

DANCE
Current Selected Research
Volume 5

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With the Cooperation of the National
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DANCE
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PREFACE

This fifth volume of *Dance: Current Selected Research* presents a variety of invited papers that are concerned with various aspects of dance education. The criteria for the consideration of such papers for publication consisted of: (1) original manuscripts on topics for which valid techniques in experimental, historical, ethnographic, clinical research have been applied in the collection of data with appropriate analytical treatment of the data; (2) state-of-the-art research reviews on topics of current interest with a substantial research literature base; and (3) theoretical papers presenting well-formulated but as yet interested models.

It is the intention of the editors and AMS Press, Inc. to continue to provide dance researchers and students with a series reporting original investigative research that is important to the advancement of knowledge in all aspects of dance. The volumes are intended to supplement and support journals and annual reviews reporting on similar topics.

This series should contribute to communication among those who represent the various aspects of dance. Each volume is meant to serve as a reference for educators investigating similar topics. Courses of study considering topics on dance should find this series useful as a supplement to required readings.

A volume of this nature would not be possible without the cooperation of many individuals. In this regard we wish to thank the contributors for presenting their work for evaluation. The enthusiasm and support of the National Dance Association continues to be important to the contribution of this series.

THE ETUDES PROJECT: INSPIRING INNOVATIONS FOR DANCE EDUCATION

Diane B. McGhee

Thanks to American Dance Legacy Institute founders Carolyn Adams and Julie Adams Strandberg, the invention of the Repertory Etude™ has become an unparalleled gift to the field of dance. In the 1990's, the sisters concluded that study of master repertory was central to dance literacy and that the legacy of dying American modern dances should be maintained. Etudes introduced the idea that kinesthetic aspects of dance masterworks could be available to everybody for ongoing access and performance, thereby perpetuating legacy. Teacher professional development and public school dance programs were seen as vehicles for disseminating the dream. One year after birth of the first Repertory Etude™ by Donald McKayle (Rainbow Repertory Etude, 1997), an effort was made to fuse Etude dance and masterwork studies with comprehensive standards-based teaching and learning. The initiative became known as The Études Project. This report describes the dynamic collaboration that shaped the design and process of this new model for dance education. It considers how the innovations and implications advance dance literacy. Repertory Etudes™ are a new source for accessing magnificent dance creations, deepening historical connections, and influencing emerging student art. The Etudes Project is generating unprecedented resources for the field where none had previously existed.

The 1990s were dramatic times of turbulence and promise for the field of dance and dance education. Philosophical debates sparked as educational dance transformed its identity from a misunderstood subdivision of physical education to a core academic subject centered in the arts (Bonbright, 1999). The change caused the dance field to painfully examine the neglect of its own cultural and artistic literacy base. For some time, dancers had been left trying to train the next generation without adequate resources or repertory access (Adams and Strandberg, 2000). Pressures to expand teacher-licensing programs in dance were compounded by

simultaneous needs in education to implement standards, develop comprehensive dance curricula at all levels, and delineate assessment strategies. These plural forces influenced and foreshadowed the launch of The Etudes Project. The urgency and risk of moving dance through unchartered waters were imminent. As Project founders aggressively sought solutions to improve the state of affairs for dance, artists, educators, and students were invited to the conversation. Inspiration and new ideas emerged from the collaboration. This is the story of a seven-year journey from The Etudes Project's inception to beginning investigations, from field-testing methods and ideas to considering results and implications for the future of dance. The quest is on going. This reflective paper marks a mere pause in the continuing work of The Etudes Project.

Signs of the Times: Justification for the Etudes Project

Frail Memories

The art of dance lives in the moment- it is present (we see it or do it) and then it is gone. Technology helps us sustain particular effects of original dances but the language is no longer authentic. Technology often becomes a presenter of information about a dance or a media translation of a dance. Other startling complications arise because of the instantaneous, non-lasting presence of dance. Creating analogies to experiences in other arts disciplines may illuminate these complexities.

Consider Pablo Picasso as he completed his painting, *Portrait of Ambroise Vollard*. Imagine that with the last brushstroke, the work suddenly evaporated. For those persons privileged to view the portrait in its final stages, they may try to relate the painting's remarkable qualities to others through words. The viewers could discuss Picasso's revolutionary departure from the style of earlier masters and illusionary dismantling of three-dimensional forms. Some may be haunted by the memory of the work and attempt to reproduce its likeness. Would reproductions be true and accurate to the original? Inspired by a great dance performance, what methods do dancers use to keep a memory lingering?

What if a poem created by Maya Angelou disappeared off the page as soon as the words were read? How could one ever enjoy the poem again? What memories would be left of word, rhyme or passionate idea? How important are written symbolic representations of ideas derived from the mind and oral language? What about dance can be accurately transferred using alternate means of communication?

What if a budding pianist could never hear or play the European classic works of Chopin, Bach, or Beethoven? What

historical information and meaning would be lost? What if links to most music masterpieces were nonexistent? How would this change the field of music? How does missing historical information affect the field of dance and student learning?

We cannot turn on a radio and enjoy a variety of dance as we can in music. It is impossible for families to stroll through an important collection of authentic dance as with an exhibit at a local art museum. How then does a dancer perpetuate the legacy of his craft and memory of his work? Which dance masterpieces become the hallmarks of time and culture?

Other than in entrenched traditions (as with ethnic dance or well established genres such as ballet), dancers have been generally unable to pass on their legacy beyond a generation or two. For a dance called into performance at a later date, a classic legal issue emerges: Who owns copyright to the intellectual property? If a choreographer holds copyright "close to the vest," what are the chances the work will ever be perpetuated? What happens to twentieth-century American modern dances when the creators are gone? How does the art form grow without constantly reinventing the wheel of ideas, technical style, and creative craft? If American citizens cannot call up their own cultural dance masterpieces, does it mean that the role of dance in American culture was/is nonexistent? Lack of dance works in the public domain, copyright laws preventing public access, and dying legacy have been almost insurmountable obstacles for perpetuating the founding ideas in American modern dance.

Of course a dancer examines questions of legacy on a daily basis. A choreographer may ask her dancers, "What do we remember from yesterday's session?" Working in the language of the dance she says, "Show me!" Rehearsals insure technical competence of a work in performance. Practice protects nuances from being discarded. It is hoped the choreographer's intent will remain alive and pure. Let us surmise that the work of a particular choreographer is complete and deemed extraordinary or successful by audiences, peers, and critics. Now the choreographer grapples with how she and the dancers will remember the piece until its next performance. The next performance could be tomorrow, in a week, next year, or twenty years away. She uses practice to keep the dance alive in the bodies of her dancers. However, what if the dancers choose to leave the choreographer's company, or the choreographer passes away, or dancers' memories become dulled or less accurate with time? What happens to the work? If the dance cannot be recalled, does this mean it is not worth remembering or dancing again?

In our present state of affairs, some of our early modern dance has been lost forever. Other works of early twentieth-century masters are endangered. Attempts to keep the memories alive have

mostly come “too little, too late”. At best, many great dances will be reduced to historical text descriptions. “The prospect of dance simultaneously losing its past and its future has been a source of great concern” (Adams and Strandberg, 2000).

It is because of these impending losses that a few professional organizations scrambled to address such horrific happenstance. In 1993 one group, Dance/USA established the National Institute to Preserve America’s Dance (NIPAD) (Dance/USA, n.d.). Upon recognition of dance’s imperiled legacy, Pew Charitable Trusts and the National Endowment for the Arts became primary supporters of NIPAD preservation efforts. Now just ten years later, much funding support for dance preservation has dried up or has been redirected to other priorities. This ended NIPAD initiatives. Although heroic attempts were made to archive well known works, usually using videography and Labanotation formats, videos and scores seem mainly confined to the shelves of a few select libraries. Therefore, this author believes the true meaning of public access to dance repertory had not been fully addressed.

Established at Brown University in 1991 and continuing to this day, the American Dance Legacy Institute (ADLI) gathers, documents, and preserves archival and repertory materials of American modern dance artists (American Dance Legacy Institute, n.d.). Dancing sisters Carolyn Adams and Julie Strandberg founded the American Dance Legacy Institute. Carolyn is curator of ADLI, a former principal dancer with the Paul Taylor Dance Company, and a faculty member at the Juilliard School. Julie is Executive Director of ADLI and Director of Dance at Brown. Together, they identified problems in preservation and access and suggested responses (American Dance Legacy Institute, n.d.). Other questions then emerged: What works should be saved? What happens to less popular works that are nonetheless landmarks in history? How does the field invite and perpetuate access to great dance works of art? How are signature qualities of dance masters identified? What are the quintessential elements of a particular modern dance?

Similarly, each of us in dance should be asking: “How do we identify a Graham dance from a Limon work, a Nagrin piece from a Parsons, a Sokolow work from a McKayle?” And, what cultural and historical dance information should every American citizen know? How do dancers bring understandings of master works into common knowledge? What implications do these questions have for what and how we teach? Within the mission and goals of the American Dance Legacy Institute, Carolyn and Julie were destined to discover a tool that would give a boost to frail dance memories. Their invention became known as a Repertory Etude™.

What Do We Teach?

Without access to repertory of dance masterworks, teachers in schools and studios seem destined to practice the art of self-perpetuation. What then are the implications for dance education, teacher training, and school curricula? An egocentric focus of a well-meaning teacher may sacrifice rich, relevant, and comprehensive learning at the expense of students. Karen Bradley (2001) comments on the unilateral perspective perpetuated in some dance classrooms:

Where dance exists, programming is tied to the talents and desires of “we few, we happy few, we band” of dance educators. Oversight of curriculum is not a concept in most places. Because dance has been, in this nation at least, a field built on the cult of personality... (Bradley, 2001, p. 32)

In colleges and universities where nationally accredited dance education programs lead graduates to teacher licensure, standards and accountability for pre-service programs are appropriately monitored for quality. We have the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to thank for their work in this area. Accountability insures that a dance department will offer breadth, depth, and multiple perspectives in programs of study with dance centered in the arts. Accreditation insures a healthy intellectual and physical environment for student learning. Where this accountability is absent, quality of pre-service dance teacher programs remains questionable. Many reasons for poor or failed efforts in dance teacher certification programs of the early years have been described by Nancy Brooks Schmitz (1992, pp. 29-30). Yet, program certified or not, today there remains a general void of repertory studies of great American masterworks in pre-professional and teacher pre-service training.

What then constitutes the nature of what we teach? Just as works of Henry David Thoreau, Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, or Tennessee Williams are central to the study of American literature, master repertory in American dance should be central to our subject matter knowledge in dance. It is not enough to read about a dance. Comprehension and understanding come from working within the language of the body. It is imperative that colleges and universities be accountable for addressing these critical issues within dance departments and teacher training programs. If we expect the youngest of students to meet dance standards and develop dance literacy, where are the curricula, models, and resources to help teachers in delivery of such?

Frank Abraham's states a parallel issue in music education

reform:

If the national standards for music education are to have impact on practice in general education, teacher education programs must respond. Preservice music teachers must themselves meet the benchmarks set in the standards...

The future success of education in the nation's public schools depends to a great extent on how quickly and effectively universities can adapt their curricula to the national standards. Colleges and universities must reconsider their teacher preparation programs in light of the skills and competences that the standards articulate (Abrahams, 2000, p. 2).

In greater detail we dancers must ask ourselves: How can we adequately prepare teachers to deliver standards if resources and repertory access are almost nonexistent? Without these, what does a university curriculum actually prepare students to know and do? How does a teacher or student learn intellectually about a work, know it kinesthetically, enter into its choreographic process, and understand its intent beyond entertainment value? How do our historical works provide points of reference for associated meanings?

We cannot continue to work under illusion or false assumption that we are adequately preparing our teachers and pre-professional dancers. Shall we be content to busy ourselves with interpreting our interpretation of interpretive dance? We must consider what we can do to foster best practice and strategically plan and execute solutions that lead us with competence and confidence into the future. To meet these demands requires college faculty and dance organizations to embrace new challenges in professional development, preservation and access to master repertory, and educational resource development. These efforts will lead to improved quality of dance education curricula.

As critical as these issues are today, lack of professional development and networking opportunities coupled with inadequate dance education resources were recognized and specifically addressed in 1993 with the founding of the Southeast Center for Dance Education (SECDE) at Columbia College in South Carolina. The Center (now the South Carolina Center for Dance Education) was established and guided by a unique public-private partnership that included the South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina Arts Commission, Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project, Columbia College, Coker College, Winthrop University, and the Coca-Cola Foundation (SECDE, 1997). To support effective delivery of dance education, partners offered solutions to the difficult issues facing dance and made them central to the Center's mission and goals. The large state

agencies and higher education infrastructures moved dance education powerfully ahead in ways that could not have been possible by small stranded communities of dancers alone.

With help from the ABC Project, the Center identified public schools with model dance programs centered in the arts. Through grants, Center partners offered attractive funding incentives that spurred others to emulate the models and to grow viable, quality, arts-centered dance education programs. Grants encouraged schools to develop action plans leading to systemic change and arts education reform. The Center fostered dialogue and interaction among dance specialists, dance artists, classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and colleagues across the arts disciplines. SECDE was a keystone for dance advocacy and disseminated information on improving practice in teaching and learning dance. It established a dance resource library providing free access for teachers and artists across the state. SECDE worked with schools and districts to develop dance curricula facilitating achievement of national and state standards in dance. Leadership training initiatives were fostered through the Arts in Basic Curriculum Project. Graduate courses and professional development institutes in dance education were delivered through Columbia College.

Some of the grand forces driving arts education in South Carolina included: federal legislation (i.e., Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994), federal and state agency funding to implement standards-based education initiatives (e.g., National Standards for the Arts, 1994), new research studies in the arts (e.g., *Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning*, 1999), new developments in arts education assessment (e.g., the NAEP Arts Education Assessment Project, National Assessment Governing Board, 1997), dissemination of arts advocacy information (e.g., through Arts Education Partnership and Americans for the Arts), public and private partnerships, and partnerships of state agencies with higher education to initiate or improve teacher pre-service certification programs in the arts. To meet teacher demands for resources and professional development, the Dance Education Center frequently collaborated on discipline-based curriculum work with faculty at the University of North Carolina–Charlotte, the Southeast Center for Education in the Arts at the University of Tennessee–Chattanooga, the Alabama Institute for Education in the Arts, and others.

As a former public school dance educator, community dance artist, Director of the Southeast Center for Dance Education (from 1996-99), and college professor, I knew first-hand the frustrations of delivering quality dance curricula and training to people who needed it most. Early Center initiatives recognized the importance of working across levels, kindergarten through college, to provide a seamless education for student learning. It was believed that sharing ideas and applying methods of inquiry in authentic settings

would set in motion improved learning and teaching in dance. It was widely known that dance educators often worked in isolation without benefits from professional or collegial discourse. Interestingly, within a small geographic triangle, Columbia College and Winthrop University in South Carolina, and the University of North Carolina–Charlotte had each established relationships between their dance education certification programs and local public schools. Field experiences and internship courses were fertile ground for trying new ideas in dance education under the mentorship of college faculty. This connection helped to move dance beyond mere physical activity to its rightful place as an academic field with unique knowledge and skills centered in the arts. Still missing was critical content that could only be accessed through the learning of master repertory.

Need for Inclusive Dialogue

SECDE helped the South Carolina dance community realize the value and power of collaboration. Yet, the voices of artists and their contributions seemed to be missing from the dance education conversation loop. SECDE was aware that quite often dance residency artists were not acknowledged for the important artistic work and ecological changes they brought to a school community.

Artists and educators knew that meaningful opportunities were needed for sharing artistic practices and learning dance repertory. To serve the tiny struggling artist and educator populations, SECDE desired to build a more cohesive community dedicated to the teaching, learning, and practicing of dance. The time had come to make the dialogue inclusive of artists and educators. The professional association for dance at the state level supported this idea.

Artists and educators needed significant professional development with each other. Although one-session workshops at conferences and dance festivals were valuable for networking and introductory understandings, SECDE formulated multi-day institutes and graduate coursework for in-depth learning.

Other dancers and educators across the nation were battling with defining artist and teacher roles in the training and education of young people. In his article, *Finding the Thread of an Interrupted Conversation: the Arts, Education, and Community*, Arnold Aprill (n.d.) remarked about the changing paradigm taking place across the country. Positive connections were observed in the working relationships between artists and education communities.

The big shift that has occurred in these situations is not just a shift in opinion about the value of the arts as content areas to be covered or skills to be acquired, but more important, a

fundamental shift in relationships between the education communities and the arts communities within networks of shared work (Aprill, n.d., pp.1-2).

For ADLI and SECDE, serendipity was about to enter the picture. Their work was about to converge with amazing consequences.

Proposal for a Productive Relationship

In February 1999, Carolyn Adams and this author met for the first time at a statewide dance conference at Coker College in South Carolina. Booked as presenters for separate back-to-back dance sessions, Carolyn and I listened to each other's ideas with increasing interest. We were immediately aware that artistic preservation, repertory access, comprehensive dance education, and professional development for teachers and artists were issues that were intimately connected. For the remainder of the weekend, we drew inspiration from emerging ideas and stimulation from the fact that ADLI and SECDE were vehicles uniquely positioned to pilot a new conceptual design for dance teaching and learning. We believed aspects of great dance works could remain alive and vital through creation of a repertory literature base for dance education.

Coincidence played a role in connecting us again. Carolyn and I were destined to meet in Charleston, South Carolina the following June. Within the same week, we shared presentation sessions at Dance/USA's Education Peer Council meetings and the Spoleto Festival's Teachers' Institute. Julie Adams Strandberg joined her sister for presentations on these occasions. To continue the conversation, I invited Carolyn and Julie to attend SECDE's new Making Connections: Technology, Education, and Dance professional development institute two weeks later in Columbia. At the week-long institute, dance educators, classroom teachers, school administrators, and artists were guided through dance curricula units of study that included learning in aesthetic perception, art-making, student dances and performance masterworks, history and culture, and aesthetic valuing. Computers, special software programs, and digital technology aided delivery of dance content.

Among the sessions, Carolyn, Julie, and I perceived how SECDE and ADLI might effectively address the national dance issues at hand. The idea of an "Etudes Project" emerged. We believed it was necessary to place American modern dance repertory at the center of professional development experiences introduced through "Repertory Etude™" study. What is a Repertory Etude™?

...a dance repertory etude is a piece of choreography or a segment of a larger work that contains quintessential elements of that dance. Seminal choreographic works contain their own distinct signatures, with specific motifs, gestures, and uses of weight and space. An etude may be extracted from the larger work and utilized not only to hone specific skills in technique and nuance but also to convey the essence of the choreographer's style and intent (Adams and Strandberg, 2000, p.21).

For comprehensive understanding of a singular work, the Etudes Project would include examination of the original dance within cultural and historical contexts, application of aesthetic understandings, study of the master artist and his unique process of art making.

Just one summer before, Donald McKayle captured the attention of dance artists by creating a Repertory Etude™ of his signature work *Rainbow 'Round My Shoulder* for ADLI (Rainbow Etude™, 1997). The Etude concept crystallized for Donald as he worked with students at the New York State Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA) School of Dance in Saratoga Springs. It was not a coincidence that Carolyn and Julie were Artistic and Associate Artistic Directors of the School. During the next academic year, Mr. McKayle developed the Etude with his own students at the University of California, Irvine. Donald brought the finished product back to the NYSSSA School of Dance in 1998. There he taught his Etude to students and teachers in attendance. The concept of an Etude and the charitable act of Mr. McKayle making his work accessible for ongoing study and performance was revolutionary and inspired other dance artists to step forward and follow similar example with their own dances. Lorry May for Anna Sokolow, Mary Anne Newhall for the late Eve Gentry, Danny Grossman, and David Parsons followed suit.

SECDE and ADLI directors devised a plan for teachers to learn more about American dance repertory, preservation, and access. The teachers were to arrive in August at the NYSSSA School of Dance where Repertory Etudes™ development was moving into full swing. Later, SECDE would charge teachers with taking this learning back to their respective classrooms in the South. Funding support was secured for the teachers to participate in the groundbreaking work. SECDE, US Airways travel donations, and public school professional development funds made these ventures possible.

During this time, a dance curricula conceptual design model for teaching and learning emerged. The first ADLI and SECDE conversational exchanges articulated the necessity for shared participation and involvement of students, teachers, and artists in a continuous learning cycle that was child-centered. This author

envisioned a symbiotic system of dance learning and curricula development as proposed in Figure 1. It is believed this same system can easily be applied to other arts disciplines. The model is comprised of spherical learning layers that lead from simple to sophisticated levels of understanding.

Figure 1 shows learning that starts with a child's immersion into standards. Mid and advanced learners move sequentially through standards-based content and experiences. Students desiring further training may progress to levels as pre-professional dancers and/or pre-service dance educators. With increased competency, some may later gain eventual recognition as dance master artists or master teachers. The proposed master categories are intended to be inclusive of other dance careers as well: historians, critics, choreographers, researchers, etc. In the model, learning becomes a synchronous and perpetual process that builds content over a lifetime.

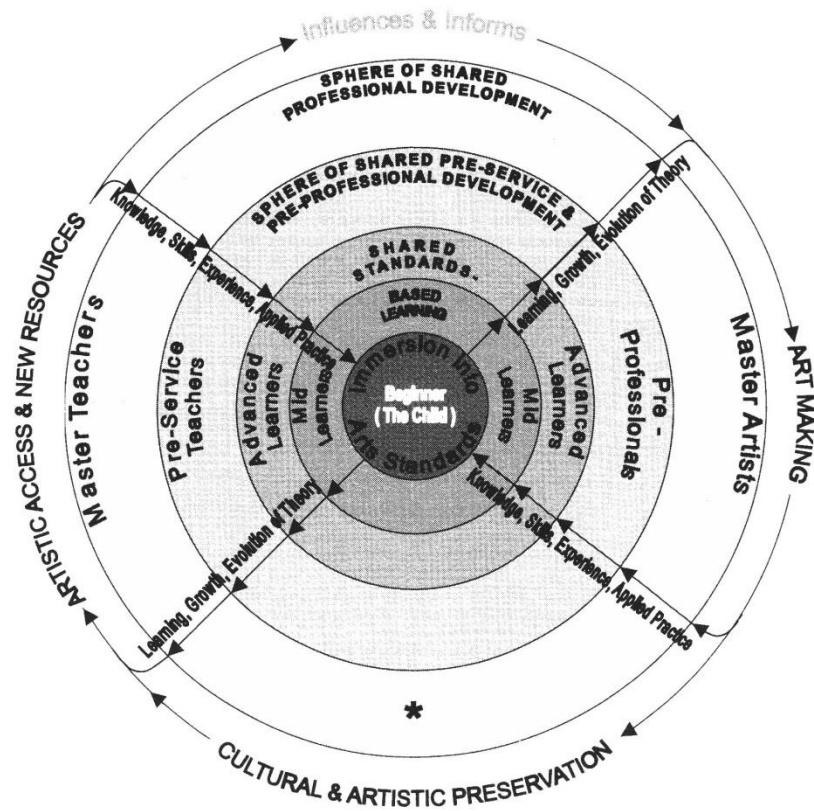
Another dimension is added to the progression. Learning is not restricted to the individual learning spheres, but rather, each layer communicates, complements and interacts with learning at other levels. Feedback from learned experiences inform and influence other levels of work. The generation of new learning theories and dance art is evolved from actual practice in authentic work settings (classrooms and studios). Members of learning and career categories never work in isolation or exclusion of others. Of course, contributions by other stakeholders (classroom teachers, dance studio teachers, community leaders, school administrators, parents, etc.) to student learning are recognized. The symbiotic system invites full participation by all parties. This premise assures:

- participants are equally connected to the conversation.
- multiple perspectives are offered to learners.
- contributions of each participant are valued.
- learning is child-centered.
- learning continues at each level of a dancer's career.
- increasing competence of dance knowledge and skills.
- associations are made across artistic and teaching practices.
- theory and practice continue to evolve and inform each other.
- theory and practice inform and influence needs in art-making, cultural and artistic preservation, repertory access, and development of new educational resources.
- Other stakeholders in the learning process: Classroom teachers, dance studio teachers, community leaders, school administrators, parents, etc.

Learning at every stage becomes interrelated and is intended to

Figure 1

SYMBIOTIC SYSTEM OF
DANCE LEARNING AND CURRICULA DEVELOPMENT



Conceptual Design: D. McGhee 2004

Graphics: M. Parsons 2004

influence and inform work of the discipline at large. Ideally, students gain competence in knowledge and skills while teachers and artists improve teaching and artistic practice. The total action research process results in the production of dance resources and new art simultaneous with preservation and access to dance masterworks. In turn, the educational and artistic resources are reinvested into teacher and artist practices as they work with students. Discipline, knowledge, and skills are therefore ever expanding as more art-making, artistic preservation, repertory access, and material resources are generated for dance. Although this was the original vision of The Études Project, it had yet to be determined if this model would work in real classrooms and studios.

Beginning Investigations at the NYSSSA School of Dance

As plans progressed, partnership members of SECDE and ADLI provided related funding support for The Etudes Project. The New York Department of Education through NYSSSA, the Harlem Dance Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) provided additional support. These collaborations helped to generate further enthusiasm.

Artists at Work

Groundwork for The Etudes Project had been laid just a few years earlier at the NYSSSA School of Dance when Carolyn and Julie fostered a special dialogue between early modern dance artists and students at the school. The assembled group of aging artists represented a unique dance collective that had its origins in the 1930's. Known as the New Dance Group (NDG), these artists created landmarks in American modern dance history. The gathering sparked intergenerational connections. The high school students were astounded by the powerful stories the aging artists had to offer. ADLI knew the historical significance of the body of dance works represented by these artists and therefore applied for NEA grant funding to help document and archive the original works. The quest of young dancers to explore NDG kinesthetic material provided a catalyst for developing repertory studies. Thus, the first Repertory Etude experiments began with works of the New Dance Group.

The New Dance Group was formed in 1932, prospering as a professional company and school through the 1940s, 1950s, and beyond. The founding women studied at the Wigman School with teacher Hanya Holm. Most members of the NDG were from working class and first generation immigrant families. Economic hard-times, social injustices, and world chaos deeply affected the

hearts and minds of the dancers. The dancers organized to communicate their experiences and expressions. Their first rule became: “that one must dance on subjects which concerned them personally, and in a clear, almost simplistic manner: one necessary to reach a mass audience” (Burns and Korff, 1993; Newhall, 1995).

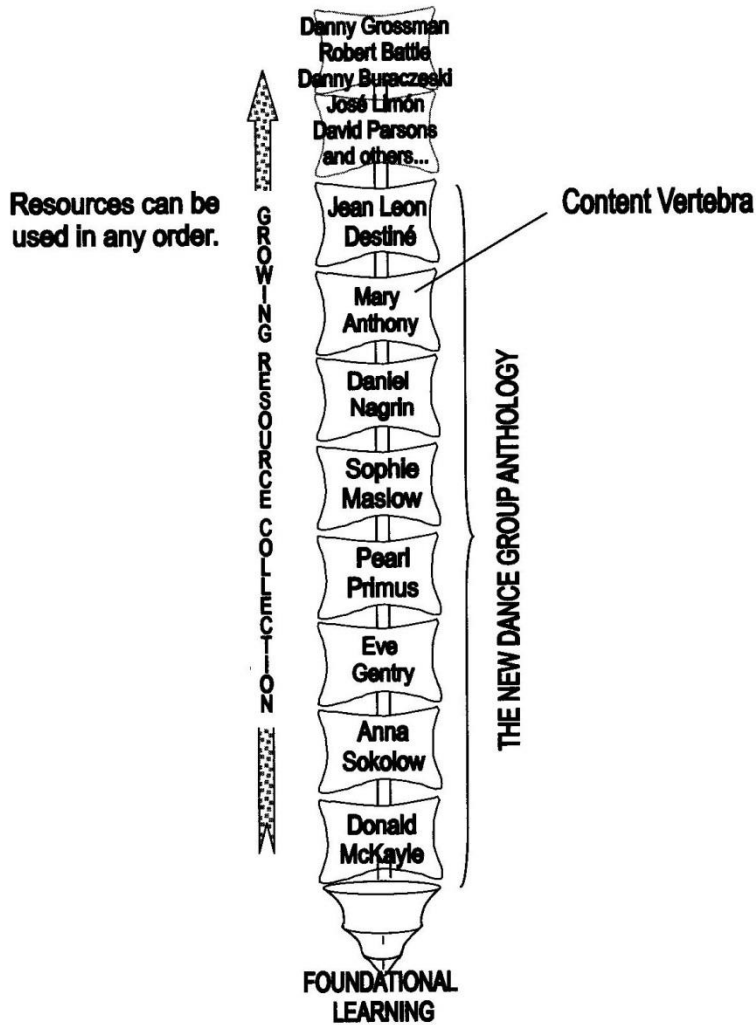
Students from all ethnic and social classes were welcomed to their studios. Removing barriers of elitism, dance classes were made affordable to all. At the New Dance Group, marginalized factions of American society found a common forum for their voices (Graff, 1990; Newhall, 1995). The dancers were able to confront issues of religious, racial, and other biases head-on. During the mid-fifties the New Dance Group became a popular meeting place for black dancers, and connections there helped young African American artists find work (Dunning 1996; Haskins, 1990; Thorpe, 1989).

Recreational and social dance opportunities were offered to the community through the NDG. Formal classes offered study in a range of modern techniques and ethnic forms. The standard sequence of classes included one hour of technique, one hour of improvisation, followed by group discussions of social issues of the day (Burns and Korff, 1993). The purpose of these discussions was to inspire creativity- all were expected to create. Members were “motivated by the concept that dance has a contribution to make to everyone at every level” (Delman, 1993). As a result, dance works of this group give insight to our diverse American heritage, its evolving culture, current thought, and hopes for the future.

Although the New Dance Group members are a long list of distinguished and noteworthy dancers and choreographers, ADLI’s developing *New Dance Group Anthology* (American Dance Legacy Institute, 2003) eventually focused on the pioneer work of: Donald McKayle, Anna Sokolow, Eve Gentry, Jean León Destiné, Sophie Maslow, Pearl Primus, Mary Anthony, and Daniel Nagrin. The plan was to develop dance education learning modules, tested in classrooms, featuring each artist and a corresponding signature work. Beginning modules were to form the foundational backbone for evolving dance studies. This author presents a schematic diagram of the plan in Figure 2. The first eight vertebrae in the content spine represent NDG artists included in the *Anthology*. Simultaneous with the New Dance Group developing studies, other artists voiced concerns about trying to save and disseminate their personal works. Several began working diligently to develop Repertory Etudes™ under the auspices of the American Dance Legacy Institute. Some of these early efforts are also recorded on the content spine.

Figure 2

EVOLVING DANCE CONTENT SPINE
A Resource Collection of
Repertory Etudes™, Documentaries,
and Curricular Materials



Conceptual Design: D. McGhee 2004
Graphics: M. Parsons 2004

The Charge for Teachers

In July 1998, selected high school students from across the state of New York again converged in Saratoga Springs to participate in the extraordinary NYSSSA School of Dance. Sponsored by the New York Education Department, the teaching facilities were located at the well-equipped National Museum of Dance. In August, the students were joined by a team of nine dance educators from three Southern states (North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia). They arrived to take part in professional development classes, conversations with artists, and teacher seminars. SECDE Director Diane McGhee had identified these educators as leaders for developing educational resource materials centered on Repertory Etudes™.

The chosen group (of southern teachers) represented the diverse population of learners where reliable dance programs existed. It was necessary for work to be authenticated with students and that it address educational standards for dance. Representatives came from schools with extreme variations in financial means and racial composition... The purpose of this array was to give depth and broad purpose to the new educational materials in the initial stages of development (McGhee and Sofras, 2003, Acknowledgements).

Three teachers were higher education faculty from dance departments with dance teacher certification programs: Columbia College, Winthrop University, and the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. These faculty were connected to networks of public school dance educators (numbering approximately 200) in the combined states. One high school teacher hailed from each of the participating states, representing dance programs with regular and gifted education. One middle school teacher came from the urban Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District of North Carolina. Two middle school teachers representing large dance programs in South Carolina—metropolitan Richland County in Columbia and rural Beaufort County—completed the team.

Project accountability relied on these qualified dance educators who previously:

- 1) demonstrated school, district, or state leadership abilities in various capacities,
- 2) emulated standards-based learning practices in the art of dance within an established curriculum,
- 3) were identified for incorporating best practices in dance education,
- 4) earned school community support through principal

- endorsements backed by district professional development monies for this Project,
- 5) committed to disseminating information learned from Project participation, and,
 - 6) demonstrated willingness to lead further professional development efforts for other educators within their home school or district.

Teachers were given primary access to learning repertory from the creators and began collecting data. Educators listened to the “voice of the artist” in the teaching and sharing of artistic process. This provided educators with opportunities to consider teaching approach, dance style, and evolution of choreographic ideas, along with meanings assigned by choreographer, dancer, and viewer. Teachers were interested in how NYSSSA School of Dance students inquired, learned, and processed the new information. Teachers immersed themselves in technique and repertory classes with junior and high school students.

While in New York, the teachers felt it was critical to observe dance preservation and Repertory Etude™ creation first hand. This information gave the teachers another frame in which to view a dance. Preservation of an Etude involved filming and editing, drawing Labanotation scores (created by Mary Cory of the University of California, Irvine), plus other production aspects. This meant teachers were present when selected etudes were being created and documented. Teachers observed and asked: What did choreographers, historians, notators, and film editors identify as important about a work? For teachers, each step and decision informed the later writing of the new dance lesson studies for the *New Dance Group Anthology* (ADLI, 2003).

Repertory learning for teachers started with the Rainbow Repertory Etude™ (1997). Mr. McKayle and former company member Clay Taliaferro provided direction. The etude was based on Mr. McKayle’s 1959 work, *Rainbow ‘Round My Shoulder* (Donald McKayle Documentary, 1999). In the heart wrenching original dance, chain gang workers scorched by the sun, recall memories of freedom and consider what lengths they would go to retrieve it. “In every phrase he (McKayle) pictured the stifled and strangled being in man and his desire for freedom.” (Sorrel, 1962, p.91) The original work is popular and relevant to audiences today. It is in the current repertory of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. Teachers knew their public school students would connect to the feelings of desperation, the power of the movement, and the yearning for psychological and physical freedom found in the dance.

During the same summer, two more dances were in the process of being archived. One was the late Eve Gentry’s 1938 solo,

Tenant of the Street (Eve Gentry Documentary, n.d.) as taught by Mary Ann Newhall. Studying the dance invited examination of basic survival and the nature of human dignity. In the dance, viewers (and dancers) empathetically feel the pain and isolation of a homeless woman.

Anna Sokolow, extremely ill when The Etudes Project began, bestowed her infamous *Rooms* (Rooms Repertory Etude™, 1999) to the collection. Taught and staged by Anna's protégé Lorry May, the minimalist work highlighted the stark loneliness of people living in city tenements. Thinking of students in their home classrooms, teachers saw immediate connections to adolescents in search of love and belonging.

The richness of the dances were unfolding as a length of red carpet before the teachers. Content previously sequestered for more than half a century was becoming available. And with the unveiling of new content, teachers working with Repertory Etudes™ reshaped their thoughts on the meaning of a comprehensive and sequential dance curriculum. Repertory Etudes™ offered fresh points of view for teaching dance history.

The first three dance studies in the *Anthology* (ADLI, 2003) provided contrast in modern dance style, choreographic form, and subject matter. It was the subject matter that transcended meaning across generations and would eventually give reason and relevancy for engaging contemporary youth in the learning of dances. Members of the New Dance Group believed creating and performing were fulfilling to the soul and communicated deep feelings to others. The subjects that touched the hearts of the original artists, touched the hearts of the teachers in the seminars, and would in turn give meaning to dances created by the youngsters in their classrooms. It seemed that the spirit of The Etudes Project was following the spirit of the New Dance Group.

NDG choreographies were an effective means for communicating specific thoughts, needs, desires, beliefs, and opinions of the time. Sometimes the emotional, physical, and intellectual themes seem to parallel standard learning and psychological theories of today. As an example, some dances align with steps in Abraham Maslow's dynamic Hierarchy of Needs. Using just the first three *Anthology* (ADLI, 2003) dance studies, we begin to see the associations: Gentry's *Tenant* (Eve Gentry Documentary, n.d.) is an example of a woman caring for "physiological" and "safety" needs; Sokolow's *Rooms* (Rooms Repertory Etude™, 1999) demonstrates the city dwellers needs for "love and belonging"; in McKayle's *Rainbow* (Donald McKayle Documentary, 1999), prisoners have lost "self-esteem" and show their secret desires for independence and freedom. Perhaps for New Dance Group members, making dances were pathways toward "knowledge and self-actualization."

The dances of the early years were also statements on the plight of the human within society. This was played out in such dances as *Strike, Uprising, and War Trilogy*. For NDG choreographers, it was not enough to consider only the traumas of these desperate personal and social situations. It was the artists' intent to open doors of hope and understanding, provoke thought and modify stereotypes, and perhaps mobilize citizens to enact changes for the betterment of their fellow man. It seemed natural that young students today would recognize similar desires within themselves.

Together

At the conclusion of the NYSSSA School of Dance, students, artists, educators, videographers, notators, musicians, and administrators were drenched in perspiration and inspiration. The collaborations to preserve and give living legacy to dying indigenous American modern dance works invited new camaraderie and respect for each other. Creating and documenting etude work had turned out to be an education in itself. Ms. Adams and Ms. Strandberg encouraged students and teachers to take the work home and share repertory ideas in as many ways possible—and they did! Students returned to towns across New York. Artists returned to their homes across the country where they would continue to reflect and refine their work. Teachers returned to the South to meet their next and biggest challenge.

Field Tests in Southern Schools

As a result of learning experiences in Saratoga, questions emerged. What would teachers share with their students in the classroom? What would be selected to include in dance curricula? Would the Repertory Etudes™ perpetuate the kinesthetic legacy of dance? Teachers chose a variety of ways to deliver the new content and inspire the learners. The educators had been asked to experiment with methods and practices that would serve as guideposts for future learning and teaching. Each practitioner concentrated on using one or more Repertory Etudes™ throughout the next school year. Working with youngsters within their well-established programs, teachers connected content to existing school dance curricula. Every aspect of the work addressed district, state, and national standards for dance. Participants became part of a grand action research project as they experimented, documented, analyzed and synthesized information, applied ideas, predicted outcomes, and shared their results with others.

The long-term purpose of the work was to assist other

educators in the teaching and learning of dance by developing resources where none had previously existed. The immediate goal was to assemble best ideas and practices into a series of dance education lesson studies centered on New Dance Group artists and their signature works. Prior to this time, public school dance educators had long searched for kinesthetic connections to masterworks. They valued the study of varied choreographic processes that could be used with youngsters and that would result in the creation of quality personal art. Learning Repertory Etudes™ gave the teachers a huge leap forward in this journey. Research continued for the next two years.

The SECDE Director had asked educators to track what was being taught in classrooms and to document the learning progress of students. During this time, an overwhelming amount of documentation was generated at each school site. I therefore enlisted the help of Associate Professor of Dance and Dance Education at UNC–Charlotte, Pamela Sofras, to assist in reviewing teacher and student work in the project. Professor Sofras had been involved in discussions and workshops from the beginning of The Etudes Project. Over the years, she had trained a large percentage of dance educators in the state of North Carolina and was therefore experienced in observing dance education practices and programs. Pamela monitored project work in North Carolina schools; I did the same in South Carolina and with the participating school in Georgia.

In sharing our observations, together we discovered something quite remarkable. It seemed New Dance Group members were truly the first dance educators to have a clear set of discipline standards centered in the arts! Across all classrooms, we saw the New Dance Group as a natural guiding light for teachers and students. As stated by McGhee and Sofras (2003, Vol. I, *The New Dance Group—A History*), developing lesson studies were beginning:

...to follow in the spirit of the New Dance Group by “assisting in the development of the literature, history, and technique of these works and to promote general appreciation of the cultural significance and value of the art of dancing” (Articles of Incorporation of New Dance Group, 1944, as cited in Burns and Korff, 1993).

As with the New Dance Group, current students trained in modern technique and studied historical forms of expression to illuminate truths and inform dance making. Again, students followed the first rule of the NDG, “that one must dance on subjects which concerned them personally...”. Far more than a lesson in history, students in this project were discovering their

personal dance voices as they reached deeply into the legends within their own bodies. As a result, dance classes displayed an array of introspective and powerful dances created by the youngsters.

The process work of each participating teacher was aligning closely with Content Standard #3 of the I (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 1994). Therefore, we specifically used that standard to focus the further development of lesson studies. With etudes experiences and the guidance of good teachers, students were becoming better-informed creators and communicators in the medium of dance. We hoped to direct a meaningful future for dance education by using building stones of the past to create a road of literacy.

From the observations and documentation of work in classrooms, researchers found there were two basic approaches to acquiring this understanding. When students began the process by learning a Repertory Etude™ first, this became known as Etude Entry. Teachers used this as a starting point for a lesson when students were in need of a technical and motivating challenge. The teacher was considered the best judge of student readiness for attempting skills required of a particular etude.

When students learned about a masterwork through guided study of creative process, historical background, cultural contexts, aesthetics and later the Repertory Etude™ itself, this became known as Pre-Etude Entry. Donald McKayle and Pamela Sofras coined this particular phrase during a national phone conference involving teachers, artists, and researchers in the project. Some artists and teachers felt very strongly that the students should create their own Pre-Etude dances and studies before going on to the technical work.

Figure 3 is a visual aid to viewing these two approaches to teaching and learning content. Entering via the Etude at the center, the learning path proceeds outward, building understanding of knowledge and skills related to the original dance. Pre-Etude entry begins with broad understandings of the masterwork, artist, and artistic process then proceeds inward toward culmination with the Repertory Etude™. The particular approach may be selected based on learners' skills, ages, intelligences, prior knowledge, and experiences. Time for completion of the process would be determined by student abilities, class needs, and goals of a school's dance curriculum.

Figure 4 can help us complete the original analogy of evolving dance content to a growing spine of knowledge (refer back to Figure 2). There we visualized the *NDG Anthology* (ADLI, 2003) and evolving preservation work as a series of vertebrae. Each

Figure 3
ENTRY POINTS FOR THE LEARNER

Etude Entry



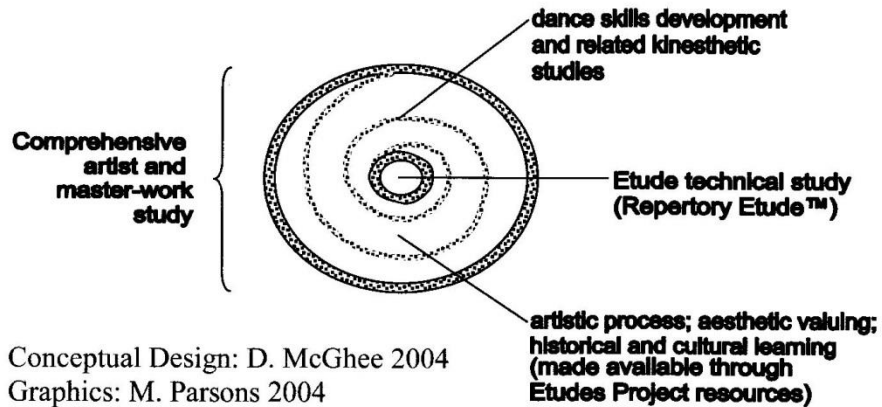
Learning path starts within the Repertory Etude and proceeds outward adding knowledge and skills related to the original masterwork.

Pre-Etude Entry



Learning path begins with knowledge and skills related to the original master work and proceeds inward culminating with the Repertory Etude .

Figure 4
CROSS SECTION OF A COMPLETE
ETUDES PROJECT VERTEBRA



vertebra was an individual artist module representing that artist's signature dance elements and featured masterwork.

Figure 4 reveals the deeper process to understanding an artist's particular work. Figure 4 illustrates a vertebra cross section of the knowledge and skills needed by learners to arrive at full understanding. Every artist module then becomes a miniature comprehensive study in dance. The marrow (center) of a bone represents the core of learning in and through the body such as the technical training provided by a Repertory Etude™. Surrounding the center is substantive learning in values, aesthetics, art-making process, history and culture, and interrelated associations to other subjects. All is integral to the core study of a selected artist and his signature work. Additional kinesthetic dance studies and experiences happen in tandem throughout the learning process of a work, as indicated by the visual spiral. To name a few, these kinesthetic studies might include practice of movement elements, dance motifs, or effort-shape concepts.

A particular teaching methodology was not endorsed in the developing lesson studies. Certified dance educators had already been trained in best practice through their teacher licensing programs. The selected teacher practitioners of The Etudes Project had many years of experience in their well-established public school dance programs. As experts, they were left to determine practices suitable for their respective student groups.

As etude studies were introduced into classrooms across three states, a set of essential questions repeatedly emerged: what is a masterpiece, who is the New Dance Group, and how can we make dances informed by our own heritage? The questions indicated that certain understandings in dance were necessary prior to working on The Etude Project material. Consistently, all teachers began NDG lessons with a review or introduction of foundational concepts related to these questions. Therefore, each of these essential questions and areas of inquiry developed into its own set of lesson studies. The trilogy of foundational concepts eventually became Volume I of *Roots & Branches: Exploring an Evolving Dance Legacy* (McGhee and Sofras, 2003) within the *New Dance Group Anthology* (ADLI, 2003).

The next developing lesson studies were simply presented in the order in which they had been learned by the teachers. Volume II became Donald McKayle's Rainbow Repertory Etude™ Lesson (McGhee and Sofras, 2003). Volume III became Anna Sokolow's Rooms Repertory Etude™ Lesson (McGhee and Sofras, 2003) and Volume IV was Eve Gentry's Tenant of the Street Repertory Etude™ Lesson (McGhee and Sofras, 2003). No attempt was made to sequence the volumes in a particular order. Teachers felt it was important for this option to be fluid. With flexibility, thematic or concept associations could easily be made within dance, among

arts disciplines, or across the entire academic curriculum. For example, a teacher might introduce the work of New Dance Group artist McKayle during black history month. Perhaps character studies in theatre could be appropriately linked to personality studies in Sokolow's *Rooms* (Rooms Repertory Etude™, 1999). In social studies, the ills of homelessness and poverty could be examined through the lens of Eve Gentry's *Tenant* (Eve Gentry Images & Reflections Documentary™, n.d.). American history would find many interesting stories related to 1930s politics and New Dance Group member attitudes. Specific to dance, extensive comparisons could be made among the dances and choreographic styles of NDG artists.

Throughout the development of the lesson studies, evaluation of student work occurred in areas of creating, performing, and responding. These categories had been delineated by NAEP for validating learning in the arts (National Assessment Governing Board, 1997, p.7). Classroom teachers, higher education faculty, and the SECDE Director looked at improving student achievement in dance. Rubrics were developed to measure accomplishment of standards-based learning objectives in the NAEP categories for each lesson set. Although the following examples are taken out of lesson context, they give a sense of rubric statements used in the devised measurements.

Category: Creative and Perceptual Skills

Sample Rubric Statements - A student will:

- demonstrate stillness as a compositional device.
- choose feelings, images, and movement ideas that convey associations to the masterwork studied.
- accurately document, organize, and present research influencing personal compositions.
- choose movement vocabulary appropriate to the assignment.
- demonstrate growing sophistication in the art-making process.
- follow a choreography assignment through to completion.
- choose effort qualities appropriate for conveying select concepts/ideas/issues.
- use movement motifs in a variety of compositional forms.

Category: Performance and Technical or Expressive Skills

Sample Rubric Statements - A student will:

- execute a movement skillfully.
- remember a chosen sequence accurately.
- perform effort qualities with clarity.
- use clear movement transitions to enhance understanding of the theme.

- retain strong focus throughout the work.
- accurately reproduce selected movement.
- select music or sound accompaniment to enhance the theme or main idea of the dance.
- communicate the intended meaning of a work.

Category: Response and Intellectual or Reflective Skills

Sample Rubric Statements - A student will:

- discuss and defend movement choices.
- make critical observations of one's own work.
- make critical observations of work created by others.
- provide proof of cultural or historical associations within or across dances.
- write about editing choices used in the dance making process.
- note similarities and differences in individual dance phrases.
- compare and contrast personal work to that of select NDG choreography.

Learning was considered successful when individual students met or exceeded expectations.

Within a lesson study, various forms of evaluation were used. In addition to dance rubrics, quality of student performance was measured in writing assignments (i.e. journal reflections, reports, research) using standards in English/Language Arts (National Council of Teachers of English, 1996). Portfolio review, video, or digital photography documentation provided other means of assessment. Pamela Sofras and I checked documentation of work and collaboratively reviewed classroom assessments.

Throughout the entire process, participating teachers and their students could direct inquiries to me, Pamela Sofras, ADLI directors, Mary Daley (organizer for NYSSSA) at the New York Department of Education, higher education faculty, each other, and the artists. Dialogue continued at professional conferences, through email, phone conferences, and within an ADLI website chat room. Some schools hired New Dance Group artists to work with their students and provide professional development for other district dance educators. School workshops and residencies permitted artists to see first-hand the fruits of Etude learning and to get a sense for how the work was received by youngsters.

As an observer in the schools, I often witnessed effects of The Etudes Project beyond the dance classrooms. I heard the excitement of parents as they watched their children perform "the Rainbow dance". Some teachers spoke of the dances as inspiration for youngsters learning more about American history. I saw language arts writing assignments and reports featuring NDG

artists posted in the hallways or on classroom doors. Some papers were part of student research projects on the life of an artist, the cultural significance of a particular dance, or revealed a youngster's view of the world as informed by NDG teachings. As a dance educator for more than 30 years, I experienced an exhilarating "rush" when I encountered these gems. I couldn't help thinking how far we had come in the new discipline of dance education.

Results

The development of Repertory Etudes™ continues to this day under the leadership and guidance of Carolyn Adams and Julie Strandberg of the American Dance Legacy Institute. They invite and contract artist participation, attend to details of documenting and preserving an artist's work, and consult with the artist during creation of a new Repertory Etude™. ADLI documents an etude in a variety of formats including but not limited to: Labanotation scores, oral and written histories, and video. ADLI artists are available to provide workshops and teach repertory. Remarkable developments have been made in the area of creating Repertory Etude™ teaching/coaching videos. By the end of summer 2003, Etude modules had been completed or begun for each artist featured in the *New Dance Group Anthology*: Donald McKayle, Anna Sokolow, Eve Gentry, Pearl Primus, Sophie Maslow, Daniel Nagrin, Mary Anthony, and Jean Leon Destiné (ADLI, 2003). The Anthology refers to the cumulative resources now available, including:

- Repertory Etudes™ packages with performance, instructional and coaching videotapes, music CD, Labanotation score, costume and lighting suggestions for performance, and resource guide.
- Images & Reflections™ Documentaries with complete performance of a work and comments by choreographers and dancers.
- Research-based curricular materials- Dancing Rebels containing artist biographies and an annotated bibliography, and *Roots & Branches: Exploring An Evolving Dance Legacy*, Volumes I through IV containing standards-based education lesson studies for dance and interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

At the time of this writing, other artist modules were in process: Robert Battle, Danny Buraczeski, Danny Grossman, José Limón, and David Parsons.

Roots & Branches: Educational Lesson Studies for Dance Teaching and Learning

Following the good work of teachers in the schools, Pamela Sofras and I were able to discern the common learning threads across dance classroom lessons. We considered designs for effectively presenting dance content through the new educational volumes. The final lesson designs include the following components: overview of an artist's masterwork and introduction to the Repertory Etude™, student objectives for the lesson, lists of materials needed for delivery, introduction of vocabulary, explanations of planning and preparation needed by teachers, background information on subjects or concepts within the lesson, biographical information on the artist, the sequence of teaching activities, instructional strategies, related assessments, lesson extensions, interdisciplinary connections, correlated national standards, student readings, and a glossary.

Each lesson study is filled with ideas tried by teachers with students in public schools. Lessons include guides for helping students plan for research, convert observations to authentic movement with personal voice, view and inquire into a masterwork, create a personal etude, consider processes of dance preservation, write about dance, and so much more. Each volume contains handouts for students, such as: the time line of a choreographer's life and works, games for introducing or reviewing dance titles, and newsletters with biographical information on the featured dance artist.

Along with viewing extraordinary student artistic work, Pamela and I were impressed with the verbal and written expressions demonstrated in the learning process. We included a selection of these in text boxes throughout the *Roots & Branches* resources (McGhee and Sofras, 2003). We felt these expressions could help readers hear the voices of artists, teachers, and young people engaged in the project.

For instance, we did not want to lose the intensity of Lorry May's artistic voice as she coached students in Sokolow's *Rooms Etude*:

Anna (Sokolow) says: 'Actions are what you feel!' What does this mean? (Vol. III)

We wanted to hear the intimacy of teacher Jeanna Cromer Nitsche speaking to her middle school class:

Other dances are produced for an audience. The dance you are making is just for you. (Vol. I).

We wanted to share the enthusiasm of students making new dance

discoveries:

The shapes I envision when I hear the word "isolation" are concave and angular. The movement quality itself could range from very weak and heavily weighted to sharp percussive movement. (Vol. III)

12th grade student, Davidson Fine Arts H.S.,
Augusta, GA

Watching students follow in the footsteps of the masters, we marveled as youngsters found ideas for new personal dances:

How do you know if you love someone?

My cousin is a drug addict and she has four children. I wanted to make a dance about what I see when I look at the kids. (Vol. I)

8th grade student, Hopkins Middle School
Columbia, SC

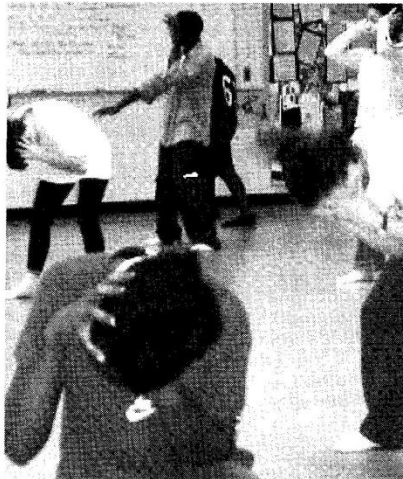


Photo D. McGhee

And, we were overcome with emotion as young people saw their world in a new way:

This dance will show everybody what homelessness is all about. This dance can help people by showing that homeless people are just like you and me. (Vol. IV)

7th grade student, Wilson Middle School
Charlotte, NC

Teachers who participated in The Etudes Project eagerly shared their new knowledge and skills with other teachers, parents, school

administrators, and fellow professionals at district sites and state meetings. Project organizers shared information about process and progress at the national level. From across the spectrum of educators and artists came the plea for “more etudes”!

Surprises in Higher Education

Although Directors of The Etudes Project had not planned to study the effect of etudes on teaching and the curriculum at college and university levels, Julie Strandberg at Brown University had been using Repertory Etudes™ in her classes as they were developed. She was excited by the implications for students in her own program. As college faculty from the Carolinas took resources and professional development experiences away from the NYSSSA School of Dance, they committed to use Repertory Etudes™ in their respective dance programs. I observed a variety of implementation processes and astonishing success for meeting particular curricula needs for each institution. I believe the implications for reforming the teaching and learning of dance are profound. Below is a synopsis of major efforts and ideas as noted from observations at the following institutions.

Columbia College in Columbia, South Carolina. Professor Martha Brim used two approaches. First, she successfully integrated information on the New Dance Group and its choreographers into a college introductory interdisciplinary Liberal Arts course. Then in the dance major program, she was inspired to focus on the *Rooms* Etude (Rooms Repertory Etude™, 1999) created by Lorry May for Anna Sokolow.

With the dance majors, Martha explored how to use an etude as inspiration for personal choreographic work. A small idea for a composition course eventually grew into content that filled an entire semester. Students appreciated Sokolow’s concern for the human condition and her understandings of internal motivators for dance action. Studies developed by college students in the composition course were based on individual case and character studies of real people in the immediate community. Movement was derived from character words that were transformed into gestures. These were built into sensory phrases that moved into and through space. “Stream of consciousness” writing accompanied student artistic processes. Written entries explored motivations for movement stemming from an individual’s deep desires, fears, or fantasies. The student dances were eventually combined into a full work with monologues. The completed dance was performed on campus. College students then created a “People Etude” from that original work and took it on tour to schoolchildren in the schools. A lecture demonstration was developed to describe student artistic

processes and to talk about Sokolow's work as inspiration for their own dances.

Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina. In 1998, under tutelage of artists associated with the American Dance Legacy Institute, Associate Professor Sandra Neels became a designated coach for the *Rainbow Etude* (Rainbow Repertory Etude™, 1997). Within the dance major program, she offered the etude as a repertory piece to enhance the performance capabilities and technical vocabulary of her students. The piece was then performed in the annual college dance concert. In collaboration with another university department, music students learned the score and sang accompaniment for the dancers in concert.

At a dance education and technology national conference held at Winthrop in 2000, eleven dancers from four area colleges performed the *Rainbow Etude* together (Rainbow Repertory Etude™, 1997). Dancers had learned the etude separately yet simultaneously within their respective college classes from resource materials provided by ADLI. Prior to the collaborative performance, Ms. Neels gave a two-hour coaching session. Students were astounded they could perform the dance together in unison without extensive prior rehearsals.

University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Professor Pamela Sofras chose to explore etudes content in a dance pedagogy class for pre-service dance teachers in the dance certification program. These same students had earlier performed *Rainbow* and now tried the ADLI resource materials in pedagogy. Students were encouraged to create lessons for young public school students based on these materials. In student teaching experiences for seventh and eighth graders, college students created pre-etude lessons to introduce work of the masters. Lessons were primarily designed around movement problems motivated by work themes or ideas introduced by the chain gang songs. These pre-etude lessons were tried in the schools with each college student meeting for four class periods of 45 minutes each. The college students shared results of their experiences with peers within the pedagogy class.

Later the college students performed the etude for high school students who requested to learn the dance. Four college students spent two months working with high school classes one time per week. College students found it helpful to practice deconstruction of an etude for teaching.

In another outgrowth, *Rainbow* (Rainbow Repertory Etude™, 1997) was introduced into two classes of seventh and eighth grade boys. The boys were grabbed by the powerful message of the movement and the athletic prowess of the University of California, Irvine student dancing the etude on videotape. At that point,

UNCC student teachers developed a research unit of study on “men in dance”. Both classes performed sections of the *Rainbow Etude* (Rainbow Repertory Etude™, 1997) to parents and the public. The young boys received a standing ovation.

Summary, Conclusion, and Implications

With thanks to the American Dance Legacy Institute founders, the invention of the Repertory Etude™ is an unparalleled gift to the field of dance. It was given at a time when most twentieth century American masterworks were becoming endangered or were on the verge of extinction. At first considered controversial and revolutionary, over a few years’ time the work became legitimized. Development of Repertory Etudes™ caused artists to realize that issues of dance preservation, access, education, and legacy were inextricably linked. For the memory of a dance to live beyond the immediate moment, something of an artist’s work had to be available for ongoing access and performance. New Dance Group artists influenced the entire field by personally passing the legacy of early modern dance to others through Repertory Etudes™. Since those humble beginnings a few years ago, contemporary choreographers are stepping forward to create their own etudes under the auspices of the American Dance Legacy Institute.

The act of creating an etude invites an artist to reflect on elements, signature style, and personal choreographic voice. It gives the artist the right to choose what and how an artist’s work shall be remembered. It highlights the importance of documenting a work from the moment of inception to ensure accurate perpetuation. The Repertory Etudes™ are not only keys for accessing precious dances, they are also technical and stylistic studies that enhance training of the body. It is in authentic dance language that kinesthetic legacy is transmitted through an etude.

Educational project directors were aware that when students focus only on technical aspects of a work, learning has potential to become dull and shallow. Both Croce (1977) and Gibbons (1992) address the problems of eroding repertory and the missing spirit of reconstructed dances as affecting stylistic features, genre, and performance quality. Strict repetition of a dance can cause students to lose interest. Without interest or commitment from the performer, the real meaning in a dance work can be lost.

The etudes learning process brings a personal connection of the original work to the student performer. It allows the participant to see beyond the immediate moment of technical training by rejuvenating the choreographer’s true intention of the dance through comprehensive understandings of the total work. The educational lesson studies bring these understandings to light, capturing and then sharing the kinesthetic, cultural, and artistic

legacies. The meaningful connections are made indelible in the body and brain of young students when the emotional and intellectual connections to the work are imbedded into the study process.

Reaching beyond the world of the performing elite, Repertory Etudes™ and the educational lesson studies have begun an avalanche of innovations in dance. For the first time in the history of the field, American dance legacy has the potential to be shared across all populations of people in the authentic language of the art form. Public school dance education programs are making this happen. Classrooms across the United States are becoming the vehicles for accessing the great dance works that every American should recognize. The Etudes Project has potential to improve the cultural and artistic literacy of every child. Furthermore, the lesson studies deliver content to students in a way that is accountable and standards-based for our educational system.

We found New Dance Group choreographic subjects and themes to be engaging to the hearts, minds, and bodies of young people today. When the dance themes made connections to youngsters' psychological and growth needs, then the historical dances became relevant to the new generation in a deep and exciting way. When dance is taught as an artform, it must draw on the mind to problem-solve, create, and communicate. Focusing on Content Standard #3 of the *National Standards for Dance Education: Understanding dance as a way to create and communicate meaning*, lesson studies emphasized these competencies. The Etudes Project lessons have opened doors for students to create unique personal expressions, perform new dances and historical art, and respond to and communicate ideas informed by American history and cultural study.

Throughout the years of The Etudes Project, dedicated dance teachers working in various levels of the public educational system participated in professional development and furthered the action research of the project. Teachers helped design, develop, and implement lessons around etudes content, artists, and their corresponding masterworks. From work with students, the teachers' inspiration, knowledge, and effort produced beautiful heart-touching lessons. The results of field-tested lessons were reviewed, edited, and finally compiled into educational volumes known as *Roots & Branches* (McGhee and Sofras, 2003). Together, teachers and artists made signature twentieth century dances and educational resources available where none had previously existed. The new dance education resources are believed to be the first to:

- offer comprehensive standards-based content with accountability informed by NAEP guidelines,

- apply a process for specifically addressing Content Standard #3,
- provide entry points for all abilities of learners (through pre-etudes and etudes),
- join kinesthetic legacy with dance literacy,
- include and access great works critical to aesthetic understandings in dance,
- look at dance as a source for sharing cultural information about our unique American heritage, specifically contributions of the New Dance Group, and
- include Repertory Etudes™ in a process that creates a living learning text and literature foundation for dance.

(McGhee and Sofras, 2003, Vol. I: To Teachers)

The goal of disseminating resources to the field is finally coming to fruition. The American Dance Legacy Institute Repertory Etudes™ packets (with videos, music CDs, costume and lighting designs, and Labanotation scores), Images & Reflections™ Documentaries, *Dancing Rebels* (artist biographies and annotated bibliography), and *Roots & Branches: Exploring an Evolving Dance Legacy* lesson studies make up the spine of dance learning modules. More resources are becoming available with each passing year.

The Etudes Project has caused higher education faculty to rethink curriculum content of teacher pre-service programs and pre-professional training. The profession is beginning to view inclusion of American historical repertory as essential to the study and literacy of our discipline. New observations and inroads are being made as more colleges and universities are challenged by the outcomes of The Etudes Project.

The dance department of the State University of New York, College at Brockport is in the stage of rethinking college course offerings and student performances as informed by etudes. The department is examining etudes as potential repertory for young dancers entering the program. Discussions have also centered on infusing the content into dance history courses, inclusion in children's dance classes, and impact on pedagogy at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Some graduate students are using etudes with success in introductory dance classes for the general college population. Brockport's Assistant Professor Juanita Suarez has said,

To inform higher education curriculum we need a literate view of man and his work. Etudes do this. The process (of creating etudes and related resources) is research driven. Information is concrete and legitimate because it is coming directly from the source. It also gives another level of training for the dancer. (J.

Suarez, personal communication, February 2, 2004)

She also has considered the influences of etudes on her work with professional dance company, Latina Dance Project:

It raises issues in the development and documentation of new work and gives further awareness to the sense of historical place. (J. Suarez, personal communication, February 2, 2004)

The Etudes Project Directors are eager to see the impact of these first experiments and resources on future teaching and learning with youngsters, pre-professional dancers, pre-service dance educators, dance curriculum at all levels, preservation and archival work, and new artistic creations.

The process of documenting and preserving dance work, creating Repertory Etudes™, researching and compiling lesson studies content, and creating new dances informed by new information is valuable in its own right. The process has brought artists and educators into a symbiotic system of communication and learning—one that has potential for modeling how we develop new knowledge and resources in dance. The intention of such a system is to make dance learning intellectually healthy and full-bodied rather than one-sided or self-perpetuating. The interactive learning model, outlined earlier, diminishes elitist hierarchies and replaces them with the basic moral principles of mutual respect and work for the common good. Many rewards are then generated back to students, artists, teachers, and the dance discipline at large. Choreographer Danny Grossman expresses his personal satisfaction on sharing his art with young learners:

When I perform my art I am trying to give a gift to the audience.
When I see students performing my art they are giving a gift
back to me.

(McGhee and Sofras, 2003, Vol. I: Acknowledgements)

Pamela Sofras elaborates on a grander scale:

Each generation of dancers was moving farther and farther away from the source of traditional modern dance. Etudes help preserve dances for the generations ahead. (As teachers) It's rare we can give students complete works of dance. This provides an interim step while giving them access to the professional field. We all gain movement vocabulary yet we have the freedom to evolve the elements into personal creative expressions. Previously, this was not the way we learned dance. Now we are able to experience the movement and experience the work and therefore we have legacy. (P. Sofras, personal communication,

February 15, 2004)

On March 17, 2000, the dance world and those involved in The Etudes Project mourned the loss of New Dance Group member Anna Sokolow. In the obituary written by Jack Anderson of the *New York Times*, he recognized Ms. Sokolow's vital contribution to modern dance (Anderson, 2000). Today, the Rooms Repertory Etude™ (ADLI, 1999) is a lasting tribute to Anna as young dancers embody the quintessential elements of her *Rooms* piece and allow it to inspire new dances on alienation. Fortunately, all of us will benefit from Ms. Sokolow's commitment to The Etudes Project and Lorry May's teaching. In the true NDG spirit, Anna was convinced that early modern dance was worth saving and sharing, and should inspire others to make art.

When the Project began eight years ago, it was difficult to convince funders that etudes were realistic and valid learning tools for dance. Organizing project start up had required extraordinary time and energy as there had been no precedent. The first time round, Directors had to clear a path while creating the road map. Often the pace of development was interrupted for Directors to address funding and organizational priorities to keep the Project going. Nevertheless, participants at every level now consider The Etudes Project a monumental accomplishment of collective work and an idea that revolutionizes dance learning for the future. Through The Etudes Project, artists and educators established a profound respect for the meaning of collaboration.

Carolyn Adams has made extraordinary contributions to the dance world through her work with the Paul Taylor Company, NYSSSA School of Dance, the Harlem Dance Foundation, American Dance Legacy Project, and teaching at The Julliard School. Yet, as many would agree, she feels The Etudes Project is a special accomplishment:

This is my finest achievement to the field. Starting with the concept of the dance etude, taking on a set of values and goals and going about achieving them is the contribution. Looking at The Etudes Project twenty years from now, dancers won't understand the concept of non-access. It will become an invisible resource. New questions will arise: What is the gift of the hour and who will be looking at this?

(C. Adams, personal communication, February 14, 2004)

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