

JAZZ DANCE LEARNING AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY: DEVELOPING
A CURRICULUM FOR 6-14 YEAR OLD STUDENTS IN A STUDIO SETTING

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INTRODUCTION

It is common for dancers to start learning dance at a young age, however I did not discover my interest in studying dance until high school. My dance training consisted of practicing with my high school drill team, as well as attending several local dance studios where I studied ballet, jazz, and tap. I value the teachers that sparked my passion for dance, however it was not until beginning my undergraduate studies at Texas Woman's University that I was introduced to the idea of movement-based somatics. With this holistic and somatic approach to teaching and learning, I was able to access and perceive movement beyond merely imitating my instructors.

Researcher Sondra Fraleigh (2015), who specializes in the field of dance somatics, describes this somatic perspective as, "...[a] study and practice concerned with holistic body-centered approaches to assist people in experimenting and transforming the self through awareness relative to the living world, the environment, and others." *Healthline*, an online provider of physical and mental health resources, describes this practice simply as, "...[using a] mind-body connection to help you survey your internal self and listen to signals your body sends about areas of pain, discomfort, or imbalance" (Raypole, 2020). Dancers can use somatic techniques to break away from negative habits and boost creativity by, "...moving from relaxed clarity as [opposed to] the clutter of consciousness (Fraleigh 2015, 5).

I consider this sensory, touch, and qualitative awareness as a dancer's personal inquiry that transforms the thinking mind and moving body into a thinking and moving being. This mind-body connection has transformed the way in which I perceive dance. For example, I used to judge one's ability to imitate the "correct" movement or shapes given by one's dance

instructor, and now I reject that act of judgement and instead crave genuine movement inquiry developed through one's heightened bodily awareness.

Since this change, I continuously work to incorporate multiple somatic approaches into my personal dance practice as well as teaching methods. This past year, during my teaching at a dance studio in North Texas, I began to wonder about ways I might integrate somatic dance practices into my curriculum for a jazz dance class I was teaching for 6-14 year old students. It is from this inquiry that this project arose.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The goal of this research project was to develop a curriculum for use in a studio-based jazz dance class for 6-14 year olds that promotes somatic awareness. My intention was to expand my teaching practices while also offering a jazz dance curriculum to the field of dance education.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can I develop and teach a five-week curriculum that integrates somatic approaches from Bartenieff Fundamentals with jazz dance technique to promote somatic awareness for 6-14 year olds in a mixed level studio dance class?

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This qualitative research employs a teaching self-study methodology. According to researcher Jason Ritter (2017), teaching self-studies are a complex process one undergoes to examine teaching practices in relation to personal beliefs and actions, typically involving ideas that challenge one's existing notions to allow for new thoughts. This reflective approach consisted of a literature review, creating a framework to guide the development of the curriculum, as well as the planning, implementation, and reflection of both personal teaching

practices, lesson plans, and general student engagement. This process ended with analysis of the self-study data in relation to the curriculum and guiding framework. The findings helped to guide the curriculum revisions and aided in expanding and improving my teaching practices. Here, I list for the reader the specific methodological and procedural steps implemented.

- **Literature Review:** I collected published research about jazz dance history, movement concepts of jazz dance, jazz dance pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and Bartenieff Fundamentals. My intention was to become informed about the context of jazz dance and its history while identifying key concepts in development of a framework to guide the creation of this curriculum.

- **Creating and Teaching the Curriculum:** I created a five-week curriculum and implemented it with students ranging 6-14 years of age in a mixed level studio jazz class. We met once a week for one hour spanning a total of 14 weeks.

- **Teacher Self Study:**
 - **Weekly Reflections on Teaching and Lesson Plans:** After teaching each lesson, I recorded reflections about my teaching, methods of instruction, and activities involved in the lessons, as voice memos on my cell phone. I followed researcher Natalia Orlova's (2009) reflective teaching methodology for pre-service teachers, which asks researchers to participate in self-reflection regarding, "...aspects of their own classroom practice" because "...it is through reflection on professional action that professional expertise is developed" (Orlova 2009, 30). I used the following list of questions to guide each reflection.
 - What was the goal for this lesson?
 - What was the Enduring Understanding? (A statement that summarizes the important idea from the lesson - not just knowing or doing, but a lasting value beyond the classroom. For example, "I can use different parts of my body to express movement, rhythms, and emotions.")
 - Define the methods of instruction, strategies, or practices used in this lesson. (ie. discussions, teacher led, student inquiry, partner activities, etc.)
 - Identify instruction methods, practices, and activities that appeared to promote somatic awareness as integrated with jazz dance concepts. What are the moments in which I saw an authentic integration? What were the moments in which I saw a shallow pairing?

- Were there moments in which I led students to reflect? What were they reflecting on? Were there clues in their reflection, or sharing, that helped me to understand their learning/understanding more accurately?
 - What was I doing as a teacher (in practice) that supported learning in this lesson and integration of concepts?
 - What practices, in relation to my guiding framework, led me to specific areas of growth, challenges, and successes around the concept/goals of culturally relevant pedagogy?
- **Reflection and Re-evaluation of Arising Challenges:** These additional written reflections occurred whenever I felt off-track, noticed challenges in my teaching or the curriculum, or when I came to new realizations. In these moments I chose to write freely, listening to my emotions as I thought back on specific situations within my classroom. I referred to Desjarlais and Smith's (n.d.) ten-step comparative analysis on reflection and self-assessment to help structure this reflection process.
 - Recognize a need to reflect.
 - Pick a time and place for reflection.
 - Play back the experience which triggered the reflection.
 - Document all insights in a reflection log.
 - Play a lot of "what-if" games.
 - Organize a list of insights into common themes.
 - Identify key insights.
 - Generalize key insights to a wider set of situations.
 - Determine whether there is a need to engage in other processes.
 - Assess the quality of the reflection process
- **Analyzing and Editing the Curriculum:** Each week, all self-study reflections were used to identify changes that needed to be made to the lesson plans, activities, or teaching practices for the following week's lesson. This process was an ongoing weekly endeavor. These changes were made in the best interest of those in my class and with the intention to deliver quality, professional, and appropriate pedagogy. Once the unit was concluded, I then analyzed the original curriculum (created before weekly changes were made) with the curriculum in its current form (the curriculum with changes made weekly as informed by my reflections). This final analysis and editing was guided by the following questions created from the University of South Florida's *Lesson Plan & Implementation: Reflection and Analysis* model (n.d.).
 - Compare and contrast the new lesson plans versus the old.

- What happened, what changed, or what was added to the newer lesson plans to make them more successful than the old ones?
- What is still missing in the new lesson plans?

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to note significant limitations to this study. I am a beginner in the field of jazz dance and its history. I had previously studied jazz dance for approximately eight years at various East Texas dance studios, Kilgore College, and Texas Woman's University. Further, my education in jazz dance did not include its cultural and historical roots, and those who taught me were teaching the form as ancillary to their main dance practice. I also want to acknowledge that I am an outsider to African American culture and jazz dance/music, as were all of my jazz dance teachers. Therefore, the teaching practices and curriculum created in this project should be understood as being created by someone who is new to the form. Additionally, the developed curriculum and practices will not fit all jazz dance classrooms, studios, students, or support all dance educators. My intention in this project is to offer to the reader an example of dance education research which outlines a process for curriculum development and improvement of teaching practices over time. In some ways, I value the findings and process of this professional development project over the resultant curriculum. I do not view the curriculum as perfect or fully representational of what a jazz dance curriculum could be or should be, but rather an important curriculum development process for myself, this dance studio in North Texas, and for these students at this time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this literature review I offer to the reader an introductory context of jazz dance followed by these sections: pedagogy and movement concepts of jazz dance, culturally relevant

pedagogy and dance education, and movement approaches from Bartenieff Fundamentals. From these four areas I constructed a framework of key ideas to help guide the development of the jazz dance curriculum.

Jazz Dance Historical Context

In this section I provide a brief contextual outline of jazz dance. Since I arrived at this research as neither a researcher of jazz history, nor a jazz dancer, this context is necessary as it grounded and provided a starting point for this project.

A most recent and in-depth telling of jazz dance history can be found in *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches*. Takiyah Nur Amin (2014) explains that jazz dance is deeply rooted in African aesthetics that traveled to America as a result of the transatlantic slave trade, “...from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth century” (Amin 2014, 37). Each of these cultural groups brought with them spiritual beliefs, practices, music, and traditions unique to their communities. “While the term [jazz] was not coined until the 1920s, the primary ancestry of jazz dance can be found by studying African dance forms and how they changed in the context of plantation life” (Amin 2014, 35). Historical records show that the expression of dance in plantation settings blended together African-derived movements that spanned a range of cultural groups through “...adopted, borrowed, and/or appropriated by dominant cultural groups” (Amin 2014, 39).

In the mid-1800s, minstrel shows were popular across the U.S. and included a wide variety of entertainers. White performers often used blackface and acted out exaggerated versions of African-derived dances, as a form of ridicule in these traveling shows (Amin, 2014). In the 1870s, Vaudeville shows set the stage for new musical and acrobatic acts, as well as

popularized a type of music from New Orleans called ragtime. This style of music was rooted in the African aesthetics of, "...syncopation, polyrhythm, and percussive use of the piano" (Amin 2014, 40). Not long after, popular music began using a triple-based rhythm with uneven beats and vocal-like sounds coming from instruments. The movements paired with this new jazz music were later referred to as jazz dance.

Dance researchers and educators, Jill Flanders Crosby and Michele Moss (2014), take us into the jazz age, which occurred from the 1920s to the 1940s. This era introduced new dance crazes as European social dances and traditional African American movements blended in new ways. Such dances highlighted, "...the swinging body in space, moving not only through the body's weighted and under-curve release in and through space but also through a propulsive, rhythmic conversation with the equally swinging and propulsive jazz music" (Crosby & Moss 2014, 48). At the peak of the Harlem Renaissance, the Savoy Ballroom became a popular intersection of jazz music and dance. A defining moment of this era occurred when both art forms converged to create the phenomenon known as swing.

The introduction of bebop music caused swing to decline in the 1940s. This form of jazz music uses a familiar swing rhythm, but contains a more complex sound with quick tempos and irregular chords. It persisted through the social dance slump brought on by World War II. During this time, many ballrooms closed their doors due to a 20% tax on all dance floors to support war efforts (Crosby & Moss, 2014). Jazz was soon replaced with other musical forms like rhythm and blues, Latin, rock'n'roll, as well as funk. The same shift could be seen on the Broadway stage, as a result of choreographers integrating jazz dance with ballet and modern dance elements. Through shifting the focus from rhythm to space and body lines, choreographers were

experimenting with what would later become known as “modern jazz dance” a white appropriation of the form (Crosby & Moss 2014, 55).

The 1960s were a time of experimentation as jazz music and dance evolved. Broadway, television, and film began to integrate outside art forms with jazz creating many new trends that included: Broadway jazz, jazz funk, authentic jazz, modern jazz, street jazz, theatrical jazz and concert jazz. These alternative forms continued to grow throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s, creating an interesting time in jazz dance education. Teachers were using popular music like rock and funk, but they considered their classes to be jazz technique. Begging the question, “What was jazz dance, and could it be separated from jazz music and still be called jazz dance?” (Crosby & Moss 2014, 62).

Pedagogy and Movement Concepts of Jazz Dance

After studying various books on the topic of jazz dance movement concepts, I chose the work of Katherine Dunham, Karen W. Hubbard, and Bob Boross, choreographers and researchers in the field of jazz dance, to help create a framework to guide curriculum development.

Researcher Joanna Dee Das explores the life and legacy of Katerine Dunham in her book titled, *Katherine Dunham: Dance and the African Diaspora*. I was drawn to this research for many reasons, most importantly the Dunham Technique, which researchers say helped influence jazz dance. In September of 1945, Katherine Dunham opened her own dance school with the goal of helping people, “...connect with the divine; to communicate with others across racial, ethnic, linguistic, class, or gender differences; and to release emotional energy through music and dance” (Das 2017, 108-109). The Dunham Technique highlighted the use of spine and

pelvis, percussive vs fluid contraction, release techniques and isolations. The Dunham School also provided various courses in social dance, "...Lindy, Swing, Boogie - black social dance precursors to jazz dance that were not typically considered 'techniques' and thus not generally taught at other dance schools at the time" (Das 2017, 110).

In *Valuing Cultural Context and Style*, Karen W. Hubbard lays out movement and rhythm objectives that encourage students to approach jazz as an indigenous U.S. dance form, immersing them in its historical and cultural contexts. She achieves this through an interactive warm-up that includes rhythmic improvisation, vocal scatting, and using the body to express different rhythmic patterns. Students then perform a series of isolations concentrating on the limbs and upper-spine. In her classes she includes interactive call and response activities that allow students to practice saying and executing traditional jazz dance vocabulary. She builds her teaching around the following traditional movement concepts: inclined torso with mobile spine and limbs, syncopated and/or polyrhythmic footwork, "swing" movement quality, and improvisational embellishments (Hubbard 2008).

Although jazz dance has evolved and shifted, new themes and concepts emerge within each new era. Bob Boross identifies three categories from which he teaches jazz dance, "...movement, rhythm, and expression" (Boross 2014, 10). He further articulates that within these categories are concepts of movement. He describes the concept of groundedness as the knees being bent and feet primarily in a parallel position with a relaxed body allowing for movement to be initiated from the pelvis extending through the distal ends of the body (arms and legs). Body part isolations are another movement he identifies as important within multiple jazz dance techniques. In addition, another movement concept is the internalization of specific music

qualities by matching or creating a counter-rhythm within jazz music during stretches and/or accented choreography. Accents may occur using the head, shoulders, arms, ribs, hips, knees and ankles (Boross 2014). Lastly, he names the relationship between improvisation and emotional connection as a key aspect of jazz dance technique. “More so than any other concert dance form, jazz dance involves ‘feeling’ and ‘being’ the dance, as opposed to a detached inhabitation” (Boross 2014, 10).

From this literature review of jazz dance pedagogy and movement concepts, I created a list of concepts and practices to help guide the development of this curriculum.

Movement/Rhythm	Body	Social Engagement	Performance
Isolations Contractions Initiation from spine and pelvis Polyrhythms Syncopation	Bent hip, knees and ankle joints Groundedness Use of flat foot Angularity and asymmetry	Sense of community Call and response Interaction between musicians and dancers Vocal encouragement Individual creativity within group	Improvisational embellishments Joyousness Creativity Emotional connection

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Dance Education

In this section, I put into conversation ideas from culturally relevant pedagogy theorists and those who discuss the need for culturally relevant pedagogy in dance education. I then conclude this section with an outline of culturally relevant teaching practices that were added to my framework to help guide the final edit of the curriculum. I added this review in the middle of the project as I realized I was lacking and struggling with pedagogical strategies and perspective to help approach this teaching as appropriate and culturally relevant.

According to educational theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings, culturally relevant pedagogy is a method of, "...teaching and learning that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impact knowledge" (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Crystal Davis (2018) investigates issues of Whiteness in dance education as a form of culturally responsive pedagogical research, specifically its effect on Pre-K through higher education students. She highlights the ways in which "Whiteness" is presented within the field of dance through terminology, curriculum, aesthetics, and administration (Davis 2018, 121-122). She explains that dismantling White privilege is by acknowledging its presence in dance curriculum. Only by interrupting, "...microaggressions, White privilege, and racial and cultural biases that present themselves in dance classrooms, curriculum, and assessment models," can we begin to equalize dance education (Davis 2018, 125). According to researcher Danielle Robinson (2006), this White privilege can be seen in the way white dance professionals are credited for the marketing and teaching of "...jazz steps to the American public as teachers and choreographers dating back to the 1920s" (Robinson 2006, 19). Some consider this exploitation of African American culture a result of studio teachers merely teaching movement concepts without first contextualizing the forms.

Lindsay Guarino (2014) has published work that specifically looks into the decline of teaching authentic jazz dance technique in the studio setting. She explains that current jazz dance technique has become more of a competitive sport than an art form due to commercialization. "Young dancers today idolize the dancers they see on television and often strive to perform in a similar fashion" (Guarino 2014, 201). Some consider studio jazz dance pedagogy as *jazz-derived* or *jazz-influenced* rather than jazz movement rooted in the social and kinetic experiences of

various African cultures (Guarino, 2014). Studios that do participate in competitions often have to decide which jazz category their submission(s) fall into - "...street jazz, jazz funk, pop jazz, contemporary jazz, lyrical jazz, and musical theater jazz" (Guarino 2014, 199). Some find this evolution of the genre problematic because it has been stripped of its historical roots in order to attract audiences.

Julie Kerr-Berry (2010) explores the progress, or lack thereof, in dance education regarding race and racial issues in her article *Peeling Back the Skin of Racism: Real History and Race in Dance Education*. She highlights that although strides have been made about race in our society, higher education remains a whitewashed academia that values Western concert dance over world dance forms. Specifically, Kerr-Berry suggests reconsidering dance history pedagogy to include the contributions of African Americans. She claims, "There is still much work to be done before we can enter an era of post-racial dance education," and those in positions of power are responsible for making these changes happen (Kerr-Berry 2010, 5). This article relayed an important message that educators should use their position of power to re-examine dance history pedagogy and integrate a broad range of voices and work from other cultures.

During my project, I came across the work of Nora Ambrosio (1993) and Lindsey Salfran (2019). Their work focuses on how jazz dance can be taught using African-based influences, as opposed to those only based on a Eurocentric model. Their published curriculum highlights the importance of a sociocultural education using the historical background of jazz dance as a foundation. Ambrosio urges that, "...dance teachers should become familiar with the historical background of jazz dance, recognize the standard elements of choreography, know the

philosophical opinions and aesthetic ideas of prominent jazz dancers and choreographers and distinguish outstanding examples of popular choreography” (Ambrosio 1993, 42).

Nyama McCarthy-Brown (2009) shares her experiences with inclusion in the classroom and offers teaching strategies to create a culturally responsive classroom. Inspired by an interview with African dancer Vusi Ngema, McCarthy-Brown decided to shift her teaching methods to help students connect to their “culture and family,” instead of favoring one dance aesthetic over another (McCarthy-Brown 2009, 121). She advises teachers to look for small ways to implement rituals and customs from other cultures into their class structure. In doing so, the classroom becomes a diverse and more inclusive space for all students.

From this review of literature I identified culturally relevant pedagogical practices and values which were added to my guiding framework:

- Work to question and uncover racial biases, assumptions, and narratives in relationship to curriculum development and pedagogical choices.
- Include diverse voices and cultures in jazz dance pedagogy.
- Encourage students to share their own cultures within dance learning.
- Learn the history and culture of jazz dance before teaching the form to students.

Bartenieff Fundamentals

According to the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies, Bartenieff Fundamentals is an extension of Laban Movement Analysis first developed by Rudolf von Laban. His work, “...identified and illuminated the concepts of Effort, Space, Shape, Action of Body Parts, and Group Relationships as elements which describe how human beings express themselves through movement” (Hackney, 2002). Irmard Bartenieff, a former student of Laban’s, pioneered the Bartenieff Fundamentals with an intention of providing, “...exercise concepts for

the experience of the body in motion with an awareness of how and why it is moving”
(Bartenieff Fundamentals, 2020).

Peggy Hackney, a registered Somatic Movement Therapist and teacher of Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis, worked with Irmgard Bartenieff for nearly 15 years. Inspired by the work of her mentor, Hackney wrote *Making Connections: Total Body Integration Through Bartenieff Fundamentals*. She explains how this training starts at a fundamental level in order to prepare the body for movement at a higher capacity. While her work is wide, covering aspects like Total Body Connectivity, Breath Support, and Developmental Progressions I focused on two specific concepts in the development of this curriculum.

In this project, I focused on Hackney’s concept of inner connectivity/outer expressivity which describes how understanding the relationships between different parts of the body increases one’s awareness and ability to articulate and express themselves through movement (Hackney 2002, 44). Also Hackney’s interpretation of breath support as being, “...the key to life, movement, and rhythm” resonated with me in this project because it is a basic place to start with my students (Hackney 2002, 51). She believes that breath helps us to connect within ourselves, as well as in unity with the universe. She goes on to describe how breath changes in relation to our ever-changing emotions. In addition, one can engage with breath to better understand how the body feels and moves. I included this concept as a focus with my students because I was curious if and how breathwork could enhance the learning and practice of jazz dance movement concepts.

Here I list two components added to my framework from Bartenieff Fundamentals:

- Self-awareness in the dance classroom may help students better understand their dancing, the classroom environment, and their classmates.

- Students may better express feelings and emotions when their movement is supported by breath.

GUIDING FRAMEWORK

After conducting the literature review I compiled concepts, values, and information I felt was important in guiding the development of the jazz dance curriculum.

Jazz Dance - What is important to teach?

Movement/Rhythm	Body	Social Engagement	Performance
Isolations Contractions Use of spine and pelvis Polyrhythms Syncopation	Bent hip, knees and ankle joints Groundedness Use of flat foot Angularity and asymmetry	Sense of community Call and response Interaction between musicians and dancers Vocal encouragement Individual creativity within group	Improvisational embellishments Joyousness Creativity Emotional connection

Pedagogical Practices and Principles - What are ways to teach the above concepts?

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Dance Education	<p>Work to question and uncover racial biases, assumptions, and narratives in relationship to curriculum development and pedagogical choices.</p> <p>Include diverse voices and cultures in jazz dance pedagogy.</p> <p>Encourage students to share their own cultures within dance learning.</p> <p>Learn the history and culture of jazz dance before teaching the form to students.</p>
Bartenieff Fundamentals - Pedagogy	<p>Self-reflection in the dance classroom may help students better understand their dancing, the classroom environment, and their classmates.</p> <p>Students may better express feelings and emotions when their movement is supported by breath.</p>

FINDINGS

In the next steps of this project I created the curriculum, taught the lessons, and conducted a teacher self-study and curriculum analysis. This analysis and evaluation of activities and practices was ongoing, ie. while teaching, after each lesson, and after the conclusion of the unit, and always in relationship to my guiding framework. From this analysis there were four significant findings that helped to expand my teaching strategies and complete a final edit of the created curriculum (see appendix for final curriculum). The findings are:

- **Jazz and Somatic Concepts were Separate:** A few weeks into the research I started feeling lost, unable to see any emerging connections between the pre-selected somatic and jazz components I was attempting to integrate. After looking back at my original lesson plans and listening to my voice memos from the previous weeks, I realized that I was viewing elements of Bartenieff fundamentals and jazz dance as separate parts that were only being paired together in a shallow way -- not integrated. Further, when looking at my notes and lesson plans I found that I was focusing more on the development of Bartenieff Fundamentals than the jazz concepts. I found that I needed to create meaningful class activities that fused the two worlds -- mind/body relationships with jazz movement.
- **Historical and Cultural Context was Missing:** One day, during a class discussion, I asked if any students knew where jazz music and movement began as a form. One by one they pointed to different areas of a world map, only one said the U.S. This interaction with my students, along with the analysis of my lesson plans, revealed that historical and cultural components were missing in the original lesson plans. A lack of historical and cultural context prompted me to further reflect on my teaching and curriculum choices in relation to the setting in which I teach. This studio is located in Decatur, Texas just 45 miles northwest of Dallas. The town has a population of roughly 6,989 people, whose racial composition can be broken into 87.80% White and 3.07% African American residents (2020). These statistics can be seen within my studio's predominantly White customer base. Due to a lack of diversity amongst our customers and my own hidden biases, I often questioned if my original lesson plans would make the parents or dancers uncomfortable. I had been shying away from working to integrate history into the lesson plans out of fear that I might integrate it incorrectly. I think this fear stemmed from my previous training in jazz dance, which was a more whitewashed version of jazz that did

not contextualize the form. Additionally, I felt that I did not have the right to teach about black history because I am not a part of the culture. I found that I needed to overcome my own biases about bringing forth historical contexts outside of my own. How could I include more context in a meaningful, genuine manner? I went back into my literature review and studied Crystal Davis' research on dismantling White privilege to implement a more inclusive dance curriculum. I found that, even without trying to, I was prioritizing Bartenieff Fundamentals over the jazz dance concepts. To decentralize European dance forms within any dance classroom, Davis stresses that, "Every dance form should be examined within its own historical and cultural context and not separate from that context" (Davis, 2018). In addition, she urges that one must be smart about how the jazz curriculum is constructed in order to avoid categorizing certain dance forms over others, or in this case layering European ideals on top of jazz dance concepts.

- **Where is Jazz Music?:** When analyzing my lesson plans, I found that I had fallen into an old teaching habit of pairing pop music with jazz technique. I noticed that the use of pop music was not supporting students' understanding of syncopated rhythms, making it more difficult to learn the traditional jazz movement concepts, and further contributed to my finding that I was not including historical and cultural context for my students.
- **Jazz Dance is Already Somatic:** In the moments when my teaching fully invested in guiding students to explore jazz dance alone (without my prescribed "addition" of somatics), I realized a somatic experience was already unfolding. I found that my goal was no longer to explore the integration of jazz with somatics, but to instead understand that somatic practices and content was already present in the jazz dance form. My teaching reflections and observations of heightened student engagement revealed that exploring jazz rhythms, traditional movement concepts, and improvisation with jazz music supported student exploration of inner connectivity to outer physical and spatial awareness. This somatic practice of physical awareness paired with structured moments of self-reflection through breathwork, class discussions, and self check-ins as outlined from Bartenieff Fundamentals enhanced their creativity resulting in what I found to be a more expressive movement inquiry and experience.

EDITING THE CURRICULUM AND TEACHING PRACTICES

Based on the above findings, the following changes were implemented to edit the curriculum:

- **Clarifying Enduring Understandings in the Curriculum:** My first edit to the curriculum was to clarify and create an enduring understandings chart that mapped out the main concept for each lesson plan, the main and enduring takeaway for students. I

added an “I can...” statement describing what the understanding might sound like from a student’s perspective. For example, when learning the importance of breath, the enduring understanding for students was that everyone breathes and breath is essential for navigating life, movement, rhythms and emotions. The “I can” statement was, “I can use breath to dance different movements, rhythms, and emotions.” The enduring understandings helped me to organize a more intentional and purposeful curriculum and moved me away from the idea of layering concepts. This allowed for a deeper exploration of somatic jazz dance concepts as being experienced by a moving/thinking body, rather than guiding students through layers of experiences and activities.

- **Adding Cultural and Historical Context:** When editing the curriculum, I used jazz dance historical and cultural context as the overall umbrella from which all other components of the lesson plans lived. Lesson one starts with a facilitated conversation about the origin of jazz dance movement, allowing students to begin building their jazz movement vocabulary with a clear understanding of its African roots. Lesson two continues to paint the picture of jazz dance history with the addition of contextualizing jazz music to better support student learning. It is important to note that these informational conversations only appear in the first two lesson plans, however I do not think teachers should limit opportunities for students to gain more insight. This condensed curriculum called for contextualization towards the beginning to support students’ learning of traditional movement concepts and music structure throughout the remaining weeks of class.
- **Visual Representations of Jazz Dance History:** In addition to adding historical context of jazz movement and music to the lessons, I also presented video clips of social dances from the 30s, 40s, 50s, and into the 2000s regularly for my students. These videos provided additional context because I was able to describe in greater detail the social aspects of the genre like call and response, interactions between dancers and musicians, vocal encouragement and the big bands that represented jazz music at the time. Further, it brought images and voices of the form to my students. I was no longer trying to be the primary source of knowledge.
- **Jazz Music:** With jazz movement concepts deeply intertwined with jazz music, it was important for students to explore them simultaneously, therefore I began to use jazz music exclusively in class. With this addition I included names and information about jazz musicians, and began counting different rhythms and teaching them about notes: quarter, half, whole and eighth. Next, I added the pairing of jazz movements with each type of note, exploring various rhythms. The more we expanded upon this activity, the more their confidence grew. The spontaneous nature of jazz music seemed to offer more

artistic choices regarding musicality than pop music did.

- **Bartenieff Fundamentals as a Teaching Tool:** Using Bartenieff Fundamentals as a teaching tool rather than a primary source from which to create activities did, at times, benefit my teaching of specific jazz dance movement concepts. For example, the way Hackney introduces breath made it easy to intertwine with the ideas of rhythm and emotional expression in jazz dance. I created an activity based on her quote, “Breath is the key to life, movement and rhythm” (Hackney 2002, 51). We first discussed how inner connectivity, using reflection and breathwork, can help us make clear decisions about how we outwardly express ourselves. Students then participated in a movement study embodying certain pre-selected emotions - i.e. sleepy, angry and happy. In the moment, we pointed out similarities, differences and specific choices being made regarding movement quality, sound and rhythm in relation to each emotion.

CONCLUSION

The original intent of this research was to develop a curriculum that integrated aspects of Bartenieff Fundamentals with jazz dance technique to promote somatic awareness for 6-14 year olds in a mixed level studio dance class. However, after studying the cultural inequities of our field, learning more about culturally relevant pedagogy and its values, it became clear that there was a more important goal and approach to this project. My process then became an inquiry about how to teach jazz dance in a way that provided a historical and cultural context of the form while exploring jazz dance concepts with my students in a way that acknowledged the form’s already existing somatic nature. Additionally, once I acknowledged my assumptions and biases about jazz dance and Bartenieff Fundamentals, I was then able to open my lesson plans and structure to include exploration of what was missing, or what I did not know. This change led to a transition of my teaching practices from “teaching to” the students to a kind of “facilitator of learning” for us all.

I offer this curriculum in its current form, and I acknowledge that more work can be done

to enrich the curriculum with new voices, especially those who are from the African American community and who are masters of the form. I offer most importantly in this project an example of a professional development process of enacting a pedagogy of “not knowing,” and of working to learn with my students. I value the work and the practice of creating culturally responsive dance practices, but know that this work is a continual process and can never be fully achieved.

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APPENDIX

Beginner/Intermediate Jazz Class (Week 1)

Age: 6-14 years old

Movement Concepts:

1. Isolations/Contractions/Bent hip, knees, ankle joints/Groundedness/Use of flat foot
2. Side chasses/Ball changes/Front chasses (from corner)/Three step turns
3. Introduction to improvisation and creating choreography

Objective:

Students will learn the origin of jazz dance movement and begin building their movement vocabulary while exploring choreography and improvisational embellishments.

Time	Activity	Description	Materials
5 min	Contextual Conversation	Teacher introduces a brief but comprehensive historical background of where jazz dance movement originated.	Chapter 6 - <i>Jazz dance: a history of the roots and branches</i> by Takiyah Nur Amin
10 min	Introductory Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask students to imagine one item at home that they treasure ● Have them create a movement or gesture that reflects their item ● One at a time, have each dancer introduce themselves and perform her/his movement. Followed by a brief explanation of what they chose and why. <p>Teacher will highlight the historical significance of storytelling in traditional African-based movements, as well as the importance of honoring students' individual backgrounds.</p>	
10 min	Stretch/Warm-up	<p>Students will face the front of the room with the teacher mirroring their movements. The teacher will lead students in a stretch routine that introduces the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Isolations ● Contractions 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bent hip, knees, ankle joints ● Groundedness ● Use of flat foot <p>Next, the teacher will warm students up using a call and response style to introduce jazz dance footwork. This will gradually get students moving all around the studio. (ex. weight shifts, stylized walks, other rhythmic variations)</p>	
20 min	Exploration of Movement Concepts	<p>The teacher will introduce the following jazz movement concepts using call and response and vocal scatting to enhance instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Side chasses ● Ball changes ● Front chasses (from corner) ● Three step turns 	
10 min	Student Choreography/Improvisation	<p>(4 min) Students will choose 2-3 movement concepts and create their own short jazz combination. They can also use footwork introduced in the warm-up to embellish their choreography. (6 min) Students will perform their combination in small groups. Teachers will instruct students to use vocal encouragement to support peers.</p>	
5 min	Cool-down	<p>Breath Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have dancers lay on their backs ● Ask them to place their bean bag on their belly button ● Facilitate a few rounds of slow breathing in through their nose for three counts (<i>observe the bean bag as it rises along with their belly</i>) and out through their mouth for three counts (<i>watch the bean bag lower as the belly deflates</i>). 	Bean bags (or other small lightweight items)

Beginner/Intermediate Jazz Class (Week 2)

Age: 6-14 years old

Movement Concepts:

1. Isolations/Contractions/Bent hip, knees, ankle joints/Groundedness/Use of flat foot
2. Side chasses/Ball changes/Front chasses (from corner)/Three step turns/Jazz Slides/Pas de Bourrees

Objective:

Students will begin to simultaneously learn about the history of jazz music alongside jazz dance movement concepts.

Time	Activity	Description	Materials
10 min	Contextual Conversation	<p>Teacher introduces a brief but comprehensive historical background of African movement and its influence on jazz music. Further, provide a contextualization of what jazz music is.</p> <p>Present video of Shorty George (YouTube), famous dancer from Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, NY</p>	<p>Chapter 7 - <i>Jazz dance: a history of the roots and branches</i> by Jill Flanders Crosby and Michele Moss</p> <p><i>A History of Jazz in America</i> by Barry Ulanov</p> <p>YouTube: <i>Shorty George</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYjT1gtQM9c</p>
10 min	Stretch/Warm-up	<p>Students will face the front of the room with the teacher mirroring their movements. The teacher will lead students in a stretch routine that incorporates the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Isolations ● Contractions ● Bent hip, knees, ankle joints ● Groundedness ● Use of flat foot <p>The teacher will introduce dancers to counting jazz music by teaching them about the different notes (quarter, half, whole, eighth) and how many beats per measure they get. The teacher will pair a simple jazz movement concept with each</p>	<p><i>It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got Musicality</i> by Erinn Liebhard</p>

		type of note. Through call and response, students will practice moving in different rhythmic patterns around the room.	
20 min	Exploration of Movement Concepts	The teacher will review/introduce the following jazz movement concepts using call and response and vocal scatting to enhance instruction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Side chasses ● Ball changes ● Front chasses (from corner) ● Three step turns ● Jazz slides* ● Pas de bourrees* 	
10 min	Combination	Students will learn a short center floor combination that includes the two new jazz movement concepts (jazz slide and pas de bourree) as well as a few other familiar concepts/footwork sequences. This combination should highlight the use of syncopation and polyrhythm in jazz music.	
5 min	Cool-down	The teacher will facilitate a class discussion that allows students to reflect on what they have learned so far (history, jazz movement concepts).	

Beginner/Intermediate Jazz Class (Week 3)

Age: 6-14 years old

Movement Concepts:

1. Isolations/Contractions/Bent hip, knees, ankle joints/Groundedness/Use of flat foot
2. Three step turns/Jazz slides/Pas de bourrees/Front chasses (from corner)/Grand jetes
3. Improvisation

Objective:

Students get to embellish various jazz movement concepts learned in class, as well as experiment with their own jazz improvisation inspired by visual representations of social dancing from the past and present.

Time	Activity	Description/Objective	Materials
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10 min	Check-in/Contextual Conversation	<p>Start class off by having students take turns sharing one good thing that has happened that week.</p> <p>Share with students two YouTube videos that represent both social dance from the past and present.</p>	<p>YouTube: <i>Swing Dance 1940</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdbyd_1y5nE&list=PLDVN_buqYt2CCODOC_0BSY2Wlj_1ICzzK&index=2</p> <p>YouTube: <i>Swing Riot Invitational Battle Part 3 - Crossover & Finale - Montreal Swing Riot 2015</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7O6kPEPOoaE&list=PLDVN_buqYt2CCODOC_0BSY2Wlj_1ICzzK&index=5</p>
15 min	Stretch/Warm-up	<p>Students will spread out in a circle, as the teacher leads the stretch routine that incorporates the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Isolations ● Contractions ● Bent hip, knees, ankle joints ● Groundedness ● Use of flat foot <p>The teacher will split the class into two separate groups. One person at a time will enter the middle of their assigned circle and lead the group's warm-up. She/he can choose from the various jazz movement concepts previously learned or they can improvise. Leaders are encouraged to pair vocal scatting along with their chosen movement.</p>	
15 min	Exploration of Movement Concepts	<p>The teacher will review/introduce the following jazz movement concepts using call and response and vocal scatting to enhance instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Three step turns 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jazz slides ● Pas de bourrees ● Front chasses (from corner) ● Grand jetes* 	
5 min	Student Improvisation	Have students play “Freeze Dance,” but provide different scores through the game (ex. must incorporate specific movement concepts learned that day, different levels, interact with another person, play around with rhythms or syncopation, etc).	
10 min	Cool-down	<p>Have students sit or lie down and participate in a five minute meditation.</p> <p>The teacher will facilitate a class discussion about different times during the day or night that it might be helpful to check in with one’s breath.</p>	<p>YouTube: <i>5-Minute Meditation You Can Do Anywhere</i> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inpok4MKVLM</p>

Beginner/Intermediate Jazz Class (Week 4)

Age: 6-14 years old

Movement Concepts:

1. Isolations/Contractions/Bent hip, knees, ankle joints/Groundedness/Use of flat foot
2. Front chasses (from corner)/Grand jetes/Kick ball changes/Jazz squares
3. Improvisation with emotion score

Objective:

Students will deepen their understanding of breath and how it can help them better express their emotions through movement.

Time	Activity	Description/Objective	Materials
10 min	Stretch/Warm-up	<p>Students will spread out in a circle, as the teacher leads the stretch routine that incorporates the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Isolations ● Contractions ● Bent hip, knees, ankle joints ● Groundedness ● Use of flat foot <p>The teacher will pair a simple jazz</p>	

		<p>movement concept with each type of note. After building a gradual sequence (8 quarter, 4 half, 2 whole, 16 eighth), students will repeat the sequence on their own moving throughout the space. The goal is to begin interacting with others while incorporating their own embellishments.</p>	
20 min	Exploration of Movement Concepts	<p>The teacher will review/introduce the following jazz movement concepts using call and response and vocal scatting to enhance instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Front chasses (from corner) ● Grand jetes ● Kick ball changes* ● Jazz squares* 	
12 min	Combination	<p>Students will learn a short across the floor combination that includes all four movement concepts previously practiced. However, the teacher will only give students the footwork requiring them to choreograph their own upper body movements.</p>	
13 min	Improvisation Activity	<p>Students will be split in half. Each group will get a turn to spread out in the room and improvise according to the emotion given (happy, angry, sleepy, etc). The teacher will facilitate discussions about the movement choices being made in the moment.</p>	
5 min	Cool-down	<p>Discuss with students the importance of breath and its effect on our emotions. <i>“Breath is the key to life, movement, and rhythm.”</i></p> <p>End class with three unison deep breaths.</p>	<p>Pg. 51 - <i>Making Connections</i> by Peggy Hackney</p>

Beginner/Intermediate Jazz Class (Week 5)

Age: 6-14 years old

Movement Concepts:

1. Paddle turns/Chaine turns
2. Review of previously learned jazz movement concepts
3. Choreography project using jazz movement concepts

Objective:

Students will partake in a culminating choreography project inspired by the jazz dance historical information, visual representations from both past and present social dance, and jazz movement concepts covered over the five week unit.

Time	Activity	Description/Objective	Materials
10 min	Stretch/Warm-up	<p>Students will spread out in a circle, as the teacher leads the stretch routine that incorporates the following concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Isolations ● Contractions ● Bent hip, knees, ankle joints ● Groundedness ● Use of flat foot <p>The teacher will pair a simple jazz movement concept with each type of note (8 quarter, 4 half, 2 whole, 16 eighth). Students will improvise using the given movement concepts while moving throughout the space. The goal is to begin interacting with others while incorporating their own embellishments, polyrhythms, and syncopation.</p>	
20 min	Exploration of Movement Concepts	<p>The teacher will review/introduce the following jazz movement concepts using call and response and vocal scatting to enhance instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kick ball changes ● Jazz squares ● Paddle turns ● Chaine turns 	
15 min	Group Choreography Project	<p>The teacher will randomly assign small groups. Each group will choreograph a short dance (1 min max), that may include any jazz movement concept covered over the five week unit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Isolations 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contractions ● Bent hip, knees, ankle joints ● Groundedness ● Use of flat foot ● Side chasses ● Ball changes ● Front chasses (from corner) ● Three step turns ● Jazz slides ● Pas de bourrees ● Grand jetes ● Kick ball changes ● Jazz squares ● Paddle turns ● Chainé turns ● Improvisational embellishments ● Polyrhythm ● Syncopation 	
10 min	Group Performances	The teacher will facilitate an informal class performance. The audience will sit in a large circle around the performers and are encouraged to support their peers with vocal encouragement during each performance.	
5 min	Cool-down	In the same large circle, each dancer will get a chance to reflect on their favorite moment, concept, or activity from the unit.	