"Fanshen" Choreography. A play by David Hare. Students from the Professional Actor
        Training Program, University of Washington, Seattle, 1989.
"Animal Farm" (Musical Adaptation). Choreography. Drama students, University of
        Washington, Seattle, 1988.
"Line" Choreography. A play by Israel Horowitz. Drama students, University of
        Washington, Seattle, 1988.
"Songs Without Words" and "From The Inner World" Performance. Choreography by Eric
        Johnson. Washington Hall Performance Gallery, Seattle, 1988.
"Mirage" and "Letting Go" Choreography. "Sarinagara" and "Contrapuntal Journey."
        Performance. Choreography by Janet Descutner. Western Oregon Institute For Arts In
        Education. Hult Center, Eugene, OR, July, 1987. "Mirage" also performed and
        adjudicated at Northwest Regional American College Dance Festival, University of
        Montana, February, 1986.

Production Work:

        Stage Manager, Faculty Dance Concert, University of Oregon, 1983.

Publications/Presentations:

Publications:

Collen, R. (1998). *Reproduction, Recreation, and Creation--Choreographer and Reconstructor, Judith
        Kennedy: Three Decades of Historical Dance at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.* Proceedings of
        the Dance History Scholars Conference, 1998.
Collen, R. (1997). *Uncovering Personal Pedagogy: The Congruence Between Self and Action.*
        Proceedings of the 30th Annual Meeting of the Congress on Research in Dance.
Collen, R. (1989). The Application of Laban Movement Analysis to Choreograph the
        Dramatic Text of the Play *Fanshen.* Unpublished Certification Project,
        Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies.
Collen, R. (1984). Passage...By Our Own Efforts: A Choreographic Portrait Based On Oral
        History. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University or Oregon.

Presentations:

(In preparation) "Dancing Shakespeare: A Few Basics of Renaissance Dance" and "Movement
        Possibilities for Character Development: Practical application of Rudolf Laban's
        Theories" Two Workshop/presentations at CODE (Council of Drama and Dance in
        Education) (Canadian organization); November 1-3, Brockville, Ontario.
"Movement in the Choral Rehearsal" Workshop/presentation with Professor Rebecca Reames,
        Virginia Music Educators Association, November, 2001.
"Tactile Pedagogy-The Use of Touch in Teaching Pilates-Based Conditioning" Workshop.
        Dancing in Millennium, Washington DC, July, 2000 (presented with Haley Hoss).
"Reproduction, Recreation, and Creation--Choreographer and Reconstructor, Judith Kennedy:
        Three Decades of Historical Dance at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival"
        Lecture, with Judith Kennedy. Society of Dance History Scholars, Eugene, Oregon,
        June, 1998.
"Uncovering Personal Pedagogy: The Congruence Between Self and Action" Lecture/Movement
        Workshop. The 30th Annual Meeting of the Congress on Research in Dance: *Dance,
        Culture & Art-Making Behavior.* Tucson, Arizona, October/November, 1997.
"The Theoretical and Practical Application of Imagery and Touch as Pedagogical Tools for
        Dance" (Co-presented with Marta Lichlyter). Lecture/Movement Workshop. *The
        Fourth Dance Science and Somatics Conference.* Cleveland, Ohio, February, 1997.
"Exploring Dynamics and Movement Qualities Through Style Analysis To Enhance Pedagogical
        Range" National Dance Association Conference: *Weaving Dance into Learning:
        Realities, Myths, and Dragons.* Minneapolis, MN, October, 1996.
"The Diverse Applications of Laban Movement Analysis: A Pedagogical Tool for Dance and
        Sport" Panel Presentation. National Dance Association, Atlanta, April, 1996.

"Enhancing Pedagogical Range Through Style Analysis" Poster Presentation, *Research Days*. Texas Woman's University, March, 1996.

"Dance Conditioning Based on the Theories of Joseph Pilates" A master class for students from Mukogawa Women's University. Texas Woman's University, March, 1996.

"Learning Culture Through Dance Reconstruction: An Introduction to Doris Humphrey's *The Shakers*." Panel presentation on Doris Humphrey. The Southwest/Texas Popular Culture Association and The Southwest/Texas American Culture Association. Tulsa, OK, February, 1996.

"Modern Dance Technique Based on the Principles of Laban Movement Analysis" Master Class. Southwest Regional American College Dance Festival. Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, 1995.

Service (Departmental, College, and Professional Organizations):

Chair, SUNY Potsdam Faculty Senate's Student Affairs Committee, Fall 2002.

Member of SUNY Potsdam Faculty Senate's Student Affairs Committee, Fall 2001-present.

Fellow, Residence Life, SUNY Potsdam, Fall 2002.

Advisor for Dance Ensemble, the Dance Program's student organization.

Member of SUNY Potsdam Academic Standards Committee, Fall 2001-present.

Dance advisor to Paul Siskind (Crane Faculty) on Bulgarian folk dance and rhythms, Fall, 2001.

Library Acquisitions Department Liaison, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 1998-2002.

Chair, Search Committee, Adjunct Dance Instructor, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 2001.

Member of Bylaws Revision Committee at Laban/Bartenieff Institute for Movement Studies, 2001-present.

Member, Department Search Committee: Design and Technical Theater Arts Educator. S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 2001.

Member of Student Affairs Committee, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 2001.

Organizational Assistant for Guest Artist; Performer, American Identities Festival, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 2001.

Rehearsal Director for guest choreographer, Richard Haisma, S.U.N.Y Potsdam, 2001.

Guest Teacher, Crane School of Music conducting students, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 2000-2001.

Curriculum development/revising Drama Major, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 1999-2001.

Member, Search Committee, E. J. Noble Outreach Internship, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 2000.

Department of Dance and Drama Representative, Faculty Assembly, S.U.N.Y Potsdam, 1999-2000

Department Coordinator, American College Dance Festival, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam, 1999, 2000, 2001.

Rehearsal Director for guest choreographer, Mathew Janczewski, S.U.N.Y Potsdam, 1999.

Manuscript Reviewer, National Dance Association, November, 1996.

Teacher, Annual High School Dance Symposium, Texas Woman's University, 1995-1996.

Adjudicator for dance technique class placement, Texas Woman's University, 1994-1997.

Writing Tutorials for Master's Degree students, Texas Woman's University, 1994-1997.

Choreography Consultant for University and community choreographers, 1994-1997.

Dance Conditioning Committee, Texas Woman's University, 1994-1997.

Certifications:

Labanotation Teacher's Certificate

Intermediate Labanotation Certificate

Elementary Labanotation Certificate

Laban Movement Analysis Certificate

Physicalmind Institute, The *Method* inspired by the fitness techniques and equipment developed by Joseph H. Pilates.

Professional Training:

Modern Dance: Laurie Sanda
Mary Williford-Shade
Gayle Ziaks

	Juanita Suarez
	Ed Groff
	Bala Sarasvati
	Mary Miller
	Teachers at the Nikolais/Louis Dance Studio

Ballet:	Adrienne Fisk
	Hannah Wiley
	Susan Zadoff
	Joan Lazarus
	Andre Tremaine
	Natalie Claire

Jazz and Tap:	Matt Mattox
	Janet Descutner

Int'l Folk Dance:	Linda Hearn
Renaissance Dance:	Judith Kennedy

Choreography:	Janet Descutner
	Penelope Hanstein

Laban Movement Analysis, Labanotation, Bartenieff Fundamentals:
Peggy Hackney, Ed Groff, Carol-LynneMoore, Pam Schick, Janet Descutner, Penelope Hanstein, Valarie Williams, Odette Blum

Aesthetics, History:	Janice LaPointe-Crump
	Caroline (Shell) Caine

Pedagogy:	Janet Descutner
	Gayle Ziaks

Fitness:	Elizabeth Jones Boswell
(Pilates-based)	Adrienne Fisk
	Joyce Yagerline

Workshops:

What Can Your LTEC Do For You? Forum, SUNY Potsdam, March, 2002.
Effective Teaching for Multiple Learning Styles, St. Lawrence University, 1999.
Getting Started on Assessment: Concepts and Strategies for Improving Teaching and Learning led by Dr. Stephen Sharkey of Alverno College, 1999, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam.
Women, Men and College Teaching: Different Rules for the Same Game? Dr. Sheila Tobias, Plenary Session Speaker, 1998, S.U.N.Y. Potsdam.
Creating Methodology, Research as Fundamental Art-Making, Karen Bond and Andrew Moorish. The 30th Annual Meeting of the Congress on Research in Dance: Dance, Culture & Art-Making Behavior. Tucson, Arizona, October/November, 1997.
Making Contact: The Language of Touch, Ed Groff and Donna Stirton-Glashow at The 30th Annual Meeting of the Congress on Research in Dance: Dance, Culture & Art-Making Behavior. Tucson, Arizona, October/November, 1997.
Somatics-based classes presented by Glenna Batson, Susan M. Bauer, Bill Evans, Susan Haigler-Robles, Donna Krasnow & Vera Orlock at The Fourth Dance Science and Somatics Conference. Cleveland, Ohio, February, 1997.
Certification Workshop in The "Method" inspired by the fitness techniques and equipment developed by Joseph H. Pilates. Elizabeth Jones Boswell (Summer, 1996), Houston, TX .
Labanotation Teacher Certification. Odette Blum , Summer, 1996, Texas Woman's University.
Modern Dance Technique and Partnering. Art Bridgman and Myrna Packer, Summer, 1996, Texas Woman's University.

Choreography and Music — A Collaboration. Mark Taylor with Carl Finch, director of *Brave Combo* , Summer, 1995, Texas Woman's University.
Stage Combat. Chris Villa, 1992, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Ashland.
Action Theatre. Ruth Zaporah, 1991, Berkeley, CA.

Master Classes Taken During Last Ten Years:

Modern Dance Technique: Sara Pearson and Patrik Widrig, 2002 S.U.N.Y. Potsdam.
Modern Dance Technique: Richard Haisma, 2001 S.U.N.Y. Potsdam.
Modern Dance Technique: Limón Dance Company; Janis Brenner, 1999 S.U.N.Y. Potsdam.
Movement and Vocal Improvisation, Christian Swenson, 1998 S.U.N.Y. Potsdam.
Modern Dance Technique, Mathew Janczewski, 1998 S.U.N.Y. Potsdam.
Pilates-based Conditioning and Scoliosis. Jillian Hessel, 1997 Dallas, Texas.
Multi-Generational Dance. Amy Dowling, 1996 Texas Woman's University.
Reconstructing Billy the Kid. Patrice Whiteside, 1995 Texas Woman's University.
Ballet. Ronn Guidi, Artistic Director of Oakland Ballet, 1995 Texas Woman's University.
Butoh. Joan Laage (1994 and 1996). Texas Woman's University.

Courses Qualified to Teach:

Modern Dance - Beginning through Advanced
Ballet - Beginning and Intermediate
Jazz - Beginning and Intermediate
Tap - Beginning
Ballroom Dance
Renaissance Dance
Improvisation
Dance Composition
Directing Student Choreography Projects
Labanotation
Laban Movement Analysis
Bartenieff Fundamentals
Pilates-Based Conditioning
Dance Appreciation
Dance Pedagogy
Dance History
Dance Criticism
Dance Aesthetics
Dance Pedagogy
Anatomy/Kinesiology for Dance
Movement for the Actor

Memberships in Professional Organizations:

Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies
Congress on Research in Dance
PhysicalMind Institute
Modus Humanus

Awards and Honors:

Texas Woman's University Programs in Dance: Excellence in Teaching Award, 1997
Kitty Winter Magee Honor Student, Texas Woman's University, 1994-1995 and 1995-1996
Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society, 1996
Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges, 1995-1996

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