

AN INQUIRY INTO MEN'S EXPERIENCES IN COLLEGIATE DANCE

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This qualitative research study was designed to gain a deeper, more profound understanding of the lived experiences of collegiate male dancers. Through three phases of research, this study uncovered societal and familial obstacles collegiate male dancers often endure during their dance journeys, and describes how males navigate and transcend them. Extensive interviewing offers detailed glimpses into the lives of 9 male students who participate in collegiate dance programs. The study reveals participants' dance experiences prior to and during college; recognizes and questions common factors that influence collegiate male participation in dance; and identifies how male dancers feel supported and/or unsupported by their program.

An experiential workshop series applied and explored existing pedagogical suggestions offered by other scholars. Subsequently, a rehearsal and performance experience physically investigated emergent themes.

Recommendations are offered on how to better encourage, cultivate, and support collegiate male dance populations through enhanced pedagogies and program improvements.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 19th century, many factors have contributed to the feminization of professional, recreational, academic, and social dancing, especially within the United States. American males interested in pursuing dance as a social, recreational, academic, or professional activity, have often faced great difficulty, ridicule, even hatred and repugnance. However, dance is not an innately feminine field of study or practice (Burt 2007). Interestingly, prior to the 19th century males were the dominant gender in dance, and males who danced were generally associated with the upper classes and aristocracy. However, according to dance scholar Ramsay Burt (2007) due to a shift in society's views and opinions on the body and gender, the male body became dismissed as a source of exhibition during the 19th century. Unfortunately, traces of this idea seem to still hold true today, and appear to impact males' participation in dance performance and study. Because of this, it is widely known and/or assumed that dance is a field primarily populated by female performers.

In the United States, and abroad, entry into and continued participation in dance for males can be extremely challenging due to societal and familial implications and expectations (Burt 2007, Gard 2006, Risner 2009a). Male dancers are often not afforded the opportunity to participate in dance at young ages; therefore, those who are interested in dance must start training much later in life than their female counterparts. It is common for males interested in dance not to pursue it until they have left home and become less dependent upon family. This

means that it is common for males to begin participating in dance after graduating from high school. Thusly, for many males' their first experience with dance training and study may occur in post-secondary institutions such as colleges and universities.

Post-secondary institutions commonly present themselves as environments in which students can safely explore new interests. Therefore, college and university dance programs may be able to offer males the opportunity to explore dance in a safer, often less judgmental, setting than high schools and private-sector institutions. In fact, Doug Risner (2009a), asserts:

Post-secondary dance programs today are well positioned, and by definition in many instances, responsible for educating culturally aware students and communities, while also accomplishing their artistic mission for preparing aspiring students for professional careers in dance. (170)

Meaning, these programs have the power and ability to not only produce proficient dance artists, but also change how dance artists are culturally and societally viewed and received.

Despite continuing to account for a significantly low percentage of students in higher education dance, the number of degree-seeking males in collegiate dance programs in the United States appears to steadily be on the rise over the past 12 years (Higher Education Arts Data Services, 2003-2015). According to the Dance Data Summaries presented by the Higher Education Arts Data Services (HEADS), males pursuing dance degrees at reporting institutions increased from 388 (10.4%) in 2003 to 771 (12.8%) in 2015 – with the highest number of males reported at 807 (13.8%) in 2013. Interestingly, between 2003 and 2015, male participation in collegiate dance programs increased by 99.7%, while female participation grew only

57.3% (Higher Education... 2003-2015). See Table 1 for a consolidated report I composed that illustrates the male and female populations of students in collegiate dance programs as indicated in the 2003-2015 HEADS' reports. While the HEADS' reports provide detailed information regarding student and faculty demographics for member institutions across the nation, it doesn't account for minors or non-degree-seeking students who participate in these programs. Therefore, males who participate in these programs, but do not declare a dance major or minor, go unreported.

Table 1. American collegiate dance students by gender 2003-2015, HEADS data.

Reporting Year	# of		Total # of Females	Total # of Students	Male %	Female %
	Institutions Reporting	Total # of Males				
2003-04	51	386	3,340	3,726	10.360%	89.640%
2004-05	50	709	3,426	4,135	17.146%	82.854%
2005-06	51	468	3,659	4,127	11.340%	88.660%
2006-07	61	602	4,838	5,440	11.066%	88.934%
2007-08	63	643	5,297	5,940	10.825%	89.175%
2008-09	65	632	5,078	5,710	11.068%	88.932%
2009-10	66	719	5,119	5,838	12.316%	87.684%
2010-11	63	652	4,866	5,518	11.816%	88.184%
2011-12	66	684	4,975	5,659	12.087%	87.913%
2012-13	69	807	5,054	5,861	13.769%	86.231%
2013-14	69	772	4,883	5,655	13.652%	86.348%
2014-15	76	771	5,253	6,024	12.799%	87.201%
Totals	750	7,845	55,788	63,633		
Averages	62.50	653.75	4,649.00	5,302.75	12.35%	87.65%

Although male participation in dance seems to steadily be on the rise in the United States, young males still face resistance and ridicule for their interest in a field that is identified through socially constructed generalizations and assumptions

as being feminine (Risner 2009a). According to Erdie Ferdun (1994, 46), this assumption can severely impact the participation of individuals who do “not want to be associated with stereotyped gender images and practices.” Therefore, the feminization of dance implicates both male and female dancers, and can ultimately negatively impact the diversity of dance participants. Moreover, this impact can readily be seen through the disproportionately inferior number of male participants involved in dance when compared to their female counterparts. According to Doug Risner (2009a) in his book, *Stigma and Perseverance in the Lives of Boys Who Dance*, which documents his three-year national study into adolescent male participation in dance, “While dance in many societies is perceived as valid male activity, Western culture continues to position dance as a [strictly] ‘female’ art form” (44). Risner (2009a) asserts that males’ participation in Western concert dance at any age continues to be a highly suspect endeavor both nationally and internationally. It is widely known and observable in the United States that women consistently outnumber men in dance studios, educational institutions, non-gender exclusive professional dance companies, and most all dance organizations and venues. This trend is found across the board in recreational, social, academic, and professional dance realms. Over time, this lopsided division of genders, with the support of other factors too, has led to the feminization of the dance field. Unfortunately this causes males’ participation in dance to continually be challenged and questioned. Risner states,

Due in large part to dualistic thinking which separates mind from body, intellectual activity from physical labor, and dance’s close association to girls and women, dance is often perceived and denigrated as part of women’s domain. Historical notions about the body often link the feminine with

intuition, nature, the body, and evil; conversely intellectual, cultural and mind historically have been perceived as masculine. (Risner 2009, 44-45)

One significant cause to this problem is males' limited, or non-existent, exposure to seeing or hearing dance promoted as an acceptable professional or recreational pursuit for men. Ramsay Burt (2007, 4) states that "Dance is not an exclusively or innately feminine activity, and most people would surely accept that the history of twentieth-century dance would have been poorer without the contribution of male dancers and choreographers." Burt (2007, 4) also exclaims that male's witnessing other men dancing can lead to the "discovery of their own unreali[z]ed potential" which can potentially lead to the start of their dancing.

However, witnessing male performance is not the only influence that initiates, encourages, or dissuades males' pursuit of dance. There are numerous societal and familial factors that influence a male's dance aptitude, what Maxine Craig refers to as a male's "dancer habitus". The construction of this habitus stems from many societal and familiar factors such as a family's approval and encouragement of dance as well as the inclusion of dance in the home and social lives of boys (Craig 2014). Craig's concept of "dancer habitus" is further discussed in Chapter 2.

These are just a few of the social and familial factors that may impact a male's decision to partake in a dance experience. Excitingly, dance in popular culture has been on the rise for the past few years. American television shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance* (SYTYCD) (2005-present), *Dancing with the Stars* (2005-present), *America's Best Dance Crew* (2008-2012 and 2015), and *World of Dance* (2017), have brought about increased awareness of dance as a viable performance

art for male dancers. Of the ten grand-prize winners in seasons 1-8 and 11-12 of SYTYCD, 50% were male dancers (“Where Are They Now?”). Male dancers also accounted for 60% of the runners up during the same seasons (Wikipedia Contributors). Because seasons 9 and 10 were prearranged to have both a male a female winner each season, their results are less informative and not considered here.

Zihao Li (2011, 17) states, “Dance seems to have become a more acceptable and enjoyable activity among males, thanks to the popular media and a more open-minded audience.” If Li’s assertion is true, has this acceptability filtered into the collegiate male demographic? What is the collegiate male’s perception of dance as a potential course of study and/or source of entertainment? These are among the many questions this study sought to answer.

It is understood that there are many factors that contribute to and impact male participation in dance in general. For example, in comparison to females, males are often afforded fewer, if any, opportunities to begin dance training at early ages. However, this study will focus its investigations and explorations on those males who, despite the challenges of pursuing dance as a male, have chosen to participate in collegiate dance programs.

Due to my personal experience as a male who has studied dance during my adolescence and in college (undergraduate and as a graduate student), I began this study by reflecting upon my personal narrative and experience as a dance artist in order to provide insight into why this research topic is so innately important to me. Like many other researchers of this topic, my personal experiences as a male dancer

have afforded me first-hand understandings and familiarities in the realm in which I have chosen to focus my study. I believe my own experiences as a male dancer have helped guide my inquiry, and have assisted in processing the discoveries found in this research.

My Story

I am a dance student, choreographer, performer, and instructor – a *male* dance student, choreographer, performer, and instructor to be precise. After spending over twenty years in the dance field, I am consistently reminded that I chose a field of study that is highly saturated by individuals of the female sex/gender. I even have a female to thank for introducing me to dance at the young age of four – my mother. Despite my early introduction to dance, my career path, like many other male dancers, has proven to be difficult to navigate socially. My dance education started at a local, private studio in a small town in the rural South. While taking dance classes at such a young age, even into my preadolescent years, I was unconcerned with, and likely unaware of, how my gender compared to all the other dancers, and instructors, in the studio. I recall becoming more cognizant of my gender difference as I got older, especially when instructors started providing me with movements that were different from what the girls in class were asked to do. This inevitably singled me out. Not only was I the only male dancer in my class, but I was also the only male dancer in the entire studio – until another male, who was 2 years younger than me, enrolled at the studio when I was 13.

The addition of another male in the studio evoked several emotional feelings and physical responses for me. I recall initially feeling very territorial as it felt as though the other male was “intruding” on my studio. In addition to this territorial feeling, I also felt compelled to overtly prove my technical proficiency as the more experienced male. As the years progressed, my initial feelings morphed into a sense of camaraderie and support for the other male dancer. Eventually, I valued having another male dancer so much that I desired having even more male dancers in the studio. Unfortunately, this never happened.

During my senior year of high school, after doing some research, I realized that studying dance could potentially be a valid collegiate pursuit and viable career ambition. With the support of my mother, family, and dance teacher, I decided to audition for the dance program at The University of Alabama (UA). I was terrified, as I was extremely ill prepared for the audition. Due to the shortage of professional and experienced dance teachers in my small hometown, I had never taken a professional level ballet class during my fourteen years of study at the local studio. Therefore, a weekend crash course on ballet terminology, technique, etiquette, and attire – with the help of a local instructor – was required. Despite this preparation, I still didn’t feel sufficiently prepared for the audition. On audition day, the university dance studio was filled with approximately 70 females, and only 7 other males. I was very self-conscious and nervous about donning my tights and dance belt, especially since I had never worn them for a class before. I was even more nervous about being unknowledgeable of the ballet movements that I would be expected to execute. While it was apparent that some of the other males were much more technically

proficient than me, I quickly realized that I wasn't the most "untrained" male who was auditioning that day. Ultimately, my audition was successful. The faculty took a chance on me, and accepted me into the program – despite my inferior and unrefined performance at the audition.

Once my collegiate career commenced, I was elated to discover that there were several other male dancers in the program. Despite that our technical abilities ranged from novice to highly proficient, it was enjoyable to finally be in a dance setting with other males with likeminded professional ambitions. Moreover, because the dance department was housed in the Department of Theatre & Dance, the males pursuing theatre and musical theatre degrees were enrolled in many of the same technique classes as the dance majors. Therefore, I could commiserate with some of the musical theatre majors (males and females) about our lack of proficiency in ballet technique.

Fast-forward a few years. I graduated from the dance program at UA and was able to move to New York City (NYC) to pursue a professional dance career. Having attended numerous auditions, and working with several dance companies throughout NYC, it was continuously obvious that male dancers in the field were extremely outnumbered by female dancers. While this was highly beneficial because it afforded me significantly less competition at auditions, it continually saddened me to see such marginal numbers of male dancers. Jumping forward in time, I'm currently a Graduate Teaching Fellow in the Department of Dance at the University of Oregon (UO). In this role, I'm privileged with the opportunity to teach various movement classes each quarter that are open to undergraduate and graduate dance

majors and non-majors. However, the minimal number of males enrolled in my classes consistently reminds me of the general lack of male participation in dance. Again, I have encountered the realities of male participation in higher education dance. It is due to my personal experiences academically and professionally that I have embarked on this study of males' experiences in collegiate dance programs.

My personal experiences as a student, professional dancer, and educator, combined with my desire to see more males partaking in dance, are what have fueled my investigation into understanding other males' experiences and perceptions of dance in post-secondary institutions. Additionally, the insufficient amount of existent research and information on males' experiences in collegiate dance further compels me to this topic.

Significance of Study

While research into the male dancer is not necessarily revolutionary, there appears to be a demographic gap specific to understanding males' experiences in US post-secondary institutions. During my investigation, I encountered numerous studies and research that delve into the implications associated with male dancing. Many of these studies focus on male dancers' (inevitable) negotiation of stigmas regarding sexuality and gender expectations. Gender-role education, either hidden or unknowingly embedded within teaching pedagogies, and the effects male dance has on the social construction of maleness are also well-investigated aspects of male dance. Moreover, research pertaining to adolescent male participation in dance, and the experiences and stories of professional male dancers, choreographers, and

educators seems to be the most researched demographics. However, there is a significant lack of information specifically regarding male participation in college dance courses and programs. Although some research has been conducted on male college dance majors (pre-professional) (Risner 2009), very little research has directly concentrated on collegiate males; their perceptions of men who dance; the implications associated with studying dance in college; the experiences of non-dance major males; or how to encourage and support existing and budding male dance populations on college campuses. It is my hope that the results of this research will provide valuable insight for educators in post-secondary institutions – especially those with dance programs – in order to better support, cultivate, and encourage male participation in collegiate dance. Furthermore, I hope that the results found in this study are also potentially applicable to other movement-based programs in post-secondary institutions such as physical education, music, theatre, and athletics.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain a richer, more profound, understanding of the lived experiences of males who participate in collegiate dance programs. Through this study, I sought to understand the societal and cultural factors that promote and dissuade male participation in collegiate dance programs; realize the current concerns of, and issues surrounding, collegiate male dancers; gain insights into how and why males engage in their institution's dance programs; and discover why and how males feel supported and/or unsupported by their

program. Lastly, this study aimed to form and propose suggestions for enhancements to current pedagogies among university and college faculties, as well as for departmental practices, in order to better encourage, cultivate, and support existing and new male dance populations on college campuses.

Delimitations

This study was focused on the experiences of males who have participated in post-secondary dance programs located in the pacific-northwestern United States. Participation in Phase 1 of this study was open to males and females. Participation in Phases 2 and 3 of this study was exclusive to cisgendered (biological) males who were presently enrolled as students at either the University of Oregon or Lane Community College and had previously or currently participated in either institution's dance program. The close proximity between these two institutions allowed for hands-on investigation and in-person participation. The number of participants in Phases 2 and 3 was limited to a maximum of 20 participants.

Regarding the scope of this study, male participation in dance and male dance performance as subjects of inquiry are often surrounded by discourses concerning the definition and construction of gender, sexuality, and masculinity. While these sensitive topics are often unavoidable in studying males' experiences in dance, they are not the primary concerns of this research study. However, it was presumed that discussions and concerns of these topics would emerge during this research. Participants in all phases of study completed IRB-approved consent forms.

Limitations

Due to the current culture of male dance in the Eugene, Oregon community, recruitment of participants for Phases 2 and 3 of this study was challenging. As the number of collegiate male dancers in the area is quite small, participants were not always available to attend all meetings/sessions due to their frequent conflicts with other dance and non-dance related activities. Therefore, attending every session was not a requirement for participation in this study; however, participants were highly encouraged to attend as many sessions as possible. Furthermore, because the participants in this study are college students, scheduling conflicts with their academic classes and extra curricular activities impeded their participation in some sessions. In spite of this, every session in Phase 2 had at least 3 participants attend.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED WORK

This study aimed to explore the experiences of males who participate in collegiate dance programs. However, there exists a significant lack of information specifically regarding the male dancer in higher education. Therefore, this review of literature explores the general implications associated with male participation in dance, as well as scholarly research and pedagogical suggestions for educating men in dance. This review of related work is divided into three categories:

1. Dancer Habitus
2. Pedagogical Approaches, Educational Concerns, and Paralleling Dance and Sports
3. Proximity and Touch

The first section explores how society and culture influence males' decision and ability to engage with dance. The second section presents the research and pedagogical suggestions of other scholars regarding males and dance education with particular attention given to the use of sports and athletic references in dance pedagogy. The third section investigates the implications involved with male-to-male touch and proximity.

Dancer Habitus

Maxine Craig's (2014) book *Sorry I Don't Dance: Why Men Refuse to Move*, explores how contemporary males become dancers or non-dancers through the impact of societal and familial enculturation. In her study, she surveyed fifty males

including six who were participants in a Dance 101 university course and forty-four who were recruited via other means (193). She uses the term “dancer habitus” to define an individual’s aptitude for dance, and explores the factors that contribute to the construction of an individual’s dancer habitus. Craig’s “dancer habitus” parallels the sociological concept of “habitus” which was proliferated by the French sociologist/philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu. Habitus is a key component to Bourdieu’s theory of practice, which asserts that action is regulated in society without being prescribed due to adherence to “rules, norms or conscious intention” (Swartz 1997, 95). Meaning, our actions can be seen as products of the amalgamation of the influences and imprints we experience in our social interactions. According to Bourdieu, as actors, or participants, in society, we are continuously negotiating the individual/societal dualism – the relationship between the individual and society (Swartz 1997, 96). As a minority demographic in the field of dance, and often societally marginalized for pursuing dance, the male dancer knows this negotiation all too well. Bourdieu, as quoted by Swartz, defines habitus as:

A system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (Swartz 1997, 100-101)

Swartz, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Boston University and Senior Editor and Book Review Editor for *Theory and Society*, helps guide the reader to understand that what Bourdieu is saying here is that our actions are heavily informed by deeply rooted and internalized dispositions acquired from our participation in society (Swartz 1997, 95-116). I inferred from Swartz (1997) that we as social actors

(participants) have the capability of not only being affected by the actions of others, but we can also impact or contribute to the actions of others. Habitus springs from class-specific habits, socialization from family and peers, and ultimately provides actors with a foundation of knowledge (dispositions) that informs their practices and agency. Therefore, an actor's actions may reify existing practices or defy them, but the actor has agency over this choice.

Maxine Craig's concept of "dancer habitus" illustrates how individuals acquire dispositions about dance, and how those dispositions influence males' decisions to dance. She states, "Childhood experiences with dance provide insight into the place of the family in the inculcation of bodily dispositions. One issue appears to be crucial for the formation of the dancer's habitus. A boy must feel that his parents approve of the pleasure he derives from dancing" (Craig, 2014, 139). Two factors that Craig believes significantly impact a young male's dancer habitus are "home bopping" and "intergenerational family dancing." Home bopping is the incorporation of dance into daily life through chores and other home activities. Intergenerational family dancing refers to the bestowment of traditional, cultural, or familial dancing on younger generations (Craig 2014, 138-146).

Craig claims that parents and siblings are both very influential on a male's dancer habitus. She states that there are factors that actually teach males not to dance. Fathers who enjoy dance but do not make their dancing visible to their sons, and the heteronormative idea of using dance to get physically close to girls yet not needing to be a successful dancer, both devalue dance for young males. (Craig 2014, 147) Craig asserts that music and dance, and the mind and body are often

disconnected for males. While males may enjoy music, they often won't or can't physicalize it (Craig 2014, 152). It is only enjoyed in one's head, not their body. Craig supports this claim with Barbara Ehrenreich's concept of muscular inhibition, which she refers to as physical containment – the act of not physicalizing movement, and actively working to not move (Craig 2014, 153). Therefore, rather than simply being passive participants, males are taught – sometimes even encouraged – to actively dismiss moving and dancing from their lived experiences. Furthermore, Craig defines masculinity as a performance executed by men and geared towards other men while denying doing it. Based on the responses from her interviews, she concludes that men reject the idea of rehearsing to avoid the stigma associated with preparing for dance – a perceived feminized endeavor. She states:

Yet while men feel compelled to perform masculinity, successful masculinity has to appear unrehearsed. Normative masculine embodiment requires having a feel for the game of masculinity, knowing what is at stake in the game and having a desire to play it, while under most circumstances denying that a game is being played. (Craig 2014, 158)

An interesting dichotomy can be seen between Craig's assertion that a man's performance of masculinity should appear unrehearsed and a choreographer's or dancer's desire for their movement to appear well rehearsed; both wish to produce a product that appears to an audience as being second nature.

As opposed to focusing on those males who identify as professionally or academically oriented dancers, Craig's study primarily focuses on general population males and those who participate in social dance forms. Her book provides insightful data concerning how males are often introduced to dance, and information about what attracts them or dissuades them from participating in such

a physical and social engagement. Craig's book delves into males' participation in various social dance forms including jitterbugging, swing, and hip-hop, but does not address Western concert dance forms such as ballet, jazz, and contemporary dance.

Despite enrolling in a university dance course as a part of her research methodology for her study, Craig doesn't explicitly address the experiences or pursuits of the collegiate male dancers with whom she engages during her research. This absence of information further illustrates the gap in information specifically regarding males' experiences in collegiate dance.

Pedagogical Approaches, Educational Considerations, and Paralleling Dance and Sports

Doug Risner is one of the leading proponents for researching and promoting male dance and dance education research in America. He is currently a Professor of Dance at Wayne State University and was the former editor of the Journal of Dance Education. His research on men in dance has been extensive, and he is often recognized as the current preeminent voice of research concerning males' participation in dance in America. Risner's presentation, "When Boys Dance: Moving Masculinities and Cultural Resistance in Dance Training and Education", at the dance and Child international (daCi) conference in Kingston, Jamaica in 2009, provides a synopsis and some of the findings of his three-year national research study of pre-professional male dancers, ages 13-22. Specific information regarding the stigma that boys' dancing garners, and the perseverance males display were presented. The findings and methods of the full study can be found in Risner's

(2009a) book, *Stigma and Perseverance in the Lives of Boys Who Dance*. The study was conducted to gain an understanding of the experiences of young male dancers and the reasons why they dance. Online surveys, interviews, focus groups, and field observations were used on a pool of 75 males currently studying dance in the United States. According to his book, Risner (2009a, 99) recruited participants from “a national dance company and its constituent members; college and university dance programs; dance studios and academies; and other snowball sampling strategies.” Survey questions regarding stigma of male dancers indicated that most males experience a predominantly female environment; endure social, verbal, and physical harassment and teasing in school and society by non-dance males; have limited support from their parents and male family members; and their sexual orientation is repeatedly questioned. Risner also criticizes the hegemonic approaches and normalizing strategies prevalent throughout dance education in the last five decades. He wrote that valorizing and celebrating the heterosexual dancer, comparing dance to sport, and minimizing non-heterosexual male participation in dance have produced “narrow masculinist stereotypes” (Risner 2009b, 5). Also, Risner asserts that too much research has been focused on the recruitment of new male participants in dance. He states that it is imperative for new research to concentrate on the current experiences of male dancers in order to gain a better understanding of how to support male dance populations.

Furthermore, Risner urges all dance educators to reevaluate their own teaching pedagogies to discover any “hidden curriculums” that may in fact hinder male participation. Sue Stinson (2005, 52) explains “hidden curriculum” as

“everything that students are learning besides what teachers are explicitly teaching, lessons that are often generated through the taken for granted structures and practices of education institutions.” Risner argues that these embedded teachings can instill and perpetuate ideas about gender and “gendered ideas about movement” (2009a, 149).

Additionally, Chapter Six in Doug Risner’s (2009a) book entitled “Confronting the Challenges of Boys’ Lives in Dance,” specifically provides great insight into the educational implications and challenges of adolescent boys in dance training. Risner’s findings from his three-year national study resulted in a list of suggestions for educators and administrators who work with and teach male dancers. While Risner’s suggestions and research appear mostly tailored to those young males who are training in dance studios and academies, his proposals are conceivably applicable to general education dance and even post-secondary dance education.

One specific recruitment tool addressed is the relating of dance to sports. Risner asserts that the use of relating dance to sports movement may be effective for general education endeavors, but is “without merit” for pre-professional training because it removes the artistic aspect of dance (Risner 2009a, 148). “Rather than focusing solely on narrow definitions of ‘physical challenge,’ like jumping higher, turning more, and taking up more space, males are also interested in moving with greater expression and self-discovery in the rehearsal studio and on the concert stage” (Risner 2009a, 149). While I understand Risner’s concerns about losing artistry when focus is placed exclusively on physical feats and actions, I do believe

that the utilization of athletic and sports motifs to inspire and evoke movement from all dancers (male and female, professional and pre-professional) has potential choreographic and educational value: especially for those individuals who are new to or inexperienced in dance.

Sports and athletics are ingrained in and reinforced throughout American culture; therefore, causing many Americans to become extremely literate in their rules, performances, and objectives (Keefe, 93). Because of this enculturation, Americans have become very familiar with athletic concepts, regardless if they are current participants or practitioners of a sport (Keefe, 93). In opposition, dance as an art form and practice is significantly less familiar to the American population. Therefore, the use of athletic motifs and concepts in dance provides a significant, common foundation for choreographic exploration and movement initiation. However, I understand and appreciate Risner's concern for potentially inhibiting artistry in movement by conforming to the rigidities of athletic techniques, as well as his concern for the possible alienation of those who do not identify or associate with sports/athletics.

I have found that when used cautiously and thoughtfully, drawing parallels between dance and sports can be beneficial. In my experience, utilizing sports and athletic motifs in dance instruction and choreography, may be akin to using pedestrian or task-based ideas. Both of these remain common tools in the choreographic process of many artists.

Risner discusses the educational implications of his study, reporting that educators and administrators play crucial roles in supporting males in dance. He

posits that educators are often the most supportive individuals in an adolescent male dancer's social support network; however, he states that they cannot replace the support of family members. Also, because the dance studio is often viewed as a safe place for many male dancers, he reveals that they may not readily demonstrate external signs of social distress or social isolation when they are there. Therefore, male dancers may hide negative feelings to conform to what is expected of being male. Risner offers twenty suggestions for supporting males in the classroom and studio, and urges educators to take inventory of their own gender assumptions to avoid hetero-centric and gendered pedagogies. Risner's suggestions that I find most pertinent to this study include: supply ample rehearsal and performance opportunities that support male student's learning experiences and self-image; promote attendance at professional dance concerts and events; consider potential gender messages in choreography and costumes; and creatively make connections between males' experiences in the studio and daily life outside the studio (Risner 2009a, 151-156).

Additionally, because of their status and authority over programs, Risner believes school administrators can heavily influence the experience of young male dancers. He offers nine suggestions for administrators, but I find the following three most relevant to my research: review promotional and audition materials, programs, websites, and advertisements to construct balanced gender images; promote gender inclusion in classes; and male administrators should be aware of their potency as leaders and promote themselves as role models for young males (Risner 2009a, 157-158). Risner's recommendations also address aspects of

pedagogies and curriculum, such as acknowledging potential gender messages, which educators may not even be aware of or deem influential in the shaping of dancers. Ultimately, I find most of Risner's recommendations and considerations progressive, insightful, and necessary for enhancing males' experiences in dance and promoting greater participation.

Most pertinent to this study, Risner specifically addresses the potential impact he feels post-secondary dance programs can have on male participation in dance. He states:

I contend that post-secondary dance programs today are well positioned and by definition in many instances, responsible for educating culturally aware students and communities, while also accomplishing their artistic mission for preparing aspiring students for professional careers in dance. Likely unthinkable only two decades ago, recent accomplishments make this claim possible...

[T]he ever-increasing number of male students pursuing professional preparation in higher education dance...positions post-secondary dance for significant leadership opportunities in redefining gender balance/symmetry and innovative outreach strategies for recruitment, male role modeling and anti-homophobic approaches for adolescents boys in dance. (Risner 2009a, 170)

Risner's beliefs that post-secondary dance programs and institutions are the potential cornerstones for impacting male participation in dance supports my endeavors in this study to understand the experiences of males' who participate in collegiate dance programs, and their perceptions of dance.

John Crawford (1994), through his article "Encouraging Male Participation in Dance" published in the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, provides brief historical information regarding the male dancer and offers some pedagogical suggestions for increasing male participation in the dance studio. Crawford's article was sparked by discussions had at the 1991, 1992, and 1993 National Dance

Association conferences regarding the need to increase male participation in dance. Crawford (1994, 40) asserts, "Male dominance [in leadership] in dance has not led to an increase in male dancers, possibly because it conforms to, rather than challenges, the very structures that brought about the scarcity in the first place." Unfortunately, Crawford's evocative statement is not adequately supplemented with clarifying information, causing it to be slightly confusing. Perhaps Crawford is implying that as males continue to be thrust into leadership/choreographic roles, and being less revered as performers, the popular belief that men are to be the gazers rather than gazed upon is being reified. Crawford suggests that looking at male dance in its historical context will lead to understanding the status quo. He provides a brief synopsis of males in dance from the 1700s to 1994, and iterates that dance lost respectability and legitimacy as a profession for men when focus shifted to the female ballerinas in the nineteenth century; this aided in the feminization of the field, and established a stereotype of male dancers as effeminate. Crawford (1994, 41) states that labeling male dancers as 'feminized men' became a way to decrease male participation in dance during the nineteenth century. Crawford states that the American educational system reflects societal views of dance as feminine, and contributes to the separation of male and female activities. He posits that after the third or fourth grade, males are often directed toward sports, while females are encouraged to dance. Therefore, in contrast to Doug Risner's beliefs, Crawford advises that educators present connections between athletics and dance in order to increase male interest in dance. He states, "The chief outlet for male emotional expression within the American mainstream is sports activity, in which males can

openly display emotion and male bonding for the good of the team and to achieve objective goals” (Crawford 1994, 41). Also, Crawford suggests the use of male-only classes to address male interests, promotion of competition within class, and the utilization of props. However, he acknowledges that to create a sense of gender-identity without enforcing stereotypes is difficult. Crawford also states that students should watch and learn from both genders, and early exposure to dance helps alleviate stereotyping. While Crawford offers several pedagogical and curricular suggestions for increasing male participation, he doesn’t provide any examples of his application and/or results of them. Despite his lack of reporting on the application of his own suggestions, I was encouraged to investigate the affects his recommendations have on males’ willingness to explore movement. Does drawing parallels between sports/athletics increase or encourage male participation in dance? How does the gender of the instructor impact the experience of the male dancer? These are questions addressed in this study.

Christina T. Soriano, instructor in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Wake Forest University, has exemplified the idea of paralleling athletics and sports to dance through an eight-week course titled “Movement for Men”, which is designed specifically for undergraduate males to explore movement. In Soriano’s 2010 article, “Movement for Men: A Course Challenging the Notion that Male Students Don’t Dance”, she provides readers with insight into the curricular design of her course. She states that the class is comprised exclusively of student athletes, most of whom have never taken a dance course previously. She indicates that the goals of this course are to encourage male perceptions of dance as an acceptable and

masculine activity, establish connections between athletics to dance, and challenge the stereotype of dance being an inherently feminine activity. Soriano (2010, 59) states, “We begin the semester with an acknowledgment that our individual identities are steeped in our bodies. How we move in the world often determines how we are perceived.” In her class, Soriano asks students to participate in movement exercises that explore simple movements and actions such as walking, sitting, and standing. To encourage further exploration, abstraction, and diversity of movement, she instructs students to “dance-ify” the simple movements and actions. Soriano (2010, 59) defines this concept as the “communal act of deconstructing athletic movement and bringing it into a more dance-specific realm.” Specifically, she incorporates many athletic motifs including a golf drive, a jump shot, dribbling, tackling, and swinging a bat. Additionally, to encourage physical contact, she uses slam-dunk patterns, high-five greetings, and celebratory end zone dances. Risner would likely not find the use of these tactics problematic here, as Soriano’s students don’t appear to be training for professional dance careers. However, he might find them questionable, and potentially limiting and alienating to non-athletic and/or homosexual dancers if used on males who are preparing for a professional career as a dance artist. Risner (2009a, 143) states, “While ‘dance as sports’ discourses may be effective in the general population, these strategies in the pre-professional realm appear to be unfounded and may be detrimental for young males’ sense of identity and self concept as dance artists.” But when is the distinction made between “general population” and “pre-professional” dancer? With it being typical for males to start dance late in life, their first exposure to dance training may also be the first

day of their pre-professional training. Due to Risner's weariness of the application of relating sports to dance, combined with Crawford's suggestion for it and Soriano's use of it, I found it to be a valuable area of exploration in this study as it appears to be highly contested.

Soriano also incorporates "video days" into her course in order to expose her students to visual representations of male dance, present historical information, and to open up discussion about gender identity. She specifically addresses the latter by presenting two versions of *Swan Lake* – a traditional version performed by the Kirov Ballet, and Matthew Bourne's all-male rendition – and discussing their similar and different presentations of the male dancer.

I greatly value Soriano's efforts to encourage male participation in collegiate dance course, yet I have some questions regarding her article, course design, and the impact her sex has on her students. According to Zihao Li (2010), male students with limited dance training typically prefer male instructors; however, as students' technical proficiencies progress, the gender of the instructor becomes less relevant to them.

Soriano's article leaves readers questioning the accomplishments of her class, and the course's efficacy in encouraging male participation in dance and broadening male students' perspectives on dance as a collegiate endeavor. We are uninformed of whether her class reached the goals she set out to accomplish. Did the course encourage these students to "embrace the notion of dancing as an acceptable and masculine activity" as she had hoped? Did they find "joy" in dancing? Both of these were outlined as goals for the class. Statistical and/or empirical data

describing the impact this course has had on her students, male enrollment in movement courses, or male attendance at dance performances would have been valuable information. Collecting this kind of data during her class does not appear to be a part of her research goal at the time of her article. Therefore, understanding its impact remains unknown to readers. Through this study I attempted to collect this type of information from participants. The results are provided in Chapters IV, V, and VI.

Proximity and Touch

Another issue men must negotiate during dance is body proximity and physical contact between participants. Because dance is a physical practice and art form, dancers will undoubtedly, almost unavoidably, be required to interact with another dancer. Physical contact between dancers is often an intimate interaction. When the interaction occurs across sexes, often less is at stake for both the audience and the performers. However, when males must physically interact with other males, more negotiations must be made by performers, choreographers, and audience members.

Fredric Rabinowitz (1992, 574) states that “a need for control and power, a competitive orientation to life, and a fear of appearing feminine, often precludes men from achieving intimate interpersonal relations with other men”. He goes on to describe male-to-male touching as taboo in current society, with only a few exceptions – weddings, funerals, and athletic events. Moreover, male-to-male touching carries the unfortunate implication of assumed homosexuality. Rabinowitz

cites studies regarding counselor-to-client non-erotic, therapeutic touching, which implies that male counselor to male client touching shows negligible effects specifically on self-disclosure – the offering of information beyond superficial and general material. Hugging was slowly incorporated as a final gesture to end each therapy session. Rabinowitz states that group members were hesitant at first due to the fear of appearing gay. Despite being such a simple action, Rabinowitz describes the complexity of male-to-male hugging. Hugging is a form of communication, and requires constant negotiation by both the giver and receiver to communicate mutual willingness to oblige. Moreover, most men only have experience embracing women and children; therefore, male bodies feel “unfamiliar and bulky” (Rabinowitz 1991, 575). Likewise, according to Rabinowitz men typically place their arms on top of females and children’s arms, thus when hugging another man, males have to negotiate arm placement – which can potentially imply a struggle for power and dominance. Even more challenging is negotiating proximity. Males, particularly heterosexual males, may fear the touching and close proximity of genitals when embracing one another. Rabinowitz declares that hugging became a ritual following group sessions, and has caused closer interpersonal contact and deeper emotional reactions. While this research does not reference artistic means of touching, information provided by Rabinowitz gives insight into the hesitations men often have when faced with same-sex touching and the power it has in promoting interpersonal communication and emotional reactions.

Roese et al (1992) also investigated the impact of same-sex touching. This research sought to find correlations between same-sex touching and homophobic

attitudes among men and women. The authors conducted two studies to examine their hypothesis that men's tendency to possess more homophobic attitudes than women might directly correlate to the amount of same-sex interpersonal touch in which they engage. The participant pools for the studies consisted of 34 (study 1) and 32 (study 2) undergraduate males and females at the University of Western Ontario in Canada. Their article provides numerous references to previously conducted research regarding interpersonal touch preferences and tendencies. They state that both quantitative and qualitative touch differences between sexes have been frequently reported (Roese et al. 1992, 249). References to previous research indicating that homophobic attitudes are more prevalent in men are provided. Additionally, they reference several studies that indicate that women engage more often, and with more comfort, in intimate same-sex touching than men. Perceptions and self-reports are consistent with behavioral data.

Several theories regarding sex differences in touch were noted in their article. Notably, the researchers include references to studies that indicate that men are socialized to restrain from using touch to express emotions. Additionally, "status concerns may limit same-sex touching in males to normatively acceptable forms" (e.g. handshaking) because they symbolize equal status and reduce signs of dominance and power (Roese et al. 1992, 250). This study appears to have stemmed from a 1989 study conducted by Derlega, Lewis, Harrison, Winstead, and Costanza which indicates that a fear of being labeled homosexual might motivate men to avoid same-sex touching (Roese et al. 1992, 251). Moreover, Derlega et al.'s hypothesis suggests that men who possess negative views of homosexuals might be

more inclined to avoid same-sex touching. Therefore, Roesse et al. desired to investigate the relationship between same-sex touching and homophobic attitudes. Two studies were conducted. Study 1 utilized data from the completion of a self-report scale and a 7-item scale that assessed homophobic attitudes. The results of this study supported the predication that women were more comfortable than men engaging in same-sex touch, and men reported higher homophobic attitudes. Study 2 utilized behavioral data collected from covert observations of same-sex touch of individuals in a college cafeteria. The results of this study indicated that women are more likely to touch than men, and covertly observed that men maintained higher homophobic attitudes. Based on these studies, the researchers show that homophobic attitudes “may underlie sex differences in same-sex touching” (Roesse et al. 1992, 256). Moreover, their results support Derlega et al.’s hypothesis that a fear of being labeled homosexual inhibits touch between men. While this study is limited to the culture in which it was conducted, North American (Canadian) college students, I feel as though its results are applicable and relevant to understanding the cultural tendencies of American college students.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

This study consisted of three phases of inquiry and data collection to gain valuable information relating to males' experiences as participants in collegiate dance. These phases include (1) conducting a discussion panel at the 2016 American College Dance Association's Northwest Regional Conference in Laramie, WY and presenting preliminary research findings at the 2016 National Dance Education Organization conference in Arlington, VA; (2) facilitating a series of experiential movement workshops and discussion sessions with recruited participants; and (3) collaboratively creating, rehearsing, and producing work with participants for a concert dance performance.

In accordance with the University of Oregon's Research Compliance Services, an application seeking approval for research involving human subjects was submitted and approved by the University's Internal Review Board (IRB) office for Phase 1, Phase 2, and Phase 3 of this study. Phase 1 was approved as protocol number 01272016.039. Phases 2 and 3 were approved as protocol number 06232016.036.

The following paragraphs outline the methodologies for each phase of this study. It is important to note that this study was intentionally designed to remain flexible and adaptive as it progressed through each phase. While each phase of the study was pre-planned with a framework for investigation, the activities and findings of each phase were used to inform the design and presentation of subsequent phases. Therefore, as the study progressed, modifications were

continuously made to the original research design in order to guide it in the direction most beneficial to the research goals and questions.

Phase 1 - ACDA Discussion Panel And NDEO Presentation

In order to gain insights into the current climate of males' engagement in collegiate dance programs, I attended the Northwest Regional Conference of the American College Dance Association in Laramie, Wyoming to conduct a 90-minute discussion panel on March 10, 2016 regarding males' experiences in collegiate dance programs. The panel was comprised of 5 current university/college faculty members (4 men and 1 women) and 1 male university dance major.

Feedback, insights, and information gleaned from this discussion panel were utilized to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of males who participate in various capacities (i.e. majors, minors, non-majors, community members, etc.) in collegiate dance programs, and guided the design and implementation of the subsequent phases of this research. See Appendix A (pg. 184) for ACDA conference panel description and research questions. Also, see Appendix B (pg. 186) for the findings from the panel discussion.

In order to gain demographic information about panelists and their respective programs, they were asked to complete a pre-panel questionnaire. Additionally, in order to evaluate the success of the panel, panelists were also asked to complete a post-participation survey. See Appendix C (pg. 188) for the pre-panel questionnaire, and Appendix D (pg. 189) for post-participation survey and results. During the panel I took notes and gathered data through the use of audio and video

recordings. After the conference, I analyzed the data to look for emergent themes, commonalities, and notable comments and concerns.

During the 2016 National Dance Education Organization Conference – held October 6-9 in Arlington, Virginia – in a 60-minute experiential presentation I provided synopses of my review of literature, data and information gained from the ACDA panel discussion, curricular proposals for Phase 2 workshops and discussion sessions, and piloted some of the planned experiential movement explorations. Presentation attendees provided feedback on these items, and participated in engaging and thoughtful dialogue concerning the current climate of male dance in higher education. Attendee feedback and my own reflections were considered in the designing of the methodological approaches for phases 2 and 3 of this study.

Phase 2 - Experiential Movement Workshops And Discussion Sessions

Due to the dearth of research concerning the male dancer, the collegiate male dancer in particular, existing methodologies for investigating this topic are extremely limited. Therefore, I found it necessary to create new methodologies, considering extant research addressed in the review of literature, to garner the necessary data for this research. Utilizing the information gained from both Phase 1 (See Appendix B) and the review of literature, I designed an experiential movement workshop and discussion session series aimed at uncovering men’s experiences in collegiate dance. In order to elicit information from various perspectives and experiences, multiple methods were used. The Experiential Movement Workshops and Discussion Sessions were conducted during the 2016 Fall term at the University

of Oregon. The series consisted of five (5) workshops and discussion sessions, which occurred weekly during weeks 5 – 8 of the 10-week term. Meetings were conducted on Wednesday evenings in a UO Department of Dance studio, and each was approximately 2 hours in duration.

For this phase of the study, participants were recruited via word of mouth, flyer advertisements, and through email communications. See Appendix E (pg. 192) for verbal and email recruitment materials, and Appendix F (pg. 193) for the recruitment poster. Recruitment efforts resulted in a participant pool consisting of 9 males who were currently enrolled as students at The University of Oregon or Lane Community College (Eugene, OR). Participants' previous dance experience, age, sexual orientation, and race were not factors for qualification to participate in this study. The researcher attempted to acquire a diverse participant pool that included dancers/movers with varying dance backgrounds.

Prior to participation in the workshop series, each participant completed a video and audio-recorded demographic intake interview. The intake interview script used for each participant can be found in Appendix G (pg. 194). Additionally, each experiential movement workshop and discussion session was audio and video recorded for future reference and analysis.

The experiential movement workshops and discussion sessions were designed to test modified versions of some of the pedagogic approaches and practices outlined in the review of literature for instructing male dancers; uncover the factors that impact males' participation in dance; better understand collegiate males' perspectives of college dance programs; explore a wide-range movement

concepts and styles; and ultimately to gain insight into the experiences of males in collegiate dance programs.

During this phase of the study, I served as facilitator, teacher, and participant-observer. Meaning, during the workshops I facilitated and guided the explorations; danced and moved alongside participants while simultaneously making observations of their experiences and responses; and taught them about various techniques and practices. I took on these three distinct roles in order to fully experience what I was asking of the participants, encourage myself to reflect on my own experiences as a collegiate male dancer, and to reflexively consider my impact on men as a collegiate educator.

The Experiential Movement Workshops utilized and investigated the impact of several different movement concepts and idioms. Particular concepts explored include:

- dance/movement composition,
- physical proximity and touch,
- relationship between sports/athletics and dance, and
- physicality and intensity of movement.

Specific dance idioms explored include classical and contemporary dance forms such as ballet, modern, improvisation, jazz, and hip-hop.

Additionally, in tandem with the Experiential Movement Workshops, I conducted discussion sessions. During these sessions, I facilitated dialogue with participants regarding theoretical, philosophical, cultural, and sociological concerns and issues often affiliated with male participation in dance. A lesson plan outlining

the topics and activities explored during each session is presented in Table 4 (page 45).

Throughout the duration of the Experiential Movement Workshops, participants were asked to maintain a journal to document their experiences and thoughts concerning each session. At the end of each session participants were asked to summarize their experience in each session, and were often prompted to write about particular concepts relevant to that week's topics. After the five-week Experiential Movement Workshops and Discussion Session series was completed, I collected and thoroughly reviewed participants' journals to gain an understanding of their thoughts, reactions, and to help frame subsequent explorations.

At the conclusion of Phase 2, I conducted post-participation exit interviews with each participant. While the interviews were structured in a way that allowed for tangential dialogue, each participant was asked the same questions. Additionally, I asked each participant to complete a post-participation survey. See Appendix H (pg. 195) for post-participation exit interview questions, survey, and survey results.

All Experiential Movement Workshops, Discussion Sessions, and post-participation interviews were audio/video recorded. A review and analysis of each of these elements, as well as participants' journals, was conducted in order to find overarching themes, emergent theories, similarities, commonalities, and dissimilarities.

Phase 3 – Choreographic Rehearsal and Performance Experience

After the conclusion of Phase 2, participants were invited to participate in a collaborative choreographic, rehearsal, and performance experience during the 2017 Winter term (January – March 2017). The University of Oregon Department of Dance’s Winter Graduate Loft course served as the vehicle for this phase of the study. The goal of this phase of the study was to gain deeper information regarding males’ experience as collegiate dance performers and creators.

The performance occurred on March 17, 2017 in the Dougherty Dance Theatre located in Gerlinger Annex on the campus of the University of Oregon. The cast consisted of 3 male participants from Phase 2, plus myself. After the performance, participants were interviewed, and asked to describe their experiences, discoveries, concerns, and perceptions during this phase of the study. Specifically, each was asked to address their experiences as a contributing member of the cast during the rehearsal process; performing for an audience and being observed; communicating their experience to friends or family; and post-performance reactions. All of these interviews were video recorded, and I conducted a content analysis of them to find overarching themes, emergent theories, similarities, and commonalities. See Appendix I (pg. 197) for the post-participation exit interview questions asked during Phase 3.

Evaluative Methods

This thesis study was continuously evaluated throughout all phases of study in order to analyze and gauge its effectiveness, challenge its rigor, and ensure

sufficient collection of data. The evaluative methods for each phase of study are outlined in Table 2. Evaluative methods and data collected will be further discussed in Chapters IV, V, and VI.

Table 2. Evaluative Methods

<i>Phase 1 – ACDA Panel</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct thorough review of related work • Recruit and conduct background research on panelists to ensure variety of perspectives • Video and audio recorded ACDA panel discussion • Panelists completed pre-panel questionnaire • Panelists complete post-panel survey • Reviewed and analyzed recorded materials
<i>Phase 2 – Experiential Movement Workshop & Discussion Session Series</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted individual intake interview with each participant • Video and audio recorded all interviews • Designed lesson plan for series based on relevant topics and supported by review of related work • Video and audio recorded all workshop and discussion session meetings • Reviewed and analyzed recorded materials • Participants maintained journals to document experience and respond to writing prompts • Review and analyzed participant journals • Conducted individuals post-participation exit interviews with each participant • Participants completed post-participation exit surveys
<i>Phase 3 – Rehearsal & Performance Experience</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recorded materials from Phase 2 to source movement material for choreographic exploration • Conducted post-performance exit interviews with each participant • Video and audio recorded all interviews • Reviewed and analyzed recorded materials

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIENTIAL MOVEMENT WORKSHOPS & DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Nine male dancers volunteered to participate in a five-week series of Experiential Workshops and Discussion Sessions during the Fall 2016 term at the University of Oregon. Each session was 2 hours in length. Five sessions were conducted for a total of 10 contact hours. Before the workshops began, I met with each participant to conduct an intake interview – each approximately 30-60 minutes in duration. After the conclusion of the workshop series, each participant also participated in an exit interview, submitted their journals to me, and completed an exit survey. The data from the phase of study is presented in this chapter.

Phase 2 - Participant Intake Interviews

The following synopses illustrate each participant's documented responses provided during their intake interviews. The chronology of each participant's narrative is slightly different as the interviews, while framed with the same particular questions, were conversational in nature. Consolidated demographic information about the participant group can be found in Table 3. While attempts were made to ensure that participants attended every session possible, not all of them were able to attend every session. See Table 4 for a recap of participants' session attendance. Pseudonyms are used throughout this study to ensure each participant's anonymity.

During the workshop series, participants maintained personal journals. Additionally, I recorded my personal observations of their explorations. Data from

these two sources is included throughout the Experiential Workshops & Discussion Session synopses, as well as in conclusion of this chapter.

Table 3. Workshop and discussion session consolidated participant demographics

Participant	Age	Institution	Major	Years of Dance Study Experience	Years of Dance Performance Experience
Colton	21	Lane Comm. College	Business Administration	13	10
Dee	39	University of Oregon	Dance	22	21
Eli	21	Lane Comm. College	Exercise and Movement Science	10	6
Enzo	19	University of Oregon	Accounting	4 months	0
Harrison	19	University of Oregon	Dance	6	6
James	22	University of Oregon	Geography	2 - 3	2 - 3
Lee	20	University of Oregon	Dance	2	2
Leon	20	University of Oregon	Dance	3	3
Michael	24	University of Oregon	Dance	7	1

Table 4. Participant session attendance

Participant	Session 1 (10.19.16)	Session 2 (10.26.16)	Session 3 (11.2.16)	Session 4 (11.9.16)	Session 5 (11.16.16)	# of Sessions Attended
Colton	X	X			X	3
Dee		X		X	X	3
Eli	X				X	2
Enzo		X		X	X	3
Harrison	X	X	X		X	4
James	X	X	X	X	X	5
Lee	X		X	X	X	4
Leon	X	X	X	X	X	5
Michael		X				1

Colton

Colton is 21, and a junior undergraduate pursuing an associates degree in business administration at Lane Community College (LCC) in Eugene, OR. Colton was born and raised in Eugene in a middle class, suburban household. He has a twin brother and he described their relationship as being “very close...sometimes I think we are basically the same person.” He also has two sisters, and stated that they are all really close. His mom is a dance teacher who owns her own studio in town. He recalls spending more time with his mom than his peers during his youth because

he regularly took classes at her studio. During elementary school, Colton and his brother transferred from public school to a private Catholic school system. He described the public school system as being very liberal and open – words he did not use when describing his Catholic school.

Colton elaborated on his extra curricular pursuits during elementary and high school. He stated, “in high school I was always dancing but it was never really my passion, it wasn’t ever like I wanted to do this as a career.” To him it was a “pastime or hobby,” something he enjoyed doing. He was most passionate about his participation in track and field, in which he put most of his energy and time outside of school. After high school, Colton attended Western Oregon University (WOU) on a track scholarship. Feeling as though WOU wasn’t the right fit for him, he transferred to Lane Community College (LCC). At the time of his participation in this study, he was in the process of graduating from LCC, and transferring to a 4-year institution in California to further pursue track.

Colton began dancing when he was 5 years old at his mom’s studio. He stated he was never forced into it, but his mom suggested it and he “just went with it.” He credits his interest in dance as a result of always being surrounded by dance and people who danced; and because he was comfortable with it he continued to do it. He recalled always being “comfortable” with performing in recitals, and stated he became more comfortable dancing when he started regularly competing in dance competitions and participating in more public performances. When he was in 6th grade, he joined the boys’ hip-hop team at his mom’s studio and continued as a member through his senior year of high school. He stated that he always attended

high school dances, and that “everyone he knew, danced.” Colton indicated that he had both male and female friends who danced. He further explained his interest in dance by saying, “I love staying active and movement is really important to me. I get grumpy when I’m not doing physical activity.” Also in high school, Colton and his brother participated in basketball and soccer.

After high school, Colton continued to dance in college. At Western Oregon University, he enrolled in hip-hop and contemporary classes. He explained that his roommate and best friend at the time were in the dance program as well. After transferring from WOU, Colton participated in hip-hop classes in the dance program at LCC. He also performed in their end-of-term performance. Additionally, he continues to participate in drop-in classes at his mom’s studio. Colton has 13 years of dance training experience, and over 10 years of dance performance experience.

Colton stated he agreed to participate in this research study because he wanted to help me out. Additionally, he said, “I think it would be interesting to see the outlook on men in the dance community, especially because it’s becoming more popular and accepted.” He believes that male participation in styles other than hip-hop, such as ballet, contemporary/modern, are becoming more widely accepted. He also expressed great interest in hearing the experiences and opinions of other study participants.

Colton stated that when he was significantly younger, he didn’t know any other males who danced. “I only knew my brother and 2 other boys who danced.” Now that he’s older, he feels as though more people are actively participating in the dance community, specifically in hip-hop. He personally believes that males’

attraction to hip-hop dance might be attributed to the fact that it is often considered to be more masculine than other genres of dance.

Colton explained that his family has always been “super supportive” of his dancing. Further he has never experienced “bad reaction” from anyone regarding his dancing. He explained that his parents, grandparents, and extended family, would always “want to see us [Colton and his brother] and hear about our performances.” Colton believes it is important to note that his dad is very supportive of his dancing, as well as of his mom’s dance career. Colton stated that his friends and peers are also supportive of his dancing. He explained that over half of his friends also took dance classes with him; yet only 2 of them are still pursuing dance.

Reflecting on the dance cultures at both of his institutions, Colton said that having several other males enrolled in ballet and modern classes at WOU surprised him. In comparison, he recalled there being only 1 or 2 other men in his ballet and modern classes at LCC. Colton described the relationships between and among the male dancers at both WOU and LCC, as being “a really close bond.” He explained that simply being a male dancer often automatically “makes you closer to the [other] men in a dance setting, as compared to an academic setting.” Colton’s presumption that male dancers often form close relationships with other men in class simply due to their shared gender, illustrates to me that he is astutely aware of disparity that exists between the number of male and female dancers in the field.

Colton described his perception of societal expectations for men in general, and specifically men who dance:

I do feel like things are changing a little bit, but I feel like for the most part society’s expectation for men is to be the classic manly, bread winner. You go

out and work and your wife stays at home. I feel like our culture is changing. It's way more socially accepted to be gay, transgender or in open relationships. I feel that social expectation is still kind of how it's always been, but it's on its way to progressing.

Colton reported that when he tells new friends that he dances they automatically assume he does hip-hop – which he does. “They never expect that I’ve also done contemporary, ballet, or tap,” he explained. He believes this is because his friends typically see male dancers only doing hip-hop. He said that his particular group of friends is really into hip-hop music and culture, so he doesn’t feel as though they are looking at classical ballet or styles other than hip-hop. “It’s obviously not as prevalent for men to be doing [those other styles],” he exclaimed. Colton explained that social media and pop culture have impacted male dancers and societies’ perception of male dancing. He stated:

Ten years ago you wouldn’t have seen [male dancing] on TV, and apps didn’t really exist back then. It would have been really rare. If you wanted to see dance, or male dancers, you would have to attend a performance. But with the way technology has advanced, you can see [male dancing] in 5 seconds. I feel like social media has shined a positive light on it and more people have access to it. I follow SYTYCD (*So You Think You Can Dance*), Twitch, and Kent Boyd [former contestants on SYTYCD], on Instagram. Sometimes on Facebook I see shared posts about dancers.

I find Colton’s statement to be interesting, as 10 years ago several dance-related television series and movies existed. However, as he was significantly younger, perhaps these shows were not a part of his regular media consumption. His comments also illustrate the current generation’s affinity for and reliance on utilizing smart phone applications and social media platforms as sources for the consumption and dissemination of popular culture trends.

When asked what he wanted people to know about men in dance, Colton stated that he simply wanted people to know that “men do dance!” He further iterated, “I don’t think dancing is anything to be embarrassed about or ashamed of! I feel like that’s a ridiculous stance.” Colton’s opinion that men shouldn’t be embarrassed or ashamed of dancing appears to stem from his numerous years of experience as a dancer, extremely supportive family, and the friendships and relationships he has gained and maintained due to his participation in dance. He also added that he wants people to know that hip-hop isn’t the only “masculine” style of dancing that men can do. He emphasized the importance of experiencing different styles even if a dancer thinks he may not be comfortable with it. He offered an anecdote about a friend of his who he described as “a typical country, went shooting and wore camouflage type” guy, who he encouraged to participate in a modern class with him. In reference to that story, he believes that people are likely more reluctant to participate in a modern class unless they have taken another dance class previously. He doubts that a male taking dance for the first time would want to start with modern technique – implying that a beginner would be more willing to start with an idiom that’s more socially mainstream (e.g. hip-hop). “I had friends that would be more than happy to try hip-hop classes or workshops,” he explained, “but if [my brother and I] invited them to a contemporary or modern class, they would always be busy or reluctant.” Colton feels as though it’s most important that people eventually are willing to try any idiom. Therefore, he doesn’t find a problem with individuals being more willing to try a hip-hop class over more classical styles, first.

Lastly, Colton proclaimed, “Some people see being an artist as not a real career, but my mom has worked hard, had family support, and has been able to have a successful company. So you can do [dance] as a career.” When asked if he thought men could do that too, he responded, “yeah, definitely.”

Dee

Dee is 39, and a second-year graduate student pursuing an MFA in Dance at the University of Oregon. I have known Dee for two years as a fellow dancer and graduate student. We have taken classes and performed in works together several times. With over 22 years of dance training, and 21 years of performance experience, Dee has had a fruitful and diverse professional dance career.

Dee grew up in Santa Barbara, California. His mother is from Baltimore and his father hails from England. Dee’s mom was a professional dance artist, having danced for Garth Fagan. Dee described his father, a professor of computer science, as “not a dancing person at all.” He described his parents as very open minded and stated that they never forced religion or activities on him as a child. His parents divorced and Dee said that this impacted him significantly. “It was very confusing for me in that time in my life,” he lamented. “I was around 13 and the divorce went on for a while. I had a terrible time with drugs. I’m shocked that I’m still here actually. That was such a low point.” Dee described himself as a “troubled teenager” and believes that part of the reason his parents were supportive of his decision to dance was because he had found something he was passionate about and could pursue. He considers himself an “odd ball” who never really fit in, which he thinks

may stem from him being “mixed-race” and growing up in a predominately white community. He explained that he doesn’t feel as though he had a “black experience” growing up. “I didn’t understand why some people had certain attitudes toward me because I looked different. I think it festered inside of me somehow and isolated me in a way that actually turned into a powerful tool,” he said.

Dee eventually completed his GED, and after seeing Bebe Miller’s “Jimmy Hendrix” performance, quickly realized that he wanted to dance and be physical, rather than pursuing a more sedentary field like computer science. He recalls being “blown away” and in disbelief that the things Bebe Miller could do and say through her performance. He described it as seeing “a whole other universe” in front of him. He further credited his interest in dance to a previous instructor who encouraged him to take his first dance class.

Dee recalled participating in social dance experiences during high school, but stated he didn’t start seriously studying dance until he was 17 – when he decided to take a dance class at Santa Barbara City College. His training there consisted mostly of modern and jazz dance, and he recalled being the only male dancer in the room. When he was 19 he attended a summer program with Limón West Dance Project at San Jose State University. There, he also studied improvisation and composition. While attending the Limón project, the instructor suggested to Dee that he look into a school in Europe. So, he submitted the application, packed his bags, and went to the audition. He was accepted into the dance program at Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen, Germany. At Folkwang, Dee studied ballet, jazz, flamenco, improvisation, and partnering. While at Folkwang, Dee took advantage of an

opportunity to study at Bolshoi Academy in Moscow, Russia for a semester, where he studied ballet. “Russia had a huge impact on me, physically and mentally. The mindset of being in a room with these dancers who basically specialize in ballet, that’s going to be their life. That was quite a powerful experience.” After graduating from Folkwang, Dee returned to America and eventually moved to New York City where he danced for Dance Theatre of Harlem, New York Theatre Ballet, and the Metropolitan Opera. Eventually, Dee yearned for something more, and wanted “to be a part of some creative thing that wasn’t just learning someone else’s choreography.” So, he decided to start his own company. After 8 years of leading his company, he decided to pursue an MFA in dance.

Dee agreed to participate in this study because he thinks “it’s important to gather information about male dancers’ experiences in general,” and perhaps something in his story might be valuable for this research and future male dancers. He also believes that having detailed qualitative information about men in dance can be informative for future research on the topic.

When asked about his current thoughts and opinions regarding male participation in dance, Dee replied:

I think it’s getting much easier for males to participate in dance. When I was a young kid, if a boy would say he’s a dancer, you would think of the same kind of dancing you do at homecoming or see on MTV. I think it’s easy for people to go to the vernacular styles with things because it’s easily accessed. Nobody thought that [those] who danced in the thriller video were weird, it was just cool.

This question also prompted Dee to recall different moments in life when he informed people he was a dancer. He stated that when he first started dancing he was also working for an arborist, which resulted in him working around “burly guys

doing burly work.” When he would leave for the day they would inquire as to where he was going, and he’d respond, “Well, I gotta go to dance class!” He described it as always being a “comic,” yet simultaneously tense moment. He also recalls telling his neighbor that he was a dancer, and in response he received a “derogatory comment.” Dee stated he traveled frequently and when he would tell people he’s a dancer, they would often ask, “what kind of dance?” When he would reply with “modern,” they would often say, “oh like MTV.” He reported that he always found it hard to describe what modern dance is.

Dee described his family’s thoughts and opinions towards men who dance, and him specifically, as being “100% supportive”. He also stated that his peers, most who also dance, are equally supportive. For those who are not supportive, he attempts to distance himself from them. This portion of our conversation caused Dee to consider dance in relationship to sports/athletics. He discussed how this impacted his peers’ opinions of him:

I think it was [often considered] taboo for a man to be a dancer or wear tights. It’s such an interesting thing that men in sports also wear tights [and] they can slap each other on the butt, but to be a man in tights and taking a ballet class – pointing their toes and doing elegant things for example – somehow that’s not manly. So I did lose some friends and I know that some people made some negative comments about me.

I also asked Dee about his awareness of dance in popular culture/social media as it relates to men in dance, and how he thinks this impacts dance. He admitted that he does see it, but actually tries to avoid some of it. He believes that popular shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *America’s Got Talent* are good because they “popularize dance and reach people who definitely wouldn’t have been reached otherwise.” Yet as an artist he’s conflicted

about the impact of these shows. He finds them to be problematic because they are overly “produced and scripted.” In his opinion, such shows program people into thinking that dance can only be seen in a particular way, which obliterates the various possibilities of the field. “I think [popularizing dance through television] is good specifically because it opens peoples’ eyes and says to them, ‘you can be a dancer, a male dancer, and that’s exciting,’” he exclaimed.

When asked to describe societal expectations of men in general, and societal opinions of men who dance, Dee feels as though it is changing. “I think it’s confusing right now because of all the advances going on in our culture.” He perceives there to be a major shift occurring in the roles between males and females in America, and alludes to an increase in the awareness of non-binary identities. He offered an anecdote of his recent and first experience with using a gender-neutral restroom in America. It reminded him of taking class in Amsterdam. He stated that both men and women simultaneously utilized the showers at the particular studio in which he studied. “I was a little nervous about it, but nobody was looking at anyone else. They were just washing and doing their business. I don’t think we are that open here in [America],” he explained. I asked if he feels as though these mentalities might transfer to the studio, he replied, “...there are a lot of people playing around with things all the time.” He specifically referred to the work of Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo, an all male ballet company that plays with redefining traditional gender roles, especially in ballet. He finished by stating emphatically that he “can’t say what men’s role is in society now because it is changing so fast...faster than it ever has.”

At the University of Oregon, Dee believes that the dance team predominantly impacts the dance culture. After recently doing an online search, he found that the first result that came up about dance at UO was the dance team, which is not housed in or related to the dance department in any way. Outside of the presence of the dance team, Dee doesn't feel as though there's a strong dance culture on campus, especially comparing it to his undergraduate collegiate conservatory experience in Europe. Dee further described the relationships between and among the men in the department as amicable and fun, yet he doesn't feel as though there's a "special relationship" there. However, as a male dance teacher he embraces a sense of mentorship to young males in the department. He explains, "There's a young man who was in my classes last year and my choreography. I feel like I have a responsibility to support him if he needs support. Other than that there's not like a men's forum for dance or a roundtable for men." Furthermore, Dee described an experience in a previous ballet class:

When I took ballet class last term there were no [other] men in the class, and I felt a little deflated. It feels nice to have [other] men this term in the ballet class. It's different. You feel like you have something to push up against. Not to knock the women in the class at all, it's not about that. You look around the room and realize you're the only one in there.

Lastly, Dee expressed that he wanted people to know that men who dance are "probably very passionate" about what they are doing. He explained:

We are doing it because we want to. I don't think men, for the most part, in dance are doing this because somebody one said 'you really should follow dance.' Usually it's the opposite, people are saying 'you really should be doing something that's a serious job that's going to make you money.' I think people say these comments and they don't even really think about that. It's just a default. They don't realize the impact.

Dee expressed that he thinks it would be nice to have more male dancers in the department; however, in saying this, he iterated that he's not implying that fewer female participants would be beneficial. Rather, he feels as though more of a balance would be ideal.

Eli

Eli is 21, and a junior undergraduate at Lane Community College studying exercise and movement science. Eli was born and raised in Eugene, OR. He lives with his mom, dad, 2 younger sisters, and his twin brother (also a participant in this study). He described his family as very supportive, and stated that his parents have been a "really big blessing and have helped him through a lot of stuff."

Eli has always been very active in athletic pursuits. He participated recreationally in gymnastics for about 8 years. He attended a Catholic high school in Eugene where he participated in football, basketball, and track. He later attended Western Oregon University to play football and run track; however, he ended up only participating in the track program. Eventually, Eli left WOU as it "wasn't a good fit" for him. He transferred to Lane Community College in Eugene, OR. At LCC, he competed as a member of the track team for 2 years. He offered that he feels as though his dance training has helped him with his athletics. "Personally I don't feel like I would be the type athlete I am today if I hadn't pursued gymnastics and dance for such a long time," he described.

Eli stated that he started dancing after his dad married his stepmom, because she owned a dance studio. He explained that because dance was so ingrained in his

family, he “never really second guessed it.” Additionally, a group of friends he went to school with began taking classes at his mom’s studio. He credits this group with further sparking his interest in trying dance. His twin brother began dancing at this same time. He stated, “I just wanted to do it, and I kept doing it ever since.” Eli reported that his dance training started with taking ballet, jazz, and hip-hop classes; he later tried ballroom, lyrical, and tap. As he got older he started focusing his dance training on the styles he “felt most comfortable with,” which included ballroom, hip-hop, contemporary, and partner work. While a student at his mom’s studio, he also participated in several community performances, recitals, and competitions. He stated that he eventually started focusing solely on hip-hop dance styles, and with his friends, formed a competitive all-boys hip-hop team. He described the competitive aspect to be “the most fun and the coolest experience” he’s had with dance. He credits competing with affording him the opportunity to travel and perform in places including Washington, Las Vegas, and on board a cruise ship in Mexico.

While attending LCC, Eli enrolled in a hip-hop class offered by the dance program. He described the dance culture at LCC as “very self-expressive,” and feels as though the program is popular among students. He recalls speaking with numerous students in the program who plan to continue their dancing training at a 4-year institution after graduating from LCC. He also reported that the program offers multiple free shows each year, and they are well attended. When asked to describe the relationships among the male dancers in the LCC program, Eli stated

that his classes consisted mostly of women. Eli further explained the relationships between the male dancers:

I think automatically [the males] were drawn to talk to each other. Out of comfort maybe. It was easy to feel comfortable with other men. We are all here for the same reason, and I didn't feel judged. [Dancing with other men] can definitely create a bond, and having another male in the room was comforting.

Eli stated that he agreed to participate in this research study because he wanted to help me out, and he thought it would be "cool" to let other people hear his experiences and thoughts on dance. I asked him to provide his current thoughts and opinions regarding male participation in dance. He responded, "I have nothing but the utmost respect and pride when it comes to men in the dance community. I feel like in the last 5-10 years it has really boomed. Possibly because it's been getting a lot more exposure, especially through shows like *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance*." I further asked him about his awareness of dance in popular and social media and the impact he feels this may have on male participation in dance. He expressed that dance is definitely present in social media platforms and throughout popular culture, but stated that it often has to be sought out. However, he acknowledged that corporations such as Nike and Gatorade have recently begun to include dance in their advertising. "People are seeing more of it. It's becoming more and more popular. I can't think of a social media platform where I don't see [something] dance related," he explained. He also noted that he follows several dance performers and groups on Twitter and Instagram.

I asked Eli to describe his family and peer's thoughts and opinions about his participation in dance, and male participation in dance in general. Eli stated that his

family “loves it.” He further exclaimed, “Obviously my mom is a huge supporter” – due to her career as a dance studio owner and instructor. He also described his dad as being very supportive, and proud that he and his brother have danced for so long. He also described his grandparents as being “very supportive.” Regarding his peers, Eli stated, “for the most part my friends thought [dancing] was cool.” He further explained:

I feel like there were times when people would be like ‘that’s kind of weird, you’re a guy and you dance.’ I wasn’t really bullied about it, but was sometimes made fun of for dancing. For the most part people are pretty accepting of it, especially after they see a performance.” He said that he and his friends would often attend each other’s performances regularly.

When asked to describe society’s expectations of men in general, and for those who dance, Eli responded, “Originally, men were seen as more masculine, more rough and tough, I guess. I don’t feel like that is really [the situation] anymore. I feel like men are able to express themselves anyway they feel or are most comfortable.” He further believes men no longer have to feel compelled to put on a “fake persona” to meet social expectations. Regarding society’s opinions about men who dance, Eli believes it is seen differently by those individuals who are a part of the dance community, and those who are not.

He further believes that dancers’ personalities are wide ranging, therefore, how they think, feel, or present themselves “doesn’t necessarily correlate to what styles they do.” He explained, “[Someone] can be a very masculine man and still do ballet, or be someone who feels more feminine and do hip-hop. There are two different sides to dance sometimes, and I feel like I’ve seen those sides mesh into one.” I asked him if he found those two idioms (ballet and hip-hop) to be particularly

gendered. He replied, “Yes, I feel like I contemporary, ballet, and lyrical are mostly populated by women, as opposed to hip-hop where you see mostly men doing that.” He noted however, that there are still populations of both men and women who defy this particular binary.

I asked Eli what he would like for people to know about men who dance, and he responded by saying that people should recognize that “it is a lot more common and it’s more of a norm for men to dance than people think. Even if you don’t support it or think men shouldn’t be dancing, don’t talk crap to them or talk down to them because of that.” Despite the fact that Eli is not currently studying dance, he still identifies himself as a dancer, and plans to resume studying dance in some capacity after transferring to his next institution to complete his undergraduate degree.

Enzo

Enzo is 19, and a sophomore undergraduate majoring in accounting and minoring in Italian at the University of Oregon. I met Enzo during spring 2016, when he was a student in DAN 251: Looking at Dance – an introductory dance studies course that incorporates history, theory, and movement that fulfills a general university arts and letters requirement – and I was the teaching assistant. Enzo expressed interest in participating in my research. As I found his natural proficiency in and eagerness to learn movement profound, I was excited to include him as a participant. After having a few conversations with him about his natural abilities, Enzo registered for my contact improvisation class the following term. He later

revealed that this class was first dance technique class in which he had ever participated. He expressed that he decided to participate in both this study, and the contact improvisation class, because of his positive experience in DAN 251 and the conversations he had with me.

Enzo was born in Minneapolis and grew up with his mom, dad, and younger brother. Enzo was active in sports and athletic activities as a kid. He started playing hockey when he was 3 years old, and continued playing until he graduated high school. When he was 4, he started skateboarding with his dad, and eventually took up snowboarding. In 6th grade, he took up lacrosse, and he continues to play today. He's currently on the University of Oregon men's lacrosse team. In addition to his athletic pursuits, Enzo shared that he has always had an affinity for men's fashion, and enjoys "dressing up nicely." Enzo described his relationships with his family members. He described his mom as a stay-at-home mom and his best friend. He paints her as being very laid back, and shared that she lets him keep "things" from his dad. "She likes to gossip a lot," he stated. "She was involved in everything I did during my childhood. She knew all the secrets and gossip." He and his brother had a "weird relationship up until high school," often "butting heads." Enzo said his dad is funny, yet very strict, and described him as a "hard ass." Enzo's family still resides in Minnesota. He revealed that since he chose to go to college in Oregon, he receives a little pressure from his family to pursue a business major. I inquired if he is pursuing business also out of personal interest, to which responded that he is indeed genuinely interested in business. He stated that for a long time he really

wanted to pursue marine biology because he's a certified open water diver, but said that he's "really bad at chemistry and biology."

Enzo's total dance training experience at the time of this interview consisted of four months of technique, and he had never performed in a concert dance performance. His technical dance training occurred exclusively at the University of Oregon through the Looking at Dance and contact improvisation courses in which he participated. Outside of these classes, Enzo stated that at home he would often dance around, and his parents would say, "You should be a dancer."

Enzo expressed that he agreed to participate in this study because he wanted to help me out. "You made dance fun, so I thought I would do anything I could to help your research. The experience I had in DAN 251 is why I'm even taking your dance class now," he stated. Furthermore, he revealed that his male friend, who is not a dancer, encouraged him to sign up for DAN 251. He thought it might be a good way for him to "meet girls." He stated he was further propelled into taking that class because he experienced a "rough" first term and was very homesick. When his friend proposed that they enroll in DAN 251, Enzo recalls thinking "this is probably something I should just go do." He also credits his friend with pushing him to be outgoing in the class. Because he generally considers himself a "quiet person," Enzo found his willingness to be "weird and outgoing" in class a unique experience.

Enzo expressed his family and peer's thoughts and opinions about his participation in dance. "They think it's hilarious that I actually ended up doing dance since they always made jokes about it," he said. "They are super supportive and they love it. I talk to my mom about it all the time." According to Enzo, despite his dad's

initial concerns that dance might impede him from completing his business degree in four years, he is supportive of him taking dance classes as long as they “count for credit.” He further stated that he is unaware of his mom’s opinions on other men in dance. He acknowledged his awareness of the stereotypical mentality that only gay men dance; however, he doesn’t believe his mom follows that mentality as she thinks dancing is “awesome.” He said that she’s excited he’s finally becoming interested in the arts. Enzo stated that he has always “hated” drawing and painting, and he was never proficient at playing any instrument. However, dance is the one artistic thing he enjoys and feels as though he can do well.

When asked about his awareness of dance in popular culture and social media, and the impact this has on men in dance, Enzo stated that he has specifically noticed an increase in dancing on Twitter. Furthermore, he explained that most of the dancing he sees on social media is done by “dudes, primarily black dudes.” He stated that he would have never seen so much dancing several years ago, but it’s there now. He credits this influx of dance on social media to be a “music thing where there’s a song that has a dance that goes along with it.” He feels as though there’s a new trend every few months. “First it was ‘the whip’, then ‘the dab’, then the ‘stanky leg’, it all seems like it comes with a song.” All of these styles/trends that Enzo listed are products of the hip-hop genre of music and dance. Enzo stated that he’s “not really exposed to dance outside of [contact improvisation] class and social media.” He implied that most of his exposure to dance outside of class is through platforms such as Twitter and Instagram, as he doesn’t often attend dance performances or know where else to see dance.

Enzo, when asked to describe societal expectations of men in general, and men who dance, emphasized the “toughen up” mentality. “You’re a guy, so you’ve got to play sports, lift weights, man up, and do man activities. Society just has the idea that men play sports and that dance isn’t like a sport, a team sport.” Enzo feels as though dance is typically “swept under the rug” – inferring that it isn’t readily accepted or appreciated as an activity for men. “When I was a kid, I was never offered the option to go to a dance studio and try it out.” He recalls always being asked what sports he wanted to play and what hobbies he was into, but stated that dance was never discussed.

I inquired if Enzo recalled wanting to participate in dance when he was younger. He stated that his cousin danced, and that he would always attend her performances and make comments like “oh this looks cool,” but there was never a serious offer for him to sign up for dance classes. When he first quit hockey, his parents asked if he wanted to take up competitive snowboarding; however, dance was “never on the table.”

Enzo stated dancing was not really ingrained in his family, and he is unsure why he likes to dance. The only exposure to dance he recalls is attending his cousin’s recitals, where he only saw girls dancing. “We didn’t go dancing at weddings or anything. Besides my high school dances there was really no exposure to ‘real’ dance. I never saw my parents dance once, I don’t think my dad can,” he proclaimed. Interestingly, he expressed that he often dances around his house, especially when he’s making food. He said that he does it around everyone including his family and his college roommates.

Enzo describes the dance culture in the Department of Dance at UO as “really nice.” He feels as though everyone is really accepting and happy to be there. “I’ve only gotten good vibes from being in Gerlinger Hall (the building where the UO Department of Dance is housed),” he said emphatically. Furthermore, he described the relationships between and among the male dancers in the department at UO. Enzo described a fellow study participant as being “really into dance,” and informed me that he regularly receives messages from him on social media asking him about his thoughts on and experiences in class. Enzo described this kind of relationship between classmates as being a new experience for him. “I’ve never had someone approach me and [ask] ‘hey, what did you think about class today? What are your thoughts?’” He expressed that he feels a much closer bond to the other males in his contact improvisation class after only two classes together. He believes that the smaller class size (6 students) encourages stronger relationships between him and his classmates.

I asked Enzo about his relationships with men in general and if he tends to have more meaningful relationships with men or women. He replied that most of his friends are guys. He described the close bond he has with his lacrosse teammates, and explained that most of his close friends are also on the lacrosse team. When asked what his teammates think of him participating in dance, he replied, “they think it’s funny.” He says that he’s tried to encourage them to participate by explaining that it helps with flexibility and agility. He stated they typically respond by saying that they don’t have time to do it. He thinks a lot of them have the mentality of, “I play sports, and dance isn’t my thing.”

Lastly, I asked Enzo what he would like for people to know about men who dance. He replied:

It's not gay, and it's not feminine. It's a good way to release stress and become more in touch with yourself. Definitely after I took my first dance class I was much more aware about how I interact with people, how I went about my life. I was way more confident and outgoing. If I can get in front of all these people and dance and suck at it, then I can go in front of a bunch of random people I don't know and introduce myself and start conversations. [Dance has] impacted me socially and creatively. I think about things in a different way, and I like to dance more. When I listen to music now I wonder, 'what [count] would this go on or how can I move to this?' I may not be doing jazz, but I'm way more willing to go out there and do something weird and let the music take over.

Lastly, Enzo admitted that he even regularly dances in front of his roommates. "They think it's hilarious. I don't do a jazz square or ballet, but I whip out a few dance moves. Last night when I was making spaghetti and stirring the pasta, I was shaking my butt." Enzo's willingness and frequency of dancing at home while doing chores and home activities is representative of Maxine Craig's concept of "home bopping".

Harrison

Harrison is 19, and a sophomore undergraduate majoring in dance and minoring in computer information science at the University of Oregon. I have known Harrison for about a year as a fellow male in the department.

Harrison grew up in Santa Cruz, California, and his movement background is quite diverse. He reported that when he was 7 years old, some of his friends were participating in Taekwondo and he was interested in joining as well. So, his parents took him to the studio, and both he and his mom enrolled in classes. He stated that

he and his mom tested for their black belts together. He studied Taekwondo for 9 years.

Harrison described his family as “very musical and theatrical”. He stated that all of his family members play instruments or study voice. His grandmother and mom play the piano; his dad plays the guitar and ukulele; and his brother and uncle are well versed in string instruments. He recalls that when attending family reunions and gatherings everyone would bring along their instruments in case a jam session would break out. “That was the entertainment, that’s what you did,” he explained. I asked if dancing was ever integrated into his family’s musical soirées. “No, neither of my parents are dancers. My brother is a great performer, but not inclined to dance,” he exclaimed. “I remember that [my brother] had to do a salsa step one time and it was one of the most awkward things I’ve ever seen him attempt.” Harrison further explained that his parents find his proficiency in and affinity for dance “shocking” because no one else in the family is known for their dancing abilities. Harrison said his parents told him, “...you’re not bad [at dancing], so if you want to explore this field, we support that.”

Harrison’s brother is a singer/actor who enjoys musical theatre, but he says that his brother “can’t dance.” When he attended middle and high school, he recalls his brother being active in the theatre programs and he encouraged Harrison to join them as well. Harrison became active in the theatre programs and stated that when he started performing in musicals is also when he started dancing. He stated that his first musical theatre performance was in *42nd Street*, and his second performance was in *West Side Story*. He credited these two performances with having encouraged

and supported his tap dance training. After participating in these productions he recalled people saying, “you’re not awful at this, it should be something that you explore.” He stated he believes he was encouraged to dance by others under the mentality of “you’re a guy, you can kind of dance; dance more, you could be better.”

Harrison’s high school was a charter school that had a fine arts division. While exclusively starting in theatre and voice, he was “slowly pulled into dance.”

Harrison’s explained that his school had a student-run dance company, in which he participated. He stated that it was through his participation in that dance company that he “slowly fell in love with dancing.” Harrison recalls being summoned to participate in dance performances especially when his peers wanted to do ballroom dances like salsa. He also remembers that his friends and teachers who were also dancers encouraged him to continue dancing. As he started to hang out with other dancers more frequently in high school, he was invited to participate in more dance opportunities at local studios as well.

After graduating high school and becoming a student at the University of Oregon, he realized that he didn’t want to stop dancing, but was unsure of the benefits and career possibilities involved with studying dance in college. In Fall term of his freshmen year, Harrison enrolled in a dance improvisation class in the Department of Dance at UO. The following term he enrolled in contact improvisation. After taking both of these classes, he stated he was approached by several of the graduate instructors in the program who encouragingly asked him, “why are you here?” He stated that being asked repeatedly by the graduate students about why he was participating in the program encouraged him to think about what

he wanted to do in school. "I realized that I wanted to do dance," he exclaimed. In fact, he was so encouraged that by spring term of his freshmen year, the majority of his classes were in the dance department. "I wanted to fill up my schedule with dance classes so that I would know [after] dancing that frequently if I was going to be like 'ehhh' [implying regret], or like 'yes' [implying enjoyment]. It was yes!" he said enthusiastically. In addition to improvisation classes, he has also taken courses in modern, jazz, ballet, and hip-hop techniques, as well as Looking at Dance – an introduction course to dance studies. Eventually, Harrison declared dance as his major program of study, and has become an active performer in the department's concerts and regularly serves on the technical crew for productions.

Harrison described the dance culture at UO as being "welcoming" and "integrative." He further elaborated, "Since day 1 [of being in the department] people were friendly. The teaching here is about a broad spectrum of movement, as opposed to a place that is strictly about [particular] techniques." After changing his major, Harrison stated that it was much easier for him to talk about his involvement in the dance department with other people. However, he does feel as though it can be challenging to talk to people who are not in the department or dance arenas. "I have a different interaction with friends who are outside of performing arts," he stated, "there's an accepted comfort level with people who are performers with touch and joking that wouldn't necessarily be the same [for outsiders]." When asked to describe the relationships among the male dancers in the department, Harrison stated that he's always felt a sense of "inclusivity and camaraderie" with the other male dancers, and is hopeful that a "brotherhood" will develop as he becomes more

active in the department. He values participating with other males like Michael, a fellow study participant, who had a similar experience joining the department. He remembers Michael saying, “yeah that’s what they did to me [referring to repeatedly being encouraged to join the department], and I’m here now.” Harrison believes that when you can see that part of you in other guys, you “immediately know where they are” and can relate to how they feel. Harrison took the opportunity to attempt to list the other males in the department. He only named one professor, one other male undergraduate, and myself – leaving about 12 others (faculty and students) who are active in the department off the list. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Harrison only recently declared the dance major, and has likely not had the chance to meet others.

I asked Harrison if having, or not having, another male in the classroom has any impact on him. “Definitely,” he exclaimed! “I’ve had difficulty in the past with realizing what the full reach of my body is if there aren’t other guys in the class because I’m not seeing anything that’s similar in size or approach [to me],” he explained. He further iterated that men and women move their bodies in significantly different ways. When asked if the gender of his instructor impacts him in any way, he replied, “not consciously.” He explained that he’s had both male and female instructors who were successful in assisting him with class material, and that he doesn’t believe the instructor’s gender impacts his experience. “I can see certain teachers inspiring me more,” he stated, “but I don’t think that’s something that affects me because of their gender.” Additionally, I asked if he’s noticed different expectations for men and women in the classes he has taken. “There’s obviously stuff with ballet where you don’t have to do this because you’re a guy, and you’re

never going to have to do it,” he explained. Having initially studied social (partnered) dance forms, he stated there’s more of an expectation of him to “lift and jump.” He feels as though that plays into cultural expectations.

When asked why he agreed to participate in this study, Harrison stated that he was excited for the opportunity to dance with other guys. He further explained:

I think it’s pretty natural as a guy in this field, where it’s not [common or socially acceptable for men to participate], that I would want more guys in the field and less negative expectations about being a guy in dance. I’ve definitely experienced in my life, not just with dance but also musical theatre, some people bring in questions of who you are and what you do because of that. I’m a strong advocate for the arts and men in the arts. Unless you have something like this study, [male participation in the arts] doesn’t get looked at.

Harrison further offered up his frustration with social opposition to, and assumptions about, people who participate in the arts. “People think it’s a waste of time or [done] just for fun,” he explained. He also discussed how the sexuality of those who participate in arts, especially men, is often questioned by fellow artists and outsiders. “I know various people at times have made comments or assumptions about sexuality like ‘you’re gay’ or ‘flamboyant’,” he stated. Additionally, because most of the other dancers in class are women, and because many of his friends are also women, Harrison feels as though people often question his motives for participating in dance. Therefore, Harrison is well aware that males are often assumed to be homosexual. He referred to these assumptions as “ill-based” and “frivolous”. He believes that the arts, and therefore artists, create a type of community that is safe and diverse, which often causes social generalizations about individuals within that community.

Therefore, I asked Harrison how he's been able to deal with his sexuality being called into question. He stated that when he was younger he wasn't very conscious of it and it didn't "get under his skin." He remembers there being times when he had a girlfriend and people would still make comments like "well you still might be gay." He stated that eventually he made it a joke to himself, realizing that he would be combatting these comments and mentalities for a while. Harrison said that he's spoken with other straight males in the performing arts who commiserated with him saying, "yup, it happens." However, he does feel as though society's views and opinions about people in the performing arts have "moved a lot" during his time as a performer over the last 8 years. He finds himself in a place where sometimes he has to combat or "shake off" societal opinions, while simultaneously existing within a community that is extremely inclusive, accepting, and doesn't make assumptions. He further iterated that he doesn't recall ever having his sexuality questioned by other dancers or artists.

I asked Harrison if he had personally received societal pushback due to his participation in the performing arts, and he feels as though he's "been pretty fortunate to have a pretty supportive backing." However, he does recall there being individuals with whom he went to high school who "weren't into" the arts and "didn't understand the seriousness" involved in studying and participating in the arts. He said this resulted in people making comments like "why aren't you doing sports" or "you're doing [performing arts] too much". The only major pushback he recalls receiving was from his grandfather when he changed his major to dance. He believes his grandfathers' comments stemmed primarily from monetary concerns.

“A lot of my family has old money, so being of the older generation, [my grandfather] was protective of that,” he explained. Harrison’s grandfather is also paying for his university housing, so he feels as though his grandfather “has some input” on his collegiate decisions. He recalls one particular day over the previous summer when grandfather and grandmother showed up randomly at his house. “I began telling my grandmother about my year, things I was discovering, classes I wanted to take, and about dance,” he explained. He stated she responded with, “well that’s not going to make the same kind of money as computer science.” However, he stated that money is not what matters to him, and believes that if someone is passionate about something and it’s what he or she wants to do, that’s all that matters. I asked him how that conversation with his grandparents made him feel. He stated:

It definitely wasn’t the most comfortable situation to be in, because on one hand I was trying to explain my passion to them. When I do these classes I’m happy, I’m keeping myself healthier, and there’s a lot of other aspects of my life [dance] is helping with. I feel more personable, and there’s a lot of constructive, group, and collaborative work that happens in dance.

He recalls being frustrated with trying to describe those qualities and benefits of dancing, while having someone “not get it”, and be solely concerned with the monetary aspect of the career. He further stated:

At a certain point I wasn’t going to tear my grandfather’s head off because he is helping me financially and I need that money, but it got to a point where I obviously couldn’t make him understand this. I know that the culture he grew up in would not be supportive of this and I didn’t expect him to be. It’s definitely uncomfortable because I can’t defend myself against what I want to do.

He reiterated that his parents and brother are all extremely supportive of him and his artistic endeavors, and would never tell him not to explore something he wanted to pursue. “They understand that I’ve done performance for many years now, and

have worked with professional theatres, so they know that I'm not in a 'bad' place and simply trying to push for a career in the arts," he elaborated.

Harrison, when asked about his thoughts and opinions regarding male participation in dance, replied by saying, "I was lucky! In high school two of my friends were incredible dancers. When I joined... I became one of them. All of the men that I've met in dance have been so ready to be inclusive. I think it's natural when we see the few [men] that have potential, we want to get them [into dance] and have them run with it." Harrison recalled recently writing a paper on this particular topic. He stated he was trying to explain how it can be challenging for men in dance, particularly because they aren't represented well, and are often met with societal pressures. However, because there are fewer male dancers, they are often privileged by receiving more performance and scholarship opportunities. "There's push to do well, but when you get to a certain level, people are like 'we are going to hand this to you now.'" Harrison feels as though he's experienced this situation first-hand by being cast into performance roles simply because he's a male. "I have been cast in a few musicals that I didn't even have to audition for just because they were looking for more men," he explained. Additionally, he pointed out that since changing his major from computer science, he's noticed more opportunities for scholarship monies, and now has less competition for them.

Lastly, I asked Harrison about his awareness of dance in social media/popular culture, and what impact it may have on male dancers. Harrison stated that he thinks television is the medium that offers the most representation of men in dance. "I remember when I was just starting to get interested in dance, I

would watch *America's Best Dance Crew*," he explained, "which had more men than other shows." As Harrison became more involved in dance, he stated he became more aware of dance-related posts on social media pages; however, he feels as though it "stays in that bubble, which is sad."

James

James is 22, and a senior undergraduate geography major at the University of Oregon. He was previously a dance major, but after sustaining some non-dance related injuries, he removed himself as a major from the program. However, he still participates in the program when possible. I have known James for three years both as a fellow dancer and as a student in my classes. When I first met him, it was immediately apparent to me that James was a private individual who was very inquisitive and enthusiastic about dance.

James' parents are separated. He was born and raised in Eugene, Oregon, where he grew up with his mom and two sisters; his brother lives with his dad. James described his dad as "typically masculine" and "homophobic." He reported that his dad didn't support his children doing things that were "out of their context," such as James "doing feminine things," or his sisters "doing masculine things." James said that when he was younger and around his father he tried to make sure that everything he did was masculine, because whenever he would do any activity that might be considered "feminine," such as shaving his legs or watching Ellen on TV, his dad would inquire if he was gay or push ideas of masculinity on him. He reported that his mother was similar, but less "aggressive or hard-on" about it. "If something

was feminine, she would point it out,” he said. He stated that this made him “fearful” that if he didn’t conform to expected masculine ideals then he would be deemed “feminine, and being feminine is wrong.”

Prior to his dance studies, James trained in Karate for two years and Taekwondo for one year as an adolescent. Both of his parents also studied martial arts. James’ dance training began in 2014 as a student at the University of Oregon. He stated that he entered as an “undecided major” and changed his major a few times. Eventually he thought he was set on something he was interested in, but in his heart he “knew there was something else” he wanted to try – dance. So, he decided to take a modern class, which he described in his interview as “whatever that is”. When asked what sparked his initial interest in dance, James responded:

I had a feeling it was something I would genuinely enjoy, but something I put off because of all the stereotypes that go with it, like it’s only for girls. Those are things I don’t care about now, but at the time were barriers for me. If I didn’t care so much about those things previously, I probably would have tried it in high school.

In the first week of that Modern I class, his instructor informed him about upcoming auditions for the Department’s faculty concert and encouraged him to attend. While he was initially nervous due to his lack of experience, he said that the thought of performing in front an audience brought him “so much joy.” Despite being “scared”, he described the audition experience as “wonderful.” After finding out that he had been selected to perform in two works, James said he thought to himself, “I might have potential in this, and if I don’t pursue it now I might regret it later.”

Since then, he’s had three years of dance training and performance experience, all of which have primarily occurred in the University of Oregon

Department of Dance. During his time in the department, he has enrolled in ballet, jazz, hip-hop, African, and ballroom courses. He stated that all of his “formal” training has occurred as a student at UO, but that he has also participated in social dance events.

I asked James about his parent’s reactions to his participation in dance, and how they found out. He said that after he told his mom she responded, “oh you’re gonna hurt your ankles.” He believed she was fine with it, and that her initial response stemmed from the common belief that people who dance always start training when they are “3-4 years old.” “She wasn’t that supportive or rooting for me,” he stated,” but as I continued on, she attended performances, and was supportive.” He admitted that he never told his dad about his dancing because he was “fearful of his reaction”, but assumes that his mom or one of his sisters told his dad he was dancing. He said, “it’s sometimes hard to know what [my dad] actually thinks.”

James indicated that he agreed to be a participant in this research because he “always knew there was a gender thing” that existed in dance, and that there were always barriers that prevented his participation much earlier in life. Also, he stated that he agreed to participate due to his curiosity about the disparity between the number of male and female dancers, and that “it’s a deep subject” he feels hasn’t been explored. He stated that he became aware of this after going into a class and noticing that the majority of the students were women. Additionally, he acknowledged that when trying to find other classes (outside of the University) they were primarily populated by young girls. James stated that when he first started

dancing he consciously looked to see if other males were participating in his classes, because he “needed that support.” He said it was a “if they can do it, I can do it too type of thing.” Seeing other males participating in class helped him to be able to accept his own participation more.

When asked if he found that gender differences and gendered movement were idiomatic specific, James responded:

Usually, it’s [different movement expectations for males and females] in ballet, and sometimes in jazz. It’s easy in jazz to have some kind of flare and outgoing movement that might be interpreted as more feminine. Then the teacher might provide alternative movements. I remember when first taking classes and seeing the movement I would think, ‘should I be doing it that way or is there another way I’m supposed to do it?’ A good majority of teachers are female and [offering alternative/masculine movement] isn’t their focus. I sometimes questioned the material and if I was doing it right.

He further stated that he often questions if he is “missing or losing” something by not portraying or representing a particular kind of maleness. Through our discussion it became clear that the particular maleness James refers to is a hegemonic one that valorizes “traditional” demonstrations of masculine behavior – of which dance is typically not associated. He even stated that he wondered about the “very traditional ways of ballet.” He further questioned, “does it matter that I have to learn or do [male associated movements], or are we in an age now where men and women can have feminine and masculine sides to them.”

When asked if he was impacted differently based on the gender of his instructor, he stated that he feels as though male instructors offer him a more “male representative context,” or they often provide more “neutral” movements when sharing material. He compared this to having a female instructor by saying, “when seeing movement on a female body versus a male body I notice the differences, but

when seeing it on a male body I'm more sure of what I'm supposed to do." He further explained by saying, "there's still an effect when I walk into a room and there's a male [instructor] in the room instead of a female; unconsciously in my mind I think, 'oh, I'm in the right place!'"

In response to being asked about his current thoughts and opinions regarding males in dance, James had this to say:

In classes it's still a majority female, and it definitely shouldn't be that way. I think dance is amazing and I know that it's not just for girls. Males are capable of doing amazing things with their bodies. At the same time you don't get too mad at it [because] it's less competition. Overall, [male participation] is underappreciated. I don't think it should be looked down upon or considered less masculine, or even if it's seen as feminine that it also isn't equated to being bad because it's feminine.

He further explained that the amount of male participation in dance is "disappointing," and he wishes there were more males participating.

I asked James to describe the dance culture he experiences and relationships he has with other male dancers on campus at the University of Oregon. He responded, "I feel like dance isn't really a main thing here at the UO." He elaborated:

Dance is in its own building doing its own thing. We have posters around. In terms of my relationship with other male dancers, there aren't that many. Because I'm more used to and comfortable with hanging out around girls, and I'm not a particularly outgoing or social person so for that reason I don't have close bonds with males or females. Probably when starting [a new] class and seeing another guy, I'm usually pretty distant and stay distant.

Lastly, when asked to discuss the impact social media and popular culture have on dance, James said, "if you see males doing dance it's usually hip-hop. When I first started looking into dance I thought there was just ballet and hip-hop," he explained. James reiterated that he was specifically unaware of what modern dance was.

Lee

Lee is 20, and a sophomore undergraduate pursuing a dance major and business minor. I have known Lee for two years as a student in my classes and a friend. Lee's eagerness and passion for dance have always been readily apparent.

Lee was born in California and grew up in Brookings, Oregon. He lived with his parents and brother; his grandparents and uncle also resided in his hometown. He stated that he and his parents "have a strong relationship for the most part," but he doesn't really "get along" with his brother. Prior to studying dance, Lee had a diverse movement background. He reported studying various martial art techniques including Taekwondo (7 years of training) and Filipino Stick Fighting (2 years of training); and played sports such as basketball, baseball, and soccer in youth leagues. Lee was also active in artistic pursuits and said that his favorite classes in high school were band, art, Photoshop, and 3D animation.

Lee attributes iconic dance television shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance*, *Dancing with the Stars*, and *America's Best Dance Crew* with sparking his interest in pursuing dance. He said that dancing "looked fun" to him, and when he would participate in school dances it also "felt fun to do." He reported he joined a breakdancing club in his hometown; he participated for two years, which helped him advance his interest in dance. Lee disclosed that his parents never saw him perform or participate with this group because he was "too shy and embarrassed" to tell them. He said a friend tried to help him get over this fear by having him practice in front of other people.

Lee is currently in his second year of dance training and performance at the University of Oregon. He expressed that he chose UO specifically because he wanted to pursue dance. However, he admitted that he didn't know how to adequately gauge and research dance programs in higher education institutions due to his lack of dance training and experience. Since enrolling, he has studied and participated in a variety of technique classes including introductory and intermediate levels of modern, hip-hop, contact improvisation, and ballet. Additionally, Lee performed in a student-produced concert at the end of his first year of study. Outside of the University's program, Lee says that he also participates in hip-hop, breakdancing, and contemporary workshops and classes at studios in the local community.

Lee stated that he agreed to participate in this research because he thought it was something "new." He also iterated that participating in an MFA research study might "better prepare" him for what he might encounter should he pursue a master's degree in dance.

When asked about his current thoughts and opinions about male participation in dance, Lee stated:

I think there's too few. I know there are so many people who say they want to try, but never do because they are afraid of being made fun of, or they think it's a non-masculine thing. Which in my opinion is kind of sad because you never know you don't like something until you try it. I've heard a lot of negative feedback, like '[dance] is not a very athletic thing, it's not sports-like, or you can't do anything with it.' But that's not really what it's about, it's about expressing who you are and your beliefs in just a different format.

I asked Lee if he had personally experienced people stating that they don't believe dance is sports-like/athletic, and if so, from whom did he experience this. Lee responded, "I've had some down talk from other people about me choosing [dance]

– a couple of past high school teachers and a bunch of kids in high school.” He believes that the teachers’ opinions stem from the idea that dance isn’t a practical career pursuit, and that they would say, “you will never get anywhere, and if you break a bone you’ll be out of a job.” Lee said that he would readily talk about wanting to study dance, but wasn’t able to pursue it in his hometown because there were no studios or classes offered.

When asked about his family’s response to his decision to study dance, Lee responded that his brother “seems kinda supportive.” However, he explained, “he hasn’t shown much interest towards it.” Lee stated that the rest of his family have attended both of his performances, and they say they enjoy seeing how much he’s grown as a dancer. He said that this makes him “feel confident,” which he appreciates because he’s very critical of himself. He likes it when “other people can recognize things” about him that he can’t recognize himself. He further emphasized that his family supports him “100 percent.” Additionally, he said that his family wants him to pursue his dreams, even if he isn’t successful.

Lee described the dance culture at UO as being “a giant family” and “very welcoming.” He further described the relationships between and among the male dancers as “very close.” “It seems like they are very excited to work with each other.” Throughout the interview, I noticed that when Lee discussed the male dancers in the program he almost always referred to them in third person and rarely uses the inclusive “we.” This caused me to wonder if he feels disenfranchised from the “closeness” he described. When asked about his relationship to that “family,” he expressed that he feels “nervous or scared” when he sees how

experienced other dancers are, or when they appear to already be a part of “the family.” He agreed that he does consider himself to be a part of the family; however, it is hard for him to connect at times.

Responding to my question regarding how he feels when there are other males in class with him, Lee stated he is “always worried about what they are thinking about him.” Because he’s taken several classes in the department, he’s gotten to know some of the other males, and has heard about their past dance experiences and achievements. He expressed that this makes him nervous, and causes him to feel as though he’s “gotta do good.” He further exclaimed that he wants to “impress” the people around him, and “make friends.” He stated he feels more relaxed when there are no other males in class with him; however, he indicated that he feels as though once he improves his technical skills he will be able to connect and relate with others (male and female) more.

I inquired about the relationship Lee has with his instructors, and how their gender impacts his experience as a student. In response, Lee addressed the innate intimate nature of studying dance. “Dance is more hands on, which creates intimacy.” Additionally, he declared that in certain idioms, like ballet, it is beneficial to have an instructor whose gender matches that of his or her students “because you have the same anatomical structure, so it’s easier to teach.” Lee stated that the gender of his instructor “doesn’t really matter,” yet he acknowledged that male instructors often have more specific feedback for him. He believes that feedback from male instructors is more “attuned to male dancers.”

Lee expressed that he feels as though society thinks of men as “business-type people or having some form of higher degree.” I asked him if he felt as though pursuing dance aligns with that, and he responded, “I tend to see dance not being a first option for men.” However, more positively he stated that he hasn’t “seen much negative feedback for men who have been successful in their dance careers.” He further stated, “I’ve heard about it happening, but I don’t really see it.” When asked what he would like for people to know about men who dance, he voiced:

[Dance] is not a gender-specific art form. It’s for anyone and everyone who has an interest to dance – especially for men because they are too afraid about [impacting] their masculine image from what I’ve seen. I’ve asked a lot of male friends to dance to see if they would, but they are afraid of how they look and they say ‘no it’s not my thing’ or ‘it’s too feminine’.

Leon

Leon is 20, and a junior undergraduate pursuing a dance major at the University of Oregon. I have known Leon for over two years as a student and a friend. He has been a student in several of my technique classes, and we have previously performed together in various concerts and performances.

Leon, born and raised in a Portland, Oregon, described himself as a “very friendly baby.” He stated that as a young child he would always say “hi or hello” to everyone. However, he recalls becoming more shy and reclusive after changing schools when he was 15. By that point, he remembers realizing that he was “different” from others his age, especially in his sexuality. Leon recalls the impact of church and faith on his realization of his sexuality:

Going to the church every day, I would hear that gays are an abomination and it will take you down a path of sin. My parents would agree with this. I would always hear them make [negative] comments about gay people. If they saw a

gay couple they would say “that’s disgusting.” I didn’t always have a great relationship with my parents. I didn’t know my dad for a long time. He was always there; I just didn’t associate [with him]. I was scared of my dad.

Leon stated that he wanted to come out about his sexuality to his peers and family when he was in the 8th grade, but decided to wait until the 9th grade. Unfortunately, before he could come out, he was “outed” by one of his friends at the time. This resulted in Leon being tormented by his peers. He stated, “I got bullied mercilessly, thrown into lockers, showers, trashcans, was beaten, and book checked, it was a really tough time for me. I was really glad I got through that. I had some hard times trying to figure myself out.” By the time he was in the 9th grade, Leon said he was much more comfortable with his sexuality and identity, and was supported by a group of friends.

In describing his dance experience, Leon expressed that when he was little he actually “hated” dance. It was his “least favorite thing in the world.” He recalls his parents and cousins always trying to encourage him to dance, especially Mexican dances done to Mexican music. “I hated it because I was too shy, and didn’t want people looking at me. I hated everything about attention,” he stated emphatically. Dance was highly ingrained in Leon’s family, yet he further resisted participation due to his sexuality. Leon explained he feared that if he started dancing, people might find that suspect and correlate his desire to dance with his sexuality. Leon didn’t “try” dance until he witnessed a color guard group performing. He elaborated:

I was in theatre class and my friend found out that I wanted to join [color guard]. She came up to me and asked ‘hey you’re gay right?’ I was like ‘yeah, umm sure?’ She asked if I wanted to join color guard. I was like ‘what does that have to do with [color guard]?’ Apparently a lot of men that do color guard are gay, and they correlate that to doing color guard and willingness to participate.

Leon stated that he simply wanted to join because he thought it looked “fun and cool.” He believes there’s a “weird correlation” between an individual’s sexuality and them doing particular movement-based activities such as dance. He feels as though parallels are often assumed between individuals who dance, or do anything girly or pretty, and their sexuality – and often results in being called gay, even if you’re not.

For Leon, participating in color guard became his first dance experience. He recalls being required to do “dance basics” (e.g. ballet positions of the arms and feet, and jazz walks/runs) as a member of the group. Leon remembers one particular instructor that worked with his color guard group, and her impact on him as a dancer:

One teacher we were working with had us doing these lines of energy, which I found very interesting. I really liked how she was explaining the chakras of the body, energy, and flow. We were doing chaîné turns across the floor and she came up to me and said, ‘you need to never stop dancing, you need to keep dancing, you have this golden aura around you that brings so much joy to me when I watch you and you need to give that to the world.’ That moment is what caused me to want to dance more, so I decided that’s what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I was 16 at the time. That was the turning point.

In his senior year of high school, Leon still didn’t completely know what he wanted to do as a career after graduation. He stated that he hadn’t focused on dance exclusively due to hearing comments like “you can’t do dance as a career, you have to something more practical” from his family members. However, he applied for acceptance into Portland State University and the University of Oregon. Once he was accepted into UO, he discovered both the human services and dance programs. “I knew then that I wanted to work with kids and dance,” he exclaimed.

Leon began his dance training as a freshman at UO. He started by enrolling in introductory level modern and ballet courses. Since then, he has declared the major, and has progressed into intermediate and advanced levels of modern and ballet techniques. In addition, Leon has enrolled in hip-hop, jazz, and African technique courses. He explained his reasons for enrolling in these classes:

I chose African because I love the movement, and [the instructor]. He seems super fun. After watching the first two terms, I knew I had to join in the spring term. The movements bring out a lot of joy. I chose hip-hop because it's a very popular dance that people do, and I wanted to get better at hard hitting moves. For jazz, I've just always wanted to do it. I used to watch a jazz dance in *Grease* and it was all guys, and I thought, 'Oh wow, that's so cool, those guys are all dancing together, I wanna do that.'

In addition to taking dance courses at UO, Leon has also been an active performer. At the time of his interview he had been in 3 faculty dance concerts; represented UO at the 2016 American College Dance Association (ACDA) regional conference as a performer and participant; and choreographed and performed an autobiographical solo – which was selected to represent UO at the 2017 ACDA Northwest regional conference.

Leon described the dance culture at UO as “very inclusive...fun and free.” Outside of the dance program he has gathered that many people are unaware of the program, and feels as though they don't actively seek out information about it and its performances. He further expressed he believes that individuals who do not engage with dance often don't fully recognize the value of studying it. He fears that they reduce dance to being purely aesthetic and think it exists to simply “look good.” He believes they don't understand the “intricacies of dance and how it can affect life

in the world” through human rights advocacy and politics. He purported that “dance can be ugly, it can make you feel uncomfortable, make you cry” or cause nausea.

When asked to describe the relationships between and among the male dancers in the department, Leon explained that interacting with other males was a relatively new experience for him. “I wasn’t used to seeing male-to-male dances or other male interactions because I’m not the best at interacting with other men. I’m usually surrounded by girls because that’s how I grew up.” He further posited:

...growing up not really having that many good connections with men, I don’t know how to act or talk to them. Sometimes when men touch me I get scared. It’s a [natural] reaction I have now; I tense up and freak out, especially if I don’t know them very well. Even when we are doing dance-based duets, and get touched by anyone (man or woman), I can’t do it. However, I’m more comfortable with people in the department than I am with those outside. If I become friends with someone then I know how to act around them.

Leon stated that he agreed to participate in this study after participating in an all-male dance experience in which we both danced. “I thought it was really awesome to have a dance with just guys. I’ve never been a part of something like that, and never thought that was something that would happen at the UO,” he explained. Due to the limited number of male dancers in the Eugene community, Leon remembered being unsure of where the choreographer would be able to recruit all the male dancers. He also credits his experience in an all-male dance class he took at the 2016 ACDA northwest regional conference with further inspiring his interest in participating in this research. He described that experience as “different” and “empowering.” He said that the experience illustrated to him just how many other male dancers there were. Leon explained that seeing other male dancers gave him a sense of being in a family. “We are representing [other males],” he declared.

I asked Leon to compare his experience in those all-male dance environments to his experience in a class where there may be fewer to no other males. Being the only male in a group isn't unfamiliar for Leon. He stated that he was the only male in his color guard group; he's used to it, and it doesn't affect him much anymore. However, he does recall being noticed for being the only male. "People look at you. [They] would come up to me and say, 'you're a guy, and you're dancing, that's awesome.'" This recognition made him feel "pointed out," which he doesn't care for. To be pointed out and looked at were his "least favorite things," he lamented. "They would use [me] for the performances to have 'featured' parts in the performances." He stated that having him on the team allowed them to do things they "couldn't do without a guy," such as "love stories between a male and female." He described that experience as "weird", and didn't like it because he doesn't associate with that kind of performance. I asked him if he still experienced feeling "singled out" in any of his college classes. He stated he doesn't really feel that any more. "The professors are here to see your body" as opposed to a student's gender, he proclaimed. "Gender, sexuality, and race are erased here. We are all equal and are here for the same reason," he said emphatically.

He stated that he specifically notices the disparity between the number of male and female dancers. "There are barely any guys," he exclaimed. He brought up the idea that male dancers are often stigmatized. "...There's the assumption that if you're a ballet dancer you're automatically gay, effeminate, weak, and a pansy. These are some words that have been said before," he explained. I asked how he knew these sentiments:

I used to hang out with a lot of people that didn't know my sexuality. This is [the kind of] stuff that they would say in front of me, and explain how they saw guys in ballet. I got this all from people I was around. All my knowledge [comes] from being around people who make these stereotypes happen. [Hearing these] kind of made me not want to try it out. I didn't want the stigma placed on me. I was afraid of that - and also because I was hiding my sexuality, and fear, and disgust with myself. It kinda sucks. ...I didn't want do something that will make it even worse.

Leon explained that there is a difference among dance idioms, however. He notices that there are more male dancers participating in hip-hop dance. He believes this may be due to hip-hop originating as a "street-based" art form, and because it has become more popularized. He stated that other male dancers have told him that hip-hop makes them feel "powerful and strong" when they do it. He said that his is pretty much the opposite of how they feel about ballet.

I further questioned of Leon if he had ever been in a class where he was given gender-specific movement, and if so how that made him feel. He stated that in some ballet classes he has been told that some movements are for the women and others are for the men. He recalled thinking when he was younger that men and women do have certain exclusive movements. For example, "Body rolls I always associated with women. Anything that's flamboyant with the arms, head tilts, and cutesy movement were associated with being feminine." He remembers wanting to hide any of these affectations in his own movement repertoire, and trained himself to do so by "watching the straight men" in daily life to copy their movements. When entering the dance program at UO, Leon described his body as being very stiff, especially his shoulders. However, being a student at UO has helped him learn to release and relax his body, which has allowed him to be more of himself in his body.

He describes this to be “relieving” and allows him to express who he really is as a person and dancer.

When asked what his current thoughts and opinions are regarding male participation in dance, Leon stated he thinks it’s a great thing and more males should be participating. He further discussed what he perceives to be the benefits of participating in dance and how those benefits may impact the stigma of men in dance. He explained:

[Dancing] helps with school, and to have more of a connection with people and be more caring for one another. I think some men don’t like hearing those kinds of qualities. If you are caring, kind, nice, sweet, those are all effeminate. Those are qualities of what a female should be like. Some dads would be like ‘be tough be stronger, be more manly, play football, don’t be a ballerina or princess.’ I think more men should take dance so we can get those stigmas away. And understand that they can have a good time being a dancer and change their life in a good way.

Leon further provided insight into his family and peers’ thoughts and opinions regarding his participation in dance. He explained that his mother is “very supportive” of his dancing, and that she’s happy he’s successful in his pursuits – especially because he’s been getting “high grades.” He described his dad as being “indifferent” and “okay with it.” Alternatively, he stated that his dad can be “supportive at times”, which he described as “a nice change of pace.”

I asked Leon to describe his awareness of dance in social and popular media, and the impact this may have specifically on men who dance. He reported that he typically observes dance in music videos – mostly hip-hop. He referred to hip-hop as being the “main dance” that men do. Prior to being in school for dance, he doesn’t recall hearing much about men doing ballet, African, jazz, or tap dance. He said he primarily sees dancing through platforms such as YouTube and the MTV network.

Outside of those channels, he remembers seeing Mexican television shows that his parents watched that often displayed mariachi bands with dancers alongside.

Michael

Michael is 24, and a sophomore undergraduate pursuing a major in dance at the University of Oregon. I have known Michael for about a year as a fellow male in the department and as a student in my introductory ballet class. Additionally, during the 2016-2017 school year, Michael and I rehearsed and performed together in a work choreographed by a faculty member.

Michael was born in San Antonio, Texas and moved regularly from state to state throughout his childhood, which he believes provided him with exposure to diverse populations of people. He stated that making new friends in each town that he lived in was a different experience, and through those experiences he learned to “portray” himself differently depending on the environment. Michael described his family as “big”, but iterated that he didn’t actively engage in a “family scene”. He has 3 half brothers and 1 half sister. When he was 10, Michael’s mom moved out of the country, and he moved in with his dad and stepmom. He described his stepmother as being “emotionally unstable.” When Michael was 18, he moved out from his parents and joined the U.S. Navy, where he served for 4 years. His experience serving in the Navy also offered him exposure to a great diversity of people.

Michael stated that he’s always liked dance, and has always been aware that he was “naturally good” at it. He further emphasized, “anytime I danced in a setting where I wasn’t critiquing myself, I always enjoyed dance.” Michael said that he

started dancing when he was “extremely young” by sporadically doing “playful movement” like jumping and flipping. He recalls being complimented by his peers and adults on his dancing abilities. He stated that when he was a high school student he “never” danced because his city (Karnes City, Texas) wasn’t “oriented” that way. He detailed that the only dancing that he commonly participated in was country dancing. However, whenever he was bored, Michael confessed that he would stay home and dance in front of the mirror for fun. He remembers dancing at his high school prom in front of everyone, and he stated that they all wondered why he hadn’t danced in front of them before, and that he should have received his school’s “dance award.” Michael said that he’s unsure as to why he never danced publicly prior to that moment. “I don’t know if it was the self-consciousness belief that I probably shouldn’t [dance] because of the society I was in where it’s not as acceptable, or if I was afraid I wasn’t going to be good or made fun of,” he explained. Later in life, Michael reported that when he lived in the “ghetto”, that he danced recreationally to hip-hop music. While in the military, Michael stated that he would watch the street performers in San Diego. He recalled that there was always a group of street performers outside of one particular club that regularly hosted notable electronic dance music (EDM) disc jockeys. Additionally, he stated that one day he noticed a group of dancers “shuffling” on the boardwalk, and he thought it was “the coolest thing ever.” Inspired by their movements, he relied on YouTube to learn how to do it, and become proficient within a year. “I got really good at it. I became well known in the group I associated with because of [my shuffling abilities],” he exclaimed. He reported that this gave him a sense of confidence in a “completely

different way.” He explained, “it wasn’t like ‘oh I can dance, and I’m macho’ ...I felt free and expressive.” He said that he and his friend would perform and people would flock to them and sometimes record them dancing, which he described as feeling “really cool.” Additionally, Michael would use his visits to dance clubs to expand his understandings and proficiencies of dance. He stated that when visiting dance clubs he would study and examine the movements of other dancers in the circle. “I would analyze everything they did – maybe not get it to the fullest extent – but I would understand the movement quality and how they moved,” he explained. “When I would get into the circle I would repeat it to show them that I could embody the movement they just did and add a twist of my own to it.”

Michael stated that he agreed to participate in this research because he wanted to help, and because he’s aware that there are a limited number of resources (other male dancers) available on campus. Moreover, he thinks his outlook on dance is different from many others because he didn’t study dance his “whole life,” and now he’s in it so “heavily.” He iterated that the only expectation he has for participating is that he might “learn something.”

Michael stated that his interest in the program at UO was sparked by his enrollment in DAN 251: Looking at Dance, an introductory dance studies course. He explained:

I thought I would be an international studies major because I had traveled so much, but [taking] Looking at Dance caused me to realize how much I hated international studies as a topic of study. If I’m [supposed] to write a paper about international studies, I’m really not going to enjoy the process, but if I have to write one about dance, I’m going to put my creative interest into it and it’s not a task.

Eventually, Michael changed his major from international studies to dance. He described himself as being very “naïve” about dance prior to joining the department of dance at UO. Since then, Michael has enrolled in numerous introductory and intermediate courses such as ballet, modern, hip-hop, salsa, partnering, contact improvisation, dance improvisation, and African dance technique classes. In addition, Michael has become an accomplished performer, having participated in informal productions, faculty concerts, and community events. Michael described the dance culture at UO as “diverse and loving”, and stated that everyone is “very supportive.” I asked Michael to describe the relationships among the male dancers at UO. “Typically I get along with everyone,” he explained. “The interactions I have can range from a simple ‘hello, how are you,’ or if I have them in every class I create a bond and friendship with them like Harrison (a fellow study participant).” He further described the environment of the department as being very accepting and that it is “inviting regardless of one’s gender.”

When asked what his current thoughts and opinions are regarding male participation in dance, Michael replied, “...males in dance, especially straight males in dance, are kind of challenged.” He explained that male dancers are typically “surrounded” by female dancers in the studio, which can “hinder their movement because they don’t want to inappropriately touch someone.” Michael stated that he has found this to be personally challenging. He further avowed that many of the female dancers he’s encountered think that male dancers come to dance to simply be surrounded by females. “You don’t get a lot of trust at first,” he explained, “at least I didn’t.” Michael reported that he purposefully limited his movement to

ensure that he didn't "offend" anyone until people knew he wasn't there for any ulterior reasons, such as flirting with female dancers. I asked Michael if this was something he experienced only when there are females in the room. He replied, "With males I enjoy the energy that a male can bring to a piece. I'm not sure if that's just because of the people I'm dancing with, or some kind of hormone that gives off that energy. It's just nice not to be the only one, and to feel as if you're a unit and you're not the only person in a room of opposite [sexed] individuals.

Michael went on to describe the tendencies and differences he perceives among male dancers. Specifically, he stated that he notices that straight males tend to be "a lot tenser", implying that non-heterosexual males are often more relaxed and more physically flexible. He stated that being flexible is "just not something that most straight males are worried about or consider." He further explained that the only flexible males that he's been around have been runners and gymnasts. When he played football, Michael stated that the only stretching required was to "kick your knees and touch your toes." Additionally, he said that he's also noticed that "a lot" of gay males like ballet.

When asked about his family and peer's thoughts and opinions towards his, and other men's, participation in dance, he described them as being "extremely supportive." He added that everyone always asks for the dates of his performances. I asked if he's ever been met with contention due to his interests and participation in dance. He replied that "outside individuals" often question him on what it's like and "what are you going to do with it." He explained, "Every dancer understands that [line of questioning]." He stated he typically responds by saying that he's "seeing

what happens and not putting any expectations on it because that closes doors on things that could have opened.”

I asked what he thought societal expectations of men are and how they relate to men in dance. “Society’s general expectation of a man is to be the providing, strong individual for the family or household; that person that’s supposed to be the strongest one in the family,” he replied. As it relates to men in dance, he thinks that people who aren’t in “liberal environments” would immediately question male dancers’ sexuality.

I asked Michael what awareness he has about dance in popular culture or social media, and what impact this may have on men in dance. He feels as though social media has broadened society’s awareness of dance. He described dance in social media as a “tool to explore a broad bank of knowledge.” He further described the impact dance in social media/pop culture has on him. “To see the male be so vulnerable on social media and express themselves in ways that you would not see a typical man doing, gives me the idea that it’s okay [to dance], or a sense that I can do that too. You can be a strong, dominant individual and still be very soft, and vulnerable at the same time,” he explained.

When asked what he wanted people to know about men who dance, Michael exclaimed, “We’re awesome!” He added, “Dancing in my opinion is one of the few ways in which you can fully express your soul. Being a male in dance allows you to break away from society’s thoughts on ego and have self-discovery, or inner peace, because you’re able to be express and not be hindered by society’s thought process.”

Summary of Intake Interviews

It is quite apparent that these particular male dancers had, and have, very different experiences as students and dancers. Despite their differences, many themes emerged from reviewing and analyzing their intake interview responses.

While some participants indicated that they had been met with social and familial challenges regarding their participation in dance, they all characterized their experiences as male dancers as being generally positive. A majority of the males (7 out of 9) described their families, and specifically their parents, as being highly supportive of their dance endeavors both initially and throughout their careers. Descriptors such as “extremely,” “very,” and “100%” were used to illustrate the degree to which their parents were and are supportive of their dancing. The other 2 participants stated that their parents displayed initial concerns about their interest in dance; however, they both explained that least one of their parents, if not both, gradually became supportive of their dancing. Therefore, almost all of the participants in this study indicated that their parents were and are supportive of their decision to dance.

Interestingly, this situation is not representative of the data presented by Doug Risner (2009b) regarding parental support of young male dancers. Risner asked 75 study participants (ages 13-22) to indicate their response to the question, “I think more boys would study dance if....” Risner (2009b, 3) stated that 72% of respondents believed that if parents were more supportive and encouraging more boys would study dance. For the majority of participants in this study, needing or wanting more parental support didn’t appear to be a factor in their experience as

collegiate dancers. However, for a few study participants, it appears as though they had to display some level of dedication, proficiency, or success in dance before gaining the full respect and support of their parents, families, and friends. Perhaps the reason all of the study participants were able to endure the struggles of being a male dancer, and ultimately have the opportunity and desire to study dance in higher education, is due to the supportive environments in which they grew up.

Therefore, it is conceivable to think that receiving more parental support, especially at earlier ages, could likely encourage more male participation in dance. I question if more young men received similar levels of support and respect from their families and peers as the participants in this study, would there be more collegiate males currently studying dance? Study participants' significantly positive experiences generate a few other questions for me as well. For example, over the past 8 years since Risner's study was conducted, have significant cultural shifts occurred that promote a greater acceptance of men in dance? Also, what correlations exist between geographic location and parental support of males in dance? I ask this because 7 out of 9 participants in this study hail from west-coast states (e.g. California and Oregon), which are often perceived as being very liberal and progressive. In my experience growing up in the Deep South, and returning often to work with young dancers and visit family, Southern parents appear much more reluctant to register their young sons for activities such as dance, cheerleading, and gymnastics, which are perceived as female-oriented pursuits.

Most of the participants (8 out of 9) indicated that they have participated in some sports activity either recently or during their childhood. One of the most

common athletic pursuits among the study participants was martial arts. Three individuals (Harrison, James, and Lee) all studied some form of martial arts for several years. Therefore, perhaps martial arts should be looked at as a fertile avenue through which male dancers can be recruited. I too participated in martial arts for about 2 years during my adolescence. Therefore, 40% of the men involved in this study have participated in both dance and martial arts. Realizing the prevalence of athletic experience among the participants during the intake interviews, reified my desire to explore athletic movements and language in the experiential workshops in order to better understand their efficacy as tools in dance study and pedagogy.

Another trend revealed in interviews with participants was the impact hip-hop dance has on their introduction to and experience with dance, as well as their perceptions of men in dance. Four participants indicated that their experience with dance began with hip-hop. In fact, Colton, Michael, Eli, and Lee all stated that early in their dance careers they were all members of a hip-hop group in their respective communities. Additionally, 2 participants (Colton and Dee) stated that when they tell people that they dance, people frequently assume that they do hip-hop dance because they are men. Moreover, 4 participants (Colton, Eli, James, and Leon) explained that this is because society perceives hip-hop dance as being more masculine; therefore, it's more acceptable, and often expected, that men participate. Additionally, when referencing their awareness of social media as it relates to men in dance, 4 participants (Dee, Enzo, James, and Leon) stated that they primarily see male dancers in hip-hop music videos throughout social media and popular culture.

Another similarity among participants were their reasons for participating in this study. Four of the nine participants (Colton, Eli, Enzo, and Michael) indicated that they agreed to participate in this research because they wanted to “help me out.” I realize that as a fellow male dancer in the department, I had bonded with almost all of the participants prior to the context of this study. Therefore, I personally feel a sense of friendship and camaraderie with each of the participants, and assume that it is likely mutual. While flattered and appreciative of their desire to “help me out” by participating, I’m curious if their eagerness and willingness to participate in this study was impacted not only by our friendship, but perhaps also by our similar genders/sexes and our shared experience of being a male dancer.

Three participants (Harrison, James, and Leon) indicated they were most interested in participating due to the opportunities to work and dance with more men. Through their responses, these three participants implied and exclaimed that the opportunity to dance with and among other males is a rare experience for them. Therefore, it appears that these three participants would greatly value more opportunities to have male-only movement experiences built into their collegiate experiences. Additionally, 4 participants (Dee, Eli, Harrison and Michael) indicated that they agreed to participate in hopes of providing “useful” information not only to the research, but also to other participants. Three participants (Colton, Dee, and Eli) also stated that they are excited to hear about the experiences of other study participants, as well as sharing their own experiences.

While participants had a variety of responses to the question of, “what would you like people to know about men who dance,” 5 participants (Colton, Dee, Enzo,

Lee, and Michael) indicated that they find dance to be a space welcoming of all individuals regardless of sex or sexuality and that men shouldn't be embarrassed about participating. Additionally, Dee, Michael, and Enzo iterated that male dancers are passionate about dance, and that dance affords them the ability to express themselves in ways other activities don't provide. Also, almost all of participants (8 out of 9) indicated that they wish more males would participate in dance in college and in general. Four participants (Colton, Eli, Harrison, and James) indicated that having other males in class with them offers a sense of shared experience, camaraderie, support, and alleviates feelings of isolation and being singled out.

Lastly, participants unanimously described the environments of both the Lane Community College and University of Oregon dance programs as "welcoming" and "supportive". Both departments were further described as being highly "inviting" and "inclusive", which participants stated encourages their initial and continued engagement with the program. Based on participants' responses, it appears as though when faculty make a concerted effort to reach out to and engage with male dancers, they are likely to become actively involved in the program and projects. A few participants credited the interactions they had with graduate students and professors with being what drew them into the program.

Workshops and Discussion Session Descriptions

Using information gleaned from the review of literature and personal experiences, and with consideration of the intake interviews, I designed curricula for a five-week Experiential Movement Workshop & Discussion Session series that

was held in a large studio in the Department of Dance at the University of Oregon. Below are summaries of each session that outline the movement concepts explored; participants' experiences and personal observations; and discussion topics and participant responses. See Table 5 (pg. 102) for an overview of the workshop and discussion topics for each session.

Session 1

The first session of the workshop series was used to introduce the participants to the study, and focused on the following primary movement concepts:

- Partnered and group movement introductions,
- Identifying one's own movement characteristics,
- Exploring neutral/natural and gendered movement,
- Introduction of "Dance-ifying", and
- Male-to-male observation of movement.

For the first activity of this session, participants were asked to partner up, preferably with someone with whom they were less familiar, in order to conduct "movement introductions." Using both improvisational movement and spoken word, participants were asked to provide their partners with the following information: their name, hometown, institution, year in school, major, an interesting fact, and how they describe their own movement tendencies. I clarified that the movement did not need to be literal nor idiom specific. I demonstrated an example to encourage participation and to provide clarity of the task requested. The pairings were James and Lee; Harrison and Eli; and Leon and Colton.

Table 5. Experiential workshops and discussions session – lesson plan

Movement Topics	Discussion Topics
<i>Session 1</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation to the Study • Partnered/Group Movement Introductions • Identify movement that defines oneself • Identify movement that defines others • Explore natural/neutral movement • Explore gendered movement • Male-to-Male observing of movement • Introduce concept of “Dance-ifying” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience observing other males performing • Experience exploring natural, masculine, and feminine movement • Impact of male-only and mixed-gender environments
<i>Session 2</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize personal biography or experiences to compose autobiographical sketches • Observe and describe other males’ movement and performances • Describe other males’ physical bodies • Instructor-to-student tactile feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience composing autobiographical sketches • Experience observing other male performers • Experience describing and analyzing other males’ bodies and performances • Experience with receiving tactile feedback
<i>Session 3</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm-up with athletic/sports inspired motifs and gestures • Receive and perform phrases inspired by athletic/sports motifs and gestures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit and impact of including athletic/sports motifs and gestures into class and choreographic settings • Efficacy of language. Sports/Athletic terminology, dance terminology, and descriptive cueing
<i>Session 4</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review movement phrases from Session 3 • Peer-to-peer teaching/rehearsing phrases • Explore parallels between dance and sports • Men’s dance attire; dance belts and tights • Explore celebratory actions; related composition exercise • Explore physical contact through “runner/blocker” game; various intensities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience exploring similarities between sports and dance • Experience wearing and dancing in typical men’s dance attire (tights/dance belts) • What attire is currently common among male dancers? • Experience with physical contact and its impact on male students/performers
<i>Session 5</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in dance sampler class • Dance in tights and dance belts. • Continue to incorporate teacher:student and student:student touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in dance sampler class • Participants’ current engagement with their program • General feedback about participation in study

Initially, participants' movement was timid, minimal, and primarily initiated from the arms and hands. Eventually, laughter could be heard throughout the room as the participants began to move with more abandon. I noticed that all participants faced their partners for their introductions, as opposed to doing movement facing away. I also noticed that all three pairings maintained a relatively distant relationship to one another. No touching transpired in the introductions.

Afterwards, I asked the dancers to verbally introduce their partners to everyone else in the room. Dancers were asked to provide the information their partners shared with them to the room while simultaneously using improvisational movement inspired by their interaction with their partner. Descriptors used by participations to describe their own movements and those of their partners included: circular, adaptive, twisting, connected, flowy, light, groovy, and theatrical.

I informed the participants that the next exploration was designed to help them gain a better understanding of each other's movement characteristics through observation. This exploration was inspired by an exercise Christina Soriano (2010) outlined in her article regarding her men's dance course that was primarily populated by athletes. The participants all agreed to stay in their same pairings for this exercise. I gave them a list of actions they would be executing, which included walking, running, sitting, standing, jumping, and performing a "self-defining" or "iconic" movement. Participants were instructed that while one dancer executed these actions, the other dancer was to observe their partner and take notes on the performance. I encouraged them to use descriptive words, imagery, metaphors, or drawings to describe their partner. Three chairs were brought out for the sitting and

standing actions, and I provided each participant with a journal to use for note taking. One participant asked how he should approach performing the tasks, and I replied by asking them to do “whatever feels natural.” As the dancers performed the given actions, I perceived them to do so in “natural” compartments that seemed fitting to their personalities, as I knew them. When performing the jump action, I noticed that all of the participants, except for James, utilized jumps that were quite large, and with each sequential jump they appeared to attempt to go higher than the previous one. Lee was the only participant to use a traditionally balletic position (1st) to execute his jumps. James was the only one to do several smaller, “bouncy” jumps as opposed to the larger and fewer jumps performed by others. During the workshop, I referred to this initial round of executing these tasks as the “natural iteration.”

I asked participants to describe the experience of being observed by someone while performing those actions. Colton stated that it made him “think” about what he was doing. Harrison stated he was focused on not being “artificial” in his movements. Lee stated he would watch other performers to “sync up with them.” No participant expressed any extreme discomfort with being observed or having notes taken on their movements; however, some stated that it was “awkward,” and all of them indicated that they were curious about how their partners were describing them. Additionally, none of the participants stated that the gender of their observer had any significant impact on them as a performer.

In order to see how it might impact their movement choices and qualities, I prefaced the next round of exploration with the following:

As male dancers we know that it can be imperative that we perform as men. We should perform strong, be masculine, and exude a sense of macho-ness. So, I'm going to ask you to do all the tasks you just did, but this time performing them as manly, butch, strong, and assertive as possible.

For all participants, except Colton, I noticed drastic changes in their performances of the tasks. Colton's performance remained similar to that of the "natural iteration." For the others, I specifically noticed higher jumps with deeper preparations; louder landings from jumps and footfalls in walks; more rigid and restricted movement; audible grunts, especially in preparation for jumps and in participants' iconic movement choices; a pronounced use of weight; and the incorporation of athletic gestures. Dancers were more inclined to make obvious their physical exertion in this "masculine iteration" than in the "natural iteration."

For the third version of this assignment, I again asked the dancers to change the quality of their movements by prompting them with the following:

Being a dancer means that we need to be adaptable. We have to try on new personas and new things that may be unfamiliar, or may be very familiar but we haven't done them in a dance performance setting. So this time through I'm going to ask that you do those same actions with the most grace, elegance, and softness. Some may even call these qualities, feminine.

Some other descriptors I offered the dancers included "light, gentle, pretty, sassy, and supple."

Across all of the participants, the walking and standing actions appeared similar to those observed in the "natural iteration." A few subtle changes were noticed such as crossed legs when sitting and the addition of self-touching; however, the qualitative shift between the "masculine iteration" and the new "feminine iteration" was significantly subtler than the shift noticed between the "natural iteration" and the "masculine iteration." At the time I was perplexed by this

unexpected result, but after speaking with the participants in the discussion session (outlined below) I learned that not having received explicit permission to explore such an “extreme quality” was one of the prevailing reasons for this self-censorship.

After exploring the “feminine iteration,” dancers were paired up in preparation for performing for the group. I asked the dancers to “dance-ify” – a term borrowed from Soriano (2010) – the actions and tasks they had been performing. I defined “dance-ifying” for them as manipulating, abstracting, and linking the requested actions. I instructed them to turn the pedestrian actions into artistic statements by linking them and utilizing any or all of the qualities they explored or experienced in the three iterations. Leon stated that he focused on the quality of “machoness” because he is less familiar and less comfortable with it. Harrison and Lee attempted to re-explore all three iterations and find variances within a single gesture or action. Colton focused on transforming his actions into more choreographic or “dancy” actions. James and Eli both explained that they were aware of being watched by others and were trying not to allow their awareness of the audience impact their exploration.

For the first question of the discussion session during this meeting I asked the participants to describe what it was like for them to perform those 6 actions (walking, running, sitting, standing, jumping, and “iconic” movement), especially after being prompted to shift from the “natural iteration” to the “masculine iteration.” Leon reiterated that he was nervous to explore the “machoness” as he generally doesn’t relate to this quality. He further stated, “it was a weird place to put myself in and try to find something in my head that could translate that movement

into my body.” Additionally, Leon stated he associated louder landings from jumps as being more masculine. James explained he felt an “atmospheric change” when they were asked to shift between the masculine and feminine iterations. He described the masculine experience as “stale,” “angular,” and “competitive.” He also explained that he felt as though he needed to “make an impression on someone.” Eli also experienced a need to “live up to expectations,” and described the masculine experience as being “stiff” and “sharp.” Harrison sensed less articulation and greater “weightedness” and “groundedness” as opposed to lift. Lee stated that he “normally doesn’t think there’s much of a gender difference in dance.” He considered the movement in all three iterations to be “normal.” Lee found it “weird” when qualitative labels were used. I asked participants if being asked to dance more “masculine” or “manly” was something they’ve all experienced; they all nodded their heads to indicate that they had.

In observing the dancers’ explorations during the “masculine iteration,” I perceived that most of them had very specific images or ideas in mind about what movements and qualities represented masculinity – those ideas appeared quite similar throughout the room. While some variances could be seen, many of the characteristics were repeated across participants, which led me to question why this group of dancers all had similar ideas of what it means to perform “manly.”

I asked the participants if they would describe their changes between iterations as subtle or drastic. Leon described himself as a subtle changer and stated that he made little changes in each performance. He stated that he was not “confident in going further in each movement and exaggerating them.” I found this

observation interesting as I noticed a significant difference in the way he performed his “natural” and “masculine” iterations. However, I agree that his second shift – masculine to feminine – was much more subtle. He stated that he questioned if he was *allowed* to explore the full potential of the feminine qualities. In response to the word “sassy,” Leon remembered thinking that he knew he had the ability to make his actions extremely sassy; however, he didn’t feel as though he had been given explicit *permission* to explore the extremes of that quality, so he didn’t. While I never explicitly told the group to push the boundaries of their own understandings of the qualities given, I also never implied that they were not allowed to do so.

Harrison stated that he too was reserved in his exploration of “sassy” because he thought that descriptor “played differently” than the others provided. “I didn’t want to lose elegance for sass,” he stated, “which I think are very different.” He further explained that he found the entire exploration interesting, and that he never wanted to make exaggerated changes throughout due to his understandings of gender. Meaning, he believes that gender and gender performance are “ever blurring,” therefore, he never wanted to fully separate masculine and feminine interpretations by going to the “poles” of either.

Additionally, I asked participants if they thought their explorations would have looked differently had I altered the population of the room. Specifically, I inquired how they thought their performances might have differed had they performed them in my presence only, in a mixed-gender class where there are multiple male and female dancers, or in a class in which they are the only male. In response, Leon expressed that he would have been more comfortable and willing to

fully explore the “extremes“ of some of the feminine qualities if the room had females in it. “I feel more judged when there are more men in the room,” he stated. Harrison indicated that he might feel more “internal permission” to explore certain concepts more extremely if there were women in the room.

James stated that he wasn’t uncomfortable exploring between masculine and feminine concepts, but rather addressed the venue in which we were exploring. He believes that because he was experimenting in a dance building, especially one he’s familiar with, that he could do “whatever” he wanted. However, he believes if he were exploring those same concepts in a public setting, especially around people who are not “very educated on dance,” he would be more “self-conscious” of his actions.

During the “dance-ify “ performances, I noticed that none of the pairings physically interacted. I inquired of the group if they were conscious of their partner while performing, and if they considered physically interacting with them. Leon and Lee stated that because they were never instructed nor given explicit permission to do so, they never considered doing it. They both indicated that they are accustomed to being told what to do when exploring, and if not offered that information they don’t venture outside of the parameters given. Harrison believed that the pedestrian nature of the tasks being executed didn’t lend themselves to interaction. He provided the example of when walking across campus that he wouldn’t be inclined to start physically interacting with other people as they walked to class.

I find it particularly interesting that even those participants with more training did not experience a complete sense of autonomy over their movement

explorations. Responding to my curiosities about the absence of physical interaction in their gendered movement explorations, dancers stated that they were hesitant, and ultimately reluctant, to push the boundaries of their movement investigations because they were not given explicit permission to do so. I find participants' self-regulation to be fascinating, and I am curious about its foundation. Is it the result of societal expectations, or is it the result of a patterns and expectations experienced in dance pedagogy? My line of questioning during the workshops unfortunately does not necessarily afford me the answer to this question, but I presume it might be a combination of both influences.

Lastly, I asked participants to explain what they find attractive and/or dissuasive about in their institution's dance program. James stated that the UO department's "open door" policy, which welcomes all University students to participate in the program and to self-declare a dance major or minor, was attractive to him. "Seeing that it was possible to [study dance] this late in my life is what made me want to go for it," he stated. However, he noted that he was hesitant of pursuing the dance degree due to the department's requirement that all majors must be enrolled in a ballet course each term.

Lee explained that the collegial and familial atmosphere of the department, and its diverse course offerings, are what attracted him to the program. Harrison too was attracted to the perceived "immediate openness" of the dance program at UO. He recalled being approached by two instructors (one male and one female) during his third week of classes who delightedly inquired who he was and why he was taking class because they were captivated by his dancing. He stated that the

constant encouragement from faculty, and the ability for him to be “true to who he was,” was attractive to him. Changing his major from computer science to dance and having to have conversations with his family about his decision, was the only thing that dissuaded him from participating in the program. Leon was also attracted to UO’s welcoming environment that demonstrated “love and support.” He highly credits the faculty’s encouragement and support of his studies as driving factors behind his continued pursuits in dance. While he noted the small number of men in the program, he stated that it didn’t dissuade him from participating. Colton stated that he was attracted to the dance program at Lane Community College based on the recommendations of his friends and due to the program not being “super rigorous, hard, or serious”. He was further encouraged by the program’s emphasis on having fun and exposing students to new experiences through dance. He also stated that participating in dance classes sufficed the college’s required physical education requirement.

Based on participants’ responses from this initial discussion session, a welcoming atmosphere created and supported by faculty and fellow students, appears to be one of the elements that attracted these particular dancers to their program. Of those in attendance during this session, 4 out of 6 participants credited their program’s perceived welcoming and supportive atmosphere with drawing them in. Additionally, 3 participants expressed that explicit *permission* or *allowance* is necessary to encourage them to explore “extreme” ideas about gendered movement as well as physical interaction.

Session 2

At the beginning of session two, I immediately noticed how participants oriented themselves in the room. Leon, Michael, and Harrison were rehearsing choreography for an upcoming performance, Dee was dancing and warming-up individually, and James and Enzo were both sitting alone. Once the session commenced, I asked the dancers to re-introduce themselves to one another, and to introduce themselves to the new participants. Enzo, Dee, and Michael joined the group for Session 2, but were unable to attend Session 1. Most introductions included a handshake. After introductions, I conducted a brief guided warm-up, which culminated in relatively physically demanding contemporary dance movements. After the warm-up, I introduced our first activity.

I prefaced the first activity with reminding participants that during their intake interviews, each of them provided me with a brief autobiographical synopsis of their family, upbringing, and dance experience. I tasked them with recalling this information and to use it as stimuli for creating movement phrases. I referred to these phrases as “autobiographical sketches.” I asked them to focus explicitly on ideas and memories that are movement based or inspire movement, and that are sources of importance or intrigue for them. I gave them approximately 20 minutes to construct a brief movement sequence that would be performed. Michael inquired if the phrase could be improvised during the performance, to which I responded yes, but encouraged him, and the other participants, to build frameworks to help ensure relevancy to their inspiration. I also encouraged them to use their journals to notate their inspirations.

Everyone, except for James, initially approached this assignment by sitting and writing in their journals. James chose to start his exploration through movement. After 8 minutes had passed, all participants, with the exception of Enzo, were physically exploring and constructing their phrases. So, I approached Enzo to find out why he had not begun physically exploring. He expressed to me that he had never done anything like this and it “terrified” him. After a lengthy discussion and pep talk in which I assured him that he was in a safe space and would not be judged or ridiculed for his exploration or inexperience with improvisation and choreographic processing, he began physically exploring movement on and near the chair in which he was seated.

Throughout this exploratory time, I approached each dancer and intentionally provided them with some form of tactile feedback or touch in order to see how they would respond. These interactions were used to gauge each dancer’s willingness to engage in and/or receive physical touch from me. The supportive tactile feedback I offered to Leon, Enzo, James, and Harrison appeared to be welcomingly received. When I attempted to provide some feedback to Michael by placing my hands on the sides of his head as he was working on a head action, he quickly pushed them away. He later revealed during the discussion session that this was subconsciously done. In fact, he didn’t even recall the interaction. He later stated he doesn’t typically have an issue with receiving tactile feedback.

After the allotted 20 minutes of exploration, I asked the participants to partner up, which resulted in two duets and one trio. The groupings created were Leon, Enzo, and Dee; Colton and James; and Michael and Harrison. Participants were

asked to perform their autobiographical sketches for their partner(s), while their partner(s) observed and took notes on the performance. As observers, I asked participants to note adjectives, imagery, emotions, and performative qualities elucidated by the performances. Additionally, I asked them to describe their partner(s) physical body. The premise behind this request was to understand participants' willingness and comfort with talking about and describing another males' body and bodily actions, and to what degree. I find that it is often socially taboo for men to critique, describe, or praise another man's physical features and abilities. Therefore, I wanted to explore this idea through this experience.

Across all of the performances, many athletic, virtuosic (flips and jumps), and literal (gestures), were utilized. After all dancers had performed their sketches, participants were encouraged to freely share their movement observations with each other, but were specifically asked to write the descriptions of their partner(s) on a separate piece of paper and turn it in to me.

For the next activity of the session, I taught participants a movement phrase. The primary intentions behind setting this particular phrase, and having participants perform it, were to:

- Briefly engage with them in a choreographic experience,
- Understand participants' movement abilities,
- Provide a movement experience in which a group of male dancers could move in accord with one another,
- Emphasize hip articulation, and
- Minimally introduce male-to-male touch through choreography.

The phrase incorporated several hip swivels and pelvic-oriented actions such as pelvic thrusts in order to understand participants' willingness to utilize this area for movement initiation. As an instructor, I have noticed that male dancers are often less capable or willing to move from this part of their bodies. Therefore, I wanted to see if participants' exhibited the same struggles or reluctance. While most participants were eventually able to execute these particular movements, many of them initially struggled to access their hip articulations. The movement that appeared easiest for the dancers to understand and execute was a large "flying" leap, which was a large jump of the dancers' choice that propelled them across the space.

The discussion session for this workshop focused on the following:

- Understanding participants' experiences with compositional exercises;
- Observing other males performing;
- Analyzing other males' bodies and movement; and
- Gaining their responses to the incorporation of tactile feedback.

Curious about the inclusion of new participants in the room, I began the discussion by asking the group about their reactions to having new members added. For those who were new, I asked them to describe their experience joining the group. Overall, participants stated they were comfortable with working with everyone regardless if they were new to the group, as most of them knew each other outside of this study. One participant, Colton, noted that it would have been "more comfortable" for him to interact with the same group from the previous week. Michael emphasized that it

was “normal” for him to constantly meet and work with new people in dance; therefore, he wasn’t uncomfortable.

All of the participants indicated they had previous experience with compositional exercises similar to the one we explored in our session. I asked them to provide their thoughts regarding our exploration. Michael stated he appreciated this opportunity to reflect on the way he moved prior to his studying dance at UO, and to find new import for those movements he may have once considered insignificant. James and Harrison noted that they were impacted by how their partners’ observations related well to their intentions. James was reminded of how dance can communicate meaning when his partner perceived his exact intentions. Colton acknowledged that he initially struggled with choosing between utilizing gestural and literal movements, which he referred to as “story telling movements,” or more abstract and “technical” dance elements. My perception of his movements is that he incorporated both abstract and technical movements, but definitely emphasized more literal full-bodied actions seen in his incorporation of athletic gestures and tumbling actions. Additionally, Michael noted that it was difficult for him to recreate and re-explore movement he used to do because his dance training has since influenced the way he understands and executes movement. All of the groupings revealed that despite having vastly different life experiences, they were able to correctly identify many of their partners’ intentions and connect with the works being presented.

Additionally, all of the participants indicated that they felt comfortable having their partners’ observe and describe their autobiographical sketches.

However, a couple of them voiced that it made them a bit nervous when asked to describe their partners' bodies, and have their own bodies described by their partners. "It seems fairer to describe the movement quality of the dance, rather than to actually describe the person's body," Dee stated. Michael stressed that it would have been more difficult and uncomfortable for him to describe his fellow participants' bodies if they weren't as "in shape" as they were. James stated he found it hard to describe his partner's body because he is more familiar with analyzing and describing movement. Therefore, he attempted to employ the same methods and terminology he uses to describe movement to describe his partner's body, which he believes are one in the same. Colton stated that even though he didn't write any descriptions of his partner that he felt were "negative" he wondered if his partner would agree with his descriptions of their body.

I inquired if the dancers felt as though their bodies, as well as their movement, were on display when performing on stage or in class. I was curious about how the gaze of an audience, and in this particular scenario an exclusively male gaze, impacted them. Leon stated he doesn't "correlate" performing with putting his body on display. He focuses on his movement, but admitted that when he makes a "mistake" he begins wondering about the audience's critique. Harrison, James, and Dee all acknowledged their awareness of their body being observed and likely critiqued by the audience. James emphasized that he's more aware of how his body is being displayed and received when he knows that photography is being taken, or if he's wearing a "revealing" costume. I further probed if participants ever find themselves consciously comparing their own bodies and abilities to other

bodies (male and female) in the room. Michael, Leon, and Harrison all stated that they definitely acknowledge and compare themselves to other bodies in the room when dancing. All of them iterated that it can be both inspiring to see facile movers, yet simultaneously challenging to understand how to translate that movement into their bodies – especially if the other mover is a female. Both James and Harrison specifically addressed the challenge of comparing their body shapes and sizes to those of females when trying to understand movement. They emphasized that due to the typical differences in height and width between male and female dancers, it can often be difficult to relate to and understand movement performed through female teachers and fellow dancers.

When I asked participants to discuss their experiences learning and performing the short phrase I presented, James, without being prompted, immediately addressed the hip swivels and pelvic actions. Harrison and Michael joined the conversation, and noted that it is often difficult or foreign for men to access movement in the pelvic region of the body. Leon and Dee, both of who have had more dance training experience than Michael, James, and Harrison, were not “fazed” by this type of movement. However, Michael and Dee shared that they struggled with understanding the mechanics behind the pelvic thrusts – which were inspired by hip-hop actions such as “toprocks.” Both Leon and Michael stated that this movement was highly representative of my individual aesthetic as a mover and choreographer. Colton was the only mover I offered the “toprock” analogy to during the process, which he found helpful in understanding the movement.

Lastly, I informed the participants that throughout the evening I had deliberately provided all of them with some form of tactile feedback/physical contact. I asked if they recalled those interactions. Dee and James couldn't recall the touch I provided to them until I reminded them of the specific interaction. Michael and Harrison both stated that they are very comfortable with receiving tactile feedback, and recognize it can both effective and ineffective as a teaching tool.

Leon stated that he was initially apprehensive about me placing my hands on his head to assist him with a spiraling action, but was quickly relieved after he reminded himself that it was "just Bryant." To me, this response implied that he feels a significant level of comfort with me. I assume this is likely due to our three years of working together in both student-to-teacher and peer-to-peer relationships.

I asked the group how might receiving the same touch from a female instructor would have impacted them. James stated that for him it was "more awkward" receiving the feedback from a male. He further stated that receiving that feedback from a girl "wouldn't have been as bad." This is understandable as James stated in his intake interview that he is more familiar and comfortable with hanging out with girls.

One participant, Enzo, was unable to stay for the discussion session, so he agreed to meet me the following day to talk about his experience in the workshop. This was Enzo's first workshop as he was unable to attend the first one. Unfortunately, Enzo was recovering from a sports-related injury that required him to be seated in a chair for the majority of this workshop. He stated he initially felt

like the “odd man out” because it appeared to him that “everyone was so into dance and seemed super comfortable doing their warm-ups and creating their pieces,” while he was unsure how to begin. Enzo described the autobiographical sketch assignment as being “one of the hardest things” he’s done in a long time. Despite knowing that the space was a “judgment-free zone” and that others were engaged in the same assignment, he was unable to get past his “creative block.” He stated that his only previous dance performance experience was in a group project for his Looking at Dance class – an introductory dance studies course that fulfills university general education requirements. He recalled feeling safer performing in a group than creating movement to be performed individually. He stated he had never experienced such a “mental block” before, and was unsure how to get past it.

After about 20 minutes of sitting, contemplating, and receiving a pep talk from me, Enzo eventually started exploring and creating. He stated that he could think of only 4 sources of information to use as inspiration, which were hockey, lacrosse, the cold weather of Minnesota, and growing up. He admitted that he struggled with translating those ideas into movements. I inquired if he reattempted this exercise again after the workshop to which he responded, “No, not really. I kind of blocked it all out. That was stressful.” He explained that it was stressful because exploring movement appeared to come “easy” to everyone else, and he was afraid of making a “fool” of himself due to his inexperience with dance and creating movement. He stated that when asked to do contact improvisation he’s completely fine with exploring; however, being put on the spot to create movement alone was much more difficult for him. I question if this is due to Enzo’s experience with and

proficiency in contact sports such as lacrosse. Perhaps his familiarity with negotiating physical contact in sports allows him to translate those concepts into partnered dancing. He further stated that knowing he would have to perform his phrase for others inhibited his exploration. I reminded him that during his intake interview he told me it was common for him to perform little dances in his apartment and in front of his roommates. He acknowledged that he does this and stated that his familiarity with his roommates likely affords him performance freedom. He stated he believed as he attends more sessions he will become more comfortable with the group and environment, and would be able to perform with fewer inhibitions.

Regarding the performance and observation of the autobiographical sketches, Enzo stated that he found it easy to “critique” his partners’ (Leon and Dee) phrases and bodies. However, he was a little nervous about them describing his movement. Interestingly, he was much less nervous about having his partners describe his body. “I’m very proud of my body,” he said, “so that wasn’t weird for me, I kind of liked it.”

Lastly, I asked Enzo if he recalled me providing him with some tactile feedback/touch during the movement session, and if so could he describe his response to it. Enzo recalled me patting his shoulder when he was struggling initiating his exploration of the autobiographical sketch assignment. He referred to this interaction as “motherly” and “calming”, and that interaction eventually encouraged him to start exploring. “I didn’t want to disappoint you,” he said. “When you told me I had to perform whatever I created, that was kind of the kick in the ass,

the tough love.” He further explained that due to our relationship, and knowing me for a while now, receiving touch from me doesn’t bother him. He stated that our relationship is very different than any other relationship he’s ever had with a professor/instructor, because we are more like “friends.” At the conclusion of our conversation, Enzo stated he was excited to continue participating in this study and that he finds it very “interesting.”

Session 3

This session began with a structured, follow-the-leader warm-up that incorporated several actions that are commonly utilized in athletic and fitness warm-ups such as push-ups, abdominal work, and kickboxing-inspired movements.

After completing the warm-up, I began teaching the group a new phrase. This phrase (Phrase A) was inspired by and conceptualized to explore athletic motifs and actions. I purposefully did not offer this information to the participants prior to teaching the phrase. I asked them follow along to learn the material, and informed them that once I’ve finished teaching the phrase I will answer questions for clarity. I started teaching the phrase without any verbal cueing. I visually demonstrated the material numerous times, progressively building the phrase. After four complete executions of the phrase, I began introducing minimal verbal cueing using movement terms such as “scoop,” “slice,” “swing,” “reach,” “over,” “press,” and “take off” to describe particular actions. Immediately after the inclusion of verbal cueing, dancers began asking questions about the quality and initiations of the movements.

After a few more runs using the same descriptive words, I also incorporated verbal percussive sounds to emphasize movements.

After observing a few more attempts (guided and unguided) to perform the phrase, I slowly started introducing athletic images and descriptions to clarify the movements, and respond to dancers' inquiries. For example, when asked about a lateral side kick, I stated, "it's like a karate kick, like a foot-to-throat karate kick." I explained a floor sliding action as being "like a baseball slide going into home plate." To explain a leap, I offered the suggestion of a "track runner or hurdler's leap." To describe an arm throwing action, and to encourage more intensity behind the movement, I encouraged dancers to think of "fast pitching a baseball." Leon responded to this suggestion by stating, "I've never thrown a baseball [that way] before, I've always under thrown it." Harrison stated, "[this phrase] reminds me of my days as a pitcher."

Enzo arrived to the workshop late, so I asked the participants to demonstrate and teach the phrase material to him. Lee described the first action as a "jump kick," while Leon said, "it's like you're about to punt a can." Harrison described the pitching action as being like "throwing a baseball like a pitcher." After a couple of attempts, I notice that Enzo, who has significantly less formal dance training than his fellow participants, struggled to pick up on the details of the movement actions. He appeared to thoroughly understand gross motor skills, and was able to execute the athletic actions. However, the fine details of the actions were lost in his execution. While repetition of the phrase definitely increased his sequencing and memory of the material, his transitions remained very fragmented.

After feeling as though we had exhausted that phrase (Phrase A), I began teaching the dancer's a second phrase (Phrase B). Once again I asked participants to follow along as I demonstrated the material, however, this time I included verbal cueing. For Phrase B, I purposefully chose to utilize dance (often balletic) terminology to describe the material. Terms such as "chassé," "plié," "relevé," "précipité," "saut de basque," "pique," and "4th position" were used throughout this phrase. When I first started showing the Phrase B material, Enzo stated that it reminded him of "doing squats." After a few rounds of using the ballet terminology for cueing, I began offering some athletic terms and imagery. Some activities I referenced included "weight lifting," "shooting a ball," and "swinging a bat."

After performing Phrase B several times, Harrison needed to leave soon. Thusly, I asked the participants to converse with me about their experiences learning and performing both Phrase A and Phrase B. I began by asking them if there were any particular words used during this process that resonated with them, clarified the movement, or helped with retaining the material. The group replied with the words "hurdles," "pitching," "jazz split," "side kick," and "punting." Harrison stated that each sport discussed helped clarify the dance actions for him because he was previously a hurdler and played baseball. Similarly, Enzo stated that the sports terms were informative for him during this process. He implied that this is due to his familiarity with most of the sports included in the exploration. In opposition, Leon stated that none of the sports related terminology resonated with him, and he sometimes found it to be confusing. Furthermore, he said that all of the dance terminology "made sense" to him. Despite his unfamiliarity with performing sports,

Leon stated that because he's previously seen athletes perform those actions, he was able to mimic his fellow participants' execution of them. Lee, James, and Harrison noted that they sensed an energy or intensity shift with the sports terms were introduced. For example, Lee and Harrison stated that for the arm throwing action (referencing a baseball being pitched) and the side kick action (referencing karate), their "force" and "power" increased and they experienced a more "aggressive" execution when they were prompted by the sports analogies. James and Harrison both expressed that for them the dance terminology incited ideas of "shaping" while the sports activities and imagery encouraged less emphasis on body shaping and "correct" placement. He stated that perhaps the dancer terminology was more familiar to him; however, he found that imagery or descriptive words from either dance or sports can be helpful for him.

After this brief discussion, Harrison left and I continued to work with the remaining participants. I began teaching them the third and final phrase (Phrase C) of the session. This phrase was inspired and constructed from sports referee signals, specifically American football. The phrase was very gestural in nature and directly replicated official signals. When initially presenting the material I didn't utilize any verbal cueing. After 6 minutes of learning and rehearsing Phrase C, I began providing descriptive terms. The first gesture's description, "incomplete pass", caused Enzo to laugh. Leon immediately inquired what "incomplete pass" meant, and Enzo explained that it is a referee gesture from American football. I continued explaining the remainder of the gestures including: personal foul, complete catch, dead ball/time out, first down, and holding. After providing the terms, I gave the

dancers a few minutes to workshop Phrase C. Most of them tried saying the descriptions while doing the actions to help with memorization and sequencing of the phrase. Despite being the most experienced and contemporary athlete in the room, Enzo still had difficulty connecting one gesture to the next. The other three participants, all who have had significantly more dance training than Enzo, acquired and retained the material very well. Leon was the only participant who stated that the descriptions had no meaning for him. The other three participants had varying degrees of relevancy to the descriptions.

After ensuring that everyone knew the material and sequencing for Phrase C, I tasked the participants with pairing up to create a new phrase based on Phrase C. I reminded them of the “dance-ifying” technique we previously explored, and encouraged them to use compositional tools such as retrograding, changing the tempo, and re-sequencing. In addition, I asked them to incorporate the signal for “touchdown” and “pass interference”. If these gestures were unknown, I encouraged the dancers to create their own interpretation. The dancers paired themselves. This resulted in Enzo and Lee together, the two most familiar with sports, and James and Leon together, the two least familiar with sports. In general, Enzo and Lee’s duet resulted in most of their actions being done simultaneously and performed in a side-by-side orientation. James and Leon’s duet incorporated mirroring and physical contact, which Enzo described as “more of a partner dance.” For our last movement activity of the session I asked the dancers to review the material from Phrases A, B, and C, then connect all three phrases to create one long phrase. All four of them assisted each other in remembering the material, and linking the phrases. Then they

performed the newly created phrase several times to finish out the workshop session.

I began the discussion portion of this session by asking the participants for general feedback on the activities we explored. Leon stated that exploring sports motifs and language that is “foreign” to him was “fun” and “enjoyable.” Lee found it interesting to use other movement backgrounds (sports/athletics) to explore movement. Enzo stated the incorporation of sports analogies and movements made this session “easier” and “simpler” for him. James also described the experience as “enjoyable,” except for when he didn’t know the 2 additional signals – then he felt “disconnected.”

Next I asked the participants, “As men in dance, do you find that the use of sports imagery works well for you? Or do you find it to be presumptuous?” Leon thinks the use of sports terms is a “bit presumptuous,” further noting his lack of experience in participating in sports. He further stated that many people assume men know about “sports, cars, and girls.” Lee also believes the use of sports imagery can be presumptuous, but stated he personally found value and information in the imagery. Enzo noted the potential benefits of utilizing sports activities and images for novice dancers.

In regards to how the phrases were presented, dancers had differing opinions on which methods were most beneficial to them. For Leon, when I layered sports imagery, (specifically the descriptions of the official’s signals) on top of the movement, he found it confusing to remember both. However, Enzo valued the additional information of the sports imagery because if he forgot the sequencing of

the movement, he could remember the cue that was associated with the given action. James stated that if he had been given only the sports terminology, he would have had difficulty creating the movement; however, he stated when he tried making the sports movements “dancy” and “trying on something new,” he had a lot of “fun” doing so. Lastly, I asked the participants if they feel as though utilizing sports and athletic motifs in dance limits their artistry. Lee stated it can offer more “inspiration” if you have a general understanding of the idea. Enzo believes it can stimulate creativity regardless if someone is familiar with the concept provided. Similarly, despite having less familiarity with sports, Leon and James agreed it could encourage creativity and exploration. James cautioned that it could potentially be restricting as it might place some people in a particular “dimension,” limiting their movement to that atmosphere.

Session 4

I began this workshop with a follow-the-leader warm-up similar to the one used the previous week. After completing the warm-up, I began reviewing the phrase material (Phrases A, B, and C) from the previous week, and asked participants to help teach it to those who were absent. For this week, I primarily used dance terminology to recall the phrase material, but still peppered in some of the sports/athletic images and descriptions. After reviewing the material, and completing a few run-throughs, I prompted a discussion on the similarities and crossovers between sports and dance to segue into the next activity. I asked them to describe any crossovers or similarities they find between dance and athletics. Enzo

stated he experiences a performance pressure due to the presence of an audience at both dance and sports events. He also acknowledged the similarity between practicing (sports) and rehearsing (dance). Lee expressed he finds opportunities for “self-exploration” in both sports and dance that allows him to find his understanding of particular movements. Lee equated the choreographer to being similar to a coach. Dee voiced he believes there is a disconnect between sports and dance because dance is more concerned with “aesthetics” while sports are more concerned with “efficiency.” Dee also noted he believes there’s likely a shared kinesthetic empathy as there are many similar movements. He also acknowledged the use of equipment and clothing, which I iterated would be equivalent to a dancer’s use of props and necessary attire. I then asked the dancers what kind of equipment and attire are utilized and expected for dance. The group responded by listing “shorts, sweatpants, and form fitting clothing.” Leon added “tights, if you’re in ballet.” Dee chimed in to also include “dance belts,” and jokingly asked if athletes still wear jockstraps. To which Enzo replied that he wears a “nut cup” (a hard plastic protective undergarment) when playing lacrosse.

I then explained that for this session we were going to look at some dance attire that is commonly used among male dancers. While most of the participants are dance majors, or have danced for a significant amount of time, I’ve become aware that many of them rarely utilize typical items such as dance belts and tights during class or performance. Therefore, I brought new dance belts and tights for each participant to try on and dance in. As I’m showing and naming these items,

Enzo inquires, “what’s a dance belt?” To which Dee replied, “It puts everything in its place. I have an easy explanation, 1 up and 2 down.”

I handed out the items based on size and asked the participants to go change into them. Enzo inquired if the dance belt goes on under the tights, to which Leon explained, “Yeah, this is actually like underwear.” Leon also illustrated the front and the back of the dance belt. Enzo then exclaimed, “Bryant, you are making me do things I’ve never experienced.” After they all donned their dance belts and tights, I offered to cut holes into the feet of the tights so they could be convertible and give dancer’s traction when moving. After emerging from the changing room I heard Enzo proclaim, “this may be the most uncomfortable thing I’ve ever worn!” Lee lightheartedly stated, “welcome to the dancer world.” Enzo continued voicing his discomfort stating, “This sucks! It really holds them.” He further explained that he enjoys the tights and is used to wearing them for his athletic pursuits, but does not care for the dance belt because it “rides into places” he doesn’t want it to. Leon, one of the more seasoned dancers of the group admitted that he’s never worn “actual” tights before. James explained that he started wearing tights when he began taking ballet, and later wore a dance belt after it was recommended. Lee stated he began wearing tights and dance belts when he started in the dance program at UO.

I discovered from the group that, with the exception of Dee who has danced professionally for many years, none of them have ever participated in a dance class that *required* them to wear dance belts or tights. Lee explained that he’s previously received suggestions from a professor in the program to wear a dance belt for

performances. When asked to describe that conversation he replied, “it wasn’t bad...just a suggestion.”

I explained to the group that I would like for them to run through Phrases A, B, and C while wearing the tights and dance belts. After a few runs, I asked the group what they are experiencing. Enzo immediately voiced, “it’s up my ass,” but later stated that he was “enjoying wearing this way too much!” He also stated that wearing the tights helped him feel “looser” and “warmer,” and is why he chooses to wear leggings when doing “squats.” Lee stated that after wearing the dance belt for a while it didn’t bother him any longer.

Curious about their daily attire choices, I asked them what they typically wear when taking dance classes. Most responded that they wear shorts or sweats, and sometimes compression shorts underneath.

We then moved on to another movement exploration. I informed the group they could remove their tights if they wished, but all opted to keep them on. They divided themselves into one duet (Leon and Lee) and one trio (Dee, James, and Enzo). I asked them to think about celebratory actions they can do with their partners. Specifically, I asked them to explore sports and non-sports related celebratory actions that involve physical contact to create a structured or improvised phrase. I reiterated that their interactions did not have to be solely inspired by sports/athletics, but to also consider other possibilities. The duet’s phrase consisted mostly of hand-to-hand and foot-to-foot connections, but also a “chest bump” and a lift. The trio appeared to reference “huddling” similar to a sports team, and utilized the “chest bump” action but didn’t actually make contact. Leon

described this activity as “making a handshake,” while Lee described it as his “inner child coming out.” James expressed that it was challenging for him to come up with ideas because he hasn’t participated in those kinds of “ceremonial” activities previously. Dee stated he hadn’t experienced those ceremonies either, so his explorations stemmed from what he’s witnessed on television.

Our last activity for this session was designed to further explore physical contact through a task that might elicit more physically aggressive or “rough” movement. I prompted the group by explaining that we are going to play a game. In the game, one person will be the “runner” and the other will be the “blocker.” Other synonymous descriptions offered were “intruder/defender,” “offense/defense,” and “Mario/Bowser.” The object of the “runner” is to get past or through the “blocker” and make it to the other side of the room. The blocker’s objective is to prevent the runner from succeeding by using their body and physical contact to stop them. I encouraged them to play with intensity, and to actually engage with one another as opposed to simply running around each other. This was a partnered activity. James, due to a previous injury, decided to sit out and observe. The pairings were Dee/Leon and Enzo/Lee. After an initial round of Dee and Enzo flying around their partners, I reiterated that they should purposefully engage with their “blockers.” Subsequent rounds were explored using lower intensity, slower tempo, and challenging the runner to travel exclusively on the floor (low level). Throughout this game, Enzo and Lee were extremely more aggressive than Dee and Leon. Enzo and Lee full-on tackled each other with abandon numerous times, moved in quick pace, and often finished each round with a fist bump or high five. Lee exclaimed, “I get an adrenaline

rush doing this!” He further explained that this activity incites a feeling of “competitiveness” in him. Enzo, speaking in a much deeper voice while flexing his muscles stated, “It’s sports...I was going for blood!” Leon described the experience as “fight or flight.”

Desiring a further shift in intensity and approach to the task, I challenged the dancers to find ways to travel across the floor with their partner using lower intensity and pressure; to explore subtlety and intricacy. I explained that their interactions could still utilize flight and falling. In response to this, Lee pulled Enzo into the middle of the room where the two of them engaged in a skillful and smooth contact improvisation session. Lifts and inversions were incorporated. Dee and Leon took an even softer, less physically demanding approach to their work. Reposes and weight sharing were used often. Lastly, I asked the dancers to change partners and engage in the same activity with their new partners. Leon immediately appeared submissive to Enzo, and their connection was much more disjointed and choppy than their previous pairings. However, Dee and Lee’s engagement was very similar in nature to Leon and Dee’s earlier exploration.

The discussion session for this workshop focused primarily on gaining insights into the dancers’ experiences in each of the movement activities explored, as well as to further understand their experiences wearing the tights and dance belts. I began by asking the participants how they felt about exploring the connections between sports and dance. Lee stated that this session increased his awareness about the similarities between the two. While Leon agreed he gained a similar knowledge as Lee, he explained that he still feels “very disconnected” when

connecting dance to sports. “The two don’t cross for me very much,” he stated. “It makes me more confused rather than [being] helpful. It is very interesting though because I find interest in seeing the correlations, but I don’t know if I can put it into my own movement experience.”

Further interested in understanding participants’ experience with the tights and dance belts, I asked them to describe their reactions to receiving and wearing them. All of the dancers were ecstatic about receiving new tights. Based on their reactions, I assumed many of them had never been gifted or provided proper dance attire from anyone. Leon said he was excited to finally have tights to wear for ballet, and described receiving them as being like “Christmas!” Similarly, Enzo stated he was excited to wear his new tights to lacrosse practice. He further explained that he makes a concerted effort to “look good” when he’s on the lacrosse field both during practice and games. However, when asked about preparing his attire for dance class he stated, “I don’t care what I look like when I’m dancing...for dance I’ll come in a dirty shirt and some sweatpants.” I asked him why there’s a difference in his attention to his attire between dance and sport, to which he replied, “Dress well, play well.” Lee chimed in stating, “Dress well, dance well.” Enzo rebutted, “Maybe, but I view dance as more of a comfort thing...I guess I take my sports really seriously and competitively, where dance is a hobby.”

Remembering my own personal experience donning my first dance belt, I was curious about participants’ experience wearing them. I asked the participants to describe their experience putting on the dance belts, and if they were knowledgeable of how to wear them. Leon described it as being an “uncomfortable”

experience, and Enzo stated he “hated it.” Besides Enzo, no one indicated that this was their first time wearing a dance belt; therefore, they all implied they were knowledgeable of how to wear them. Additionally, I asked the group what it would have been like if they received the tights and dance belts from a female instructor instead of me. Enzo stated that perhaps if he were younger it would have been an issue, but in his current age it wouldn’t be a problem. He also noted that he would likely not have expressed his discomfort with the dance belt as readily in front of a female instructor as he did with me. Lee stated he would have been “surprised” if a female instructor provided him with a dance belt.

I moved on to asked the participants to describe their experiences in the contact portion of the workshop. Specifically, I asked them to address the multiple variations of the “runner/blocker” game, as well as how altering the intensity of their explorations and switching partners impacted their experiences. Leon, Lee, and Enzo described it as being “fun” and all stated that it reminded them of previously playing sports. Leon described his experience working with Dee as “smooth like water going down a river over smooth rocks,” as compared to working with Enzo, which he described as being “like an ocean crashing into waves...heavy and harder.” Enzo expressed that partnering with Lee was “easy” due to their weekly interactions in their contact improvisation class; however, when partnering with Leon, Enzo stated he “didn’t know what to do” so he decided to “take control” of the partnership.

Curious if the gender of their partners impacted their interactions, I further probed the participants by inquiring if their believed experiences would have been

different had they danced with women, as opposed to only men. All of them stated that they would feel comfortable partnering with either men or women. Dee stated for him, interacting with men and women would be the same. Enzo, however, expressed he feels his partnering interactions are different with women as compared to men. He feels as though he has to be more “delicate” with his female partners, and can be “rougher” when partnering with males. Leon, stated that while he’s more experienced and comfortable partnering with women, he’s gradually getting more comfortable partnering with men.

Session 5

Wanting to provide a diverse and immersive experience for our final meeting, I designed a “sampler class” that spanned multiple different idioms for the final workshop. The class included the following idioms in the order they are listed: ballet, modern, jazz, hip-hop, and contact partnering. The idioms were evenly distributed across the two-hour session with approximately 20 minutes spent on each one. The workshop began with me providing tights and dance belts to those participants who were absent from last week’s session. I asked the group to wear their tights and dance belts to begin. Those individuals who had ballet shoes were asked to wear them for the ballet section. No shoes were worn for the modern or jazz sections. Sneakers/street shoes were worn for both the hip-hop and contact partnering sections.

For the ballet portion of the class I provided an abbreviated barre and two center exercises. While teaching this section of the class I personally experienced a

unique atmosphere in the room that was much different from teaching a mixed-gender ballet class. There was a sense of fraternity among the dancers and I noticed in myself that I greatly enjoyed the experience of being a “mentor” to other male dancers. Classical ballet music was used, and I provided tactile feedback for individual corrections.

Transitioning into the modern technique section of the class I informed the dancers they could change out of their tights and into pants or shorts, but to continue wearing the dance belt. All of them changed out of their tights. In this section of the class we utilized Bartenieff fundamentals such as naval radiation (core-distal), spinal articulation (head-tail), and homolateral (body half) movements. Additionally, we explored Laban ideas of body initiation and effort. Floor work and standing exercises, as well as traveling and jumping phrases were explored. The material covered in this section of class appeared to be better received and executed by the group as a whole, as compared to the ballet section. For this section of the class only recorded instrumental, mostly drumming, music was used.

After modern, we progressed into the jazz technique section of class. For this section, I provided only across the floor traveling phrases. We explored jazz walks, runs, and pivoting steps with varying rhythms and use of syncopation. While rhythmic patterns and weight shifting proved to be a bit problematic for the group as a whole, they showed great enthusiasm for this section of the class. Music for this section of class consisted of recorded pop, big band, and classic jazz songs.

After jazz, we moved into the hip-hop section of class. For this section of class emphasis was placed on setting choreography for the dancers to perform. All of the

participants were extremely excited to participate in this section of class, and many of them stated they were most excited for hip-hop. I incorporated several pelvic thrusts in the phrase, harkening back to our previous exploration of hip articulation during Session 2. I didn't experience any opposition to performing these hip actions. I knew that most of the participants who were present had significant backgrounds in hip-hop dance and would be able to execute the movement effectively. Music for this section of class consisted of popular hip-hop/pop songs.

The final section of class was contact partnering. Rather than using improvisational techniques, I presented preset material for the dancers to explore. The material emphasized close proximity. Connections including face-to-face, hands-to-face, and face-to-chest, as well as hugging and supporting one another in a hinge, required the dancers to engage in a duet that could be perceived as intimate in nature. Sports imagery/athletic motifs such as "high fives" were also included. While observing their execution of the material, I didn't notice any apparent discomfort or resistance to the movement. However, I did become aware of two characteristics that were fairly consistent in all three pairings. When in a close embrace and oriented face-to-face, dancers maintained distance between their pelvises/lower bodies. Secondly, dancers rarely engaged in eye contact with their partner throughout the performance of the phrase. For this section of class, no music or sound was utilized.

The discussion session for the final workshop focused on gaining information regarding dancers' experience in the sampler class, understanding their engagement with their respective programs, and receiving general feedback on their experience

during this phase of the study. In response to the sampler class, all of the participants stated they enjoyed the experience overall. Some of them stated they appreciated getting to try new idioms, while others enjoyed getting to engage in idioms they haven't been able to explore recently. Additionally, participants found some idioms more enjoyable than others. For example, Colton, Eli, Harrison, and Enzo preferred the hip-hop and jazz sections to the ballet and modern sections. Leon and James preferred the opposite. Harrison noted that he felt the class followed a progression of moving from more structured forms (ballet and modern) to less structured forms (jazz and hip-hop). Based on his response and further elaboration, I understood Harrison's statement to mean that the progression appeared to transition from dance forms that are more codified and traditionally expect exact replication, to dance forms that are less codified and encourage more individualization. Based on this observation, I asked participants if they feel/felt supported or unsupported by the scheduling of classes in their respective programs. James stated that due to conflicting class times, in order for him to be able to participate equally in ballet and modern he often had to take one idiom in a lower level. Lee expressed that he feels as though his department schedules ballet and modern classes at more suitable times for him to enroll than other idioms such as hip-hop and jazz. Enzo stated if more dance classes sufficed general university group satisfying requirements, he would feel more supported and likely enroll in more classes. Specifically regarding the structure of the sample class, it appeared to be the consensus of the group that they would have preferred modern before ballet.

Additionally, several of them noted they experienced more “energy” in the room when transitioning from modern to jazz.

As the conversation started focusing on the hip-hop section, Leon stated that he doesn’t feel as though he “looks good” when attempting to layer on performance qualities such as “sass” and “attitude.” He explained he prefers to initially focus solely on the movement as the layering of performance qualities makes it harder for him to execute the movement. Because of this, he expressed that he felt more comfortable in the ballet and modern sections of class. Lee told Leon that he thought he did a “really great” job picking up and performing the jazz and hip-hop choreographies. In response to this, I asked the group if they find receiving peer-to-peer feedback valuable in their dance training. Lee stated he greatly appreciates it because he is often over critical of himself. Others agreed they value hearing feedback from peers, and Harrison emphasized he likes joking about making mistakes so that he can “commiserate” with peers.

Enzo had to leave the discussion session early; however, I was able to catch up with him afterwards to continue interviewing him about his experience. Because he has the least amount of dance training, I was particularly interested in understanding his perspectives on Session 5 and the series as a whole. I inquired if he, being a relatively novice dancer, found any of the idioms particularly more inviting than others. He noted that hip-hop was more inviting for him because it’s “fun and more upbeat.” He further stated, “It’s hard to screw up hip-hop, it’s not really about where your body is positioned.” Enzo stated he found ballet to be least inviting based on its emphasis on “elegance, grace, and being limber.” In regards to

his experience doing contact improvisation and partnering, Enzo stated his comfort level with interacting with others has significantly increased from his first day in contact improvisation class. He stated he continuously reminded himself that he will be required to give and receive touch during class, and will need to embrace that requirement in order not to feel “weird” when dancing with others. He noted that once he got through his “mental block” he was able to have fun and enjoy it. He expressed that when trying to explain his experiences of the workshop and his contact improvisation class to his friends, he was met with confusion and many of his friends stated they could never do it. I inquired if he thought he could convince any of his friends or lacrosse teammates to enroll in a dance class. He felt it would be difficult to sell them on contact improvisation because “they are stuck in their masculine ideas of not wanting to be touched.” He stated he could likely convince some of them to take a hip-hop class.

I asked him how he feels supported or unsupported by the dance program at UO. He replied, “Well, having you as a teacher has been very supportive. I look forward to coming to class. I view you as more of a mentor I guess. It’s nice meeting a professor who if I come in can see that I’m having a down day and be like ‘need a hug?’ ‘What’s going on?’” Lastly, I asked if he had any final feedback on his experience participating in this study. He stated he valued exploring a variety of dance styles, and appreciated the incorporation of sports. He noted that participating required more time commitment than he originally anticipated, but stated he always had fun and looked forward to the next session.

Phase 2 – Post-Participation Exit Interviews

After the completion of the Experiential Movement Workshops & Discussion Sessions, each participant completed a post-participation exit interview. These interviews were designed to gain further understanding of participants' experiences during the Experiential Workshops & Discussion Sessions.

All 9 participants described their overall experience as positive. In fact, 3 participants described the experience as “fun,” and 6 participants noted their appreciation for the uniqueness and diversity of the workshop's curriculum and organization. Specifically, several participants stated they appreciated the variety of idioms that were explored throughout the process.

When asked what information they found most valuable during the weekly meetings and why, 5 participants noted that they greatly valued the opportunities to hear about the experiences, perspectives, and opinions of other male dancers. James stated that he enjoyed hearing fellow participants' “stories” about their own experiences as male dancer, and he believes that hearing them when he first started his dance training could have been particularly beneficial to him. Similarly, Dee, a veteran dancer and teacher who currently teaches various age groups and skill levels, stated that he appreciated hearing about the experiences and perspectives of younger male dancers. Similarly, Colton noted that hearing his fellow participants discuss their experiences as male dancers, and not being “judged,” caused him to believe that the “stigma” of men in dance has started to culturally dissipate, and that being a male dancer has become a “normal thing.”

Like Colton, I too was intrigued to discover that very few participants endured any bullying, harassment, or ridicule (i.e. judgment) from their peers or family regarding their dance ambitions and pursuits. Participants' experiences with bullying, harassment, and ridicule appeared to be minimal, and most participants described their peers, families, and environments as supportive. Comparatively, in a recent study conducted by Doug Risner (2014, 188) 93% of his study participants indicated they experienced "name calling and teasing," 68% experienced "verbal or physical harassment," 39% experienced "verbal threats or threatening behavior," and 11% experienced "physical harm or injury." Other empirical and qualitative studies have also noted this omnipresence of bullying and harassment of male dancers (Gard 2006 and Risner 2009). While participants were not asked these specific questions during their interviews, only a few of them mentioned receiving any kind of bullying, harassment, or ridicule. This causes me to wonder if generational and cultural trends have increased the acceptance of male dancers and/or male pursuits careers and hobbies not traditionally associated with their gender.

When asked which movement workshops they found most valuable, participants recalled various explorations from multiple different workshops. However, a few specific activities were identified as being particularly valuable for several participants. Three participants indicated they found the explorations involving touch to be valuable. Specifically, they noted the physical contact explorations from Workshop 4, and the partnering section of the sampler class from Workshop 5. Additionally, 2 participants expressed they found the

masculine/feminine explorations from Workshop 1 to be valuable as it allowed for and promoted movement investigations they've never experienced before.

Additionally, 3 other participants indicated that the autobiographical sketches and choreographic opportunities were valuable to them because those activities challenged them to create material and find inspiration through unique, and sometimes personal, ways.

Similarly, when asked which discussion sessions they found most valuable, participants' responses were various, yet they noted a few topics as being especially valuable. Three participants greatly valued discussing the relationships and correlations between dance and sports. Specifically, Harrison stated he enjoyed seeing his fellow participants utilize sport analogies to extract movement, especially after he learned about their previous experiences with athletics. Lee added, "I could see value in having more discussions on this [the relationship between dance and sports]." Additionally, 2 participants stated they enjoyed the conversations regarding the absence and potential incorporation of female participants or instructors. Colton stated, "I thought it was pretty interesting to hear some of the guys talking about how they would feel more comfortable if there were women in the room. Some said they would be more comfortable if it [the gender makeup of participants] was all women." He went on to state that both being the only male in a class and being in a room of only guys could both be potentially "intimidating." Other topics the participants deemed valuable to their experience in the study included hearing the experiences of non-dance majors; receiving feedback from

their peers during the masculine/feminine explorations of Workshop 1; and discussing their experiences with dance belts.

In response to being asked which movement workshops or discussion sessions resonated with them the most, participants' responses were primarily limited to two particular activities. Four participants selected the sampler class experience from Workshop 5 and 3 participants selected the autobiographical sketch experience from Workshop 2 as being the activities that resonated with them the most. When asked which activities or discussion sessions were least informative or valuable for them, only the sampler class and the dance belt experiences were listed. Therefore, while the sampler class was regarded as one of the experiences that resonated with many of them, it was also considered one of the least informative activities. Participants stated this was due to its similarity to their current daily experiences in dance. Likewise, dancers expressed that due to their previous experience with wearing tights and dance belts, the workshop regarding typical dance attire was less informative to them overall. However, all of them expressed that despite their familiarity with diverse dance idioms and dance belts, they were able to find some valuable information in each experience. While participants didn't find these two explorations especially informative, their responses and interactions during these activities provided me with deeper understandings of contemporary attitudes towards studying various idioms and wearing traditional dance attire among collegiate male dancers.

Regarding the relationships and camaraderie experienced between and among each other, participants described the group as welcoming, friendly, inviting,

and supportive. Individual participant responses varied in regards to the advancement of pre-existing relationships and establishing new relationships. Some participants described the relationships as “minimal,” while others stated they “made friends quickly” and got to know each other better. Enzo, the participant with the least amount of formal dance training, addressed the level of support and camaraderie he experienced by stating, “it was nice knowing that everyone was supporting what I was doing...I didn’t feel out of place.” Additionally, 2 participants expressed they experienced a level of “bonding” with other participants as the workshops progressed.

Based on their experiences in this study and as males who participate in collegiate dance programs, participants described their current thoughts concerning the status of collegiate male dancers. Participants’ responses were strikingly similar overall, but also included some individual differences. Eight out of nine of the participants indicated that they are aware of the disparity between the number of male and female dancers in the field, and they desired more male participation in dance. Dee called this disparity “problematic,” and believes it is still culturally considered “taboo” for men to dance. James stated he feels underrepresented as a male dancer, and that participating in all-male dance experiences causes him to realize how “uncommon” it is. Harrison referred to the disparity as a “minority experience,” and noted that being a male in dance often affords him more opportunities than his female counterparts. Additionally, 2 participants noted they still believe there is a “stigma” associated with men who dance, which often presumes male dancers’ sexuality and identifies them as “feminine.”

Summary of Phase 2

Participants' responses from both the intake and exit interviews, as well as their reactions and engagements in the workshop series of this phase, were beneficial in understanding which experiences this group of male dancers value the most and least in their collegiate dance careers. Based on their responses, participants appear very aware of the significant disparity between the number of males and females in collegiate dance. While participants did not appear particularly upset with being significantly outnumbered by female dancers, many of them suggested that they would value more opportunities to experience dance with other males. This group of dancers greatly appreciated the opportunities to hear about the experiences of other male dancers, and share their own experiences with other male dancers. Participants made it clear that they desire more opportunities to engage in dialogue with one another and would value it as a part of their collegiate experience. Additionally, it was suggested that speaking with males who are interested in dance at earlier stages in their engagement with dance could potentially encourage them to continue dancing, or pursue it recreationally, academically, or professionally. Participants also recognized the following three topics as being significant for them during this phase:

- Having the opportunity to engage in physical contact/touch with other men through dance
- Creating their own material through compositional and improvisational explorations
- Exploring unfamiliar and non-gendered ways of moving

Based on participants' positive responses to these particular concepts, I concluded that they would value having these experiences and opportunities interwoven into their collegiate dance experiences.

CHAPTER V

REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

The final phase (Phase 3) of the study was a rehearsal and performance experience crafted to deepen the inquiry into men's experience in collegiate dance by gaining understandings of participants' experience as student-performers and choreographic collaborators. Three participants from Phase 2 agreed to participate in the rehearsal and performance experience: Leon, Harrison, and Lee. Additionally, I included myself as a participant/performer for this phase of the study in order to have the unique opportunity to engage with both the participants and the study on multiple levels.

This phase of the study consisted of a 10-week rehearsal process that resulted in the creation of two new dance works, and culminated in concert dance performance that was open to the public. The two new works included a duet performed by Leon and myself, and a trio performed by Leon, Harrison, and Lee. Rehearsals were held twice weekly and were 2-hours in duration. The two new works were presented as a part of the University of Oregon Department of Dance's annual Winter Graduate Loft performance, which was held on March 17, 2017 in the Dougherty Dance Theatre located on the UO campus.

Both works were designed around the overarching concepts of *masculation* and *multiple masculinities*. For the purpose of this artistic exploration, I recognized masculation as the act of making something masculine or giving it male characteristics, and considered multiple masculinities as a concept that makes space for variances in masculinity and masculine performance. The duet was titled

“Masculation: 1,” and the trio “Masculation: 2.” Photographs from both of these works can be found in Appendix J (pg. 198).

Masculation: 1

After discovering which dancers were interested in and available to participate in this phase of the study, I immediately decided to create a duet with Leon. Having known Leon for several years as my student and fellow peer caused our friendship to blossom. Moreover, his eagerness to learn and explore through movement was palpable, and I knew that our friendship and familiarity with one another would allow for us to explore particular concepts that might be more challenging to explore using dancers with whom I was less familiar.

“Masculation: 1” was an attempt to explore interests and concepts that were uncovered throughout the multiple phases of this study. Male-to-male physical touch, proximity, intimacy, and relationship, as well as revealing and presenting the male body, were the primary themes for this work. These concepts appeared to be prevalent throughout the sources in the literature review, discussions and experiences had in the workshop series, and personal experiences I’ve encountered as a male dancer. Therefore, I was highly interested in investigating them throughout the creation and performance of this work.

An additional source of inspiration for this work was Brett and Kate McKay’s (2012) digital article titled “Bosom Buddies: A Photo History of Male Affection.” The article aimed to illustrate an “evolution in the way men relate to one another” by presenting an array of vintage photographs that demonstrated physical interaction

in various ways. The authors explained that the interactions seen throughout the images were typical for the time period in which they were taken, and are “not about *sexuality*, but *intimacy*” (McKay and McKay, 2012). I found these images to be striking, and wanted to use them as source material to create movement for this work. During rehearsal, Leon and I recreated the positioning and interactions seen in the photographs, which resulted in the creation of a series of vignettes that eventually served as the opening motif of the work. Because several of the poses were performed in seated or reclined positions, we incorporated a long and narrow locker-room bench into the piece. The bench provided us with the ability to interact with one another in unique ways, to more accurately recreate the interactions in the photographs, and simultaneously served as a symbol of connection between athletics and dance.

At the beginning of the creative process, I knew I wanted to challenge the traditional expectations of the male dancer in a concert dance setting by asking the audience to observe male dancers in various, and potentially new, interactions through dance. Prior to engaging in movement, I presented and explained my ideas to Leon in order to gain his consent in exploring such potentially sensitive topics. He stated that he was excited and felt comfortable exploring these ideas with me. Throughout the rehearsal process Leon and I explored various ways to interact through touch and proximity. I was particularly interested in exploring touch that is not typically perceived as socially normal or expected for two men, nor commonly seen in a concert dance setting. For example, face-to-face, face-to-stomach, hands-to-face, and skin-to-skin engagements were commonly used throughout the work.

Additionally, close proximity was explored through various embraces and partnering work.

At its core, the intention of the work was to explore male-to-male intimacy and relationship. I never explicitly defined the relationship between Leon and I during the rehearsal process in order to encourage the unfiltered emergence of meaning for both us as performers, and hopefully for the audience too. By providing a limited amount of information to Leon about the nature of our relationship was to further encourage ambiguity in the performance and perception of our duet, and to hopefully allow the audience to critically analyze and interpret the work as they interacted with it. The only suggestion I provided to Leon was that I hoped to portray a relationship that demonstrated love, support for one another, and comfort with intimacy. In this context, for me intimacy was void of any sexual connection, and was preeminently about closeness and affection. It was my intention to create and present a work that simply challenged audiences' expectations for male performers and their willingness to perceive intimate, proximal, and physical interactions between men in concert dance.

Through the creative process for this work, I found that I have an extreme level of comfort with exploring movement through close proximity and touch with another male dancer. In fact, I greatly enjoyed the variety of physical interactions, which demanded athleticism, strength, and vulnerability. I found myself significantly more comfortable exploring such intimate interactions with another male than I usually feel with a female performer. Feelings of support, similarity, familiarity, and understanding were prevalent for me during our interactions. I

perceived there to be a mutual understanding and sensitivity to the how movement was felt and experienced due to the physical similarities of our bodies and our lived experiences as men. While it wasn't a conscious thought at the time, perhaps our experiences as two gay men greatly assisted in the level of comfort we both sensed while interacting so intimately. I found great value in exploring these intimate interactions with another male dancer, especially in preparation for performance, as they are typically rare in Western social contexts. The mutual excitement Leon and I had for sharing a work that would challenge the audience to experience concert dance in a way not done so at our institution in the three years we've been students was exhilarating. Our experiences as gay men on a campus that expects and promotes diversity, inclusion, and liberalism in artistic expression in theory, but often lacks in practical application, perhaps further fueled our desire to share our interactions with an audience and present counterculture ideas.

The duet was accompanied by two separate music tracks with a short gap of silence between them. Both tracks were primarily piano based, with the first track also including some electronic sounds. Costuming for this work was identical. We both wore khaki shorts and a stretchy grey tank top. The stretchiness of the tank top was utilized in the choreography a few times as we tugged on it, pulled it up to reveal our bodies, and manipulated our hands underneath it.

Masculation: 2

With emphasis on exploring concepts of camaraderie; athleticism and the incorporation of athletic motifs in dance; self-touch; and male-to-male partnering,

“Masculation: 2” was also an attempt to investigate and portray masculinity from multiple perspectives. Similar to “Masculation: 1,” this work was created through a highly collaborative rehearsal process. Several of the movement motifs created and utilized in the work stemmed from the explorations conducted in the Experiential Movement Workshops. Specifically, the explorations regarding sports and athletic images heavily influenced the material included in this work, as well as the physical contact activities. Additionally, during rehearsals I presented pre-constructed phrase work to the dancers, and encouraged them to interpret the movement as it made sense for them. As the dancers worked through the movement, I suggested ideas for editing and designing. Improvisation and contact improvisation sessions were also utilized during rehearsals to source material. Most of the material used in the final version of the work was their interpretation of phrase work I had given, emerged from their improvisational explorations, or was inspired by their natural impulses and inclinations.

During the creative process for this work I served primarily as the rehearsal facilitator and choreographer. I participated in performing and exploring the work only when a dancer was absent, or if I needed to physicalize or experience an interaction in order to further explain the desired outcome.

As described by the dancers, this work was physically demanding. It asked dancers to transition into and out of the floor with great use of the strengths of the upper and lower body, perform various quick and sustained movements, participate in duet and trio partnering, and utilize sports/athletic inspired actions. This work was less intimate in nature than “Masculation: 1,” yet still included a couple of

interactions that required the dancers to engage in close proximity and physical touch. There are two specific interactions of male-to-male intimacy in this work that were most striking to me. One interaction involved two dancers engaging in an extended embrace (hug) while the other performer observed them. The other interaction required two of the dancers to suspend themselves over the third dancer in a “push-up” position on the floor, and then slowly lower themselves on top of him and roll off to lie beside him. Additionally, I found the opening gesture of each dancer slowly sliding their hand up from their thigh, across their pelvis and torso, and ultimately up to their face to be equally as intimate and striking as the partnered intimacy.

Through this work I strived to present male dancers as multifaceted performing artists. Physical prowess, agility, and strength were intertwined with displays of vulnerability, affection, and subtlety to illustrate males’ ability and willingness to execute a diverse repertoire of movement ideas and gestures. Additionally, through this performance I wanted to ask the audience to revere the performers for both their physical abilities and emotional embodiments.

The trio was accompanied by one musical track. The track was primarily piano based, with indiscernible whispering voices peppered throughout. All three dancers had the same costume for this work. Costumes consisted of a beige long-sleeve shirt and long black pants tucked into black socks.

Post-Performance Participant Interviews and Researcher Reflections

After completing the rehearsal process and performing in Winter Graduate Loft, each performer completed a post-performance interview. This interview process was designed to gain more information about participants' experiences as performers and collaborators in this phase of the study. While all participants were asked the same questions, the interviews were designed to allow for tangential dialoguing and questioning. Participant responses are outlined below. Additionally, as a participant-performer and observer during this phase of study, I found it necessary, and highly informative, to reflect on my personal experience too. Therefore, my observations of and reflections on the performance experience are interwoven below.

I began by asking the participants about why they agreed to participate in the performance phase of the study, and if their reasons for participating changed during the process. Both Leon and Lee explained that they wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in an exclusively male cast and performance experience. They both stated they were also particularly interested in forming relationships with, and learning more about, the other participants through this experience. Leon further noted he hoped to learn more about himself as a dancer, and further explore his comfort with engaging in male-to-male touch. "Going into this [rehearsal and performance experience] I was so much more comfortable with the whole idea of being close to someone and touching someone else," he explained. He credited his experience in the Experiential Movement Workshops with increasing his comfort with and willingness to accept and engage in male-to-male

touch. Reflecting back on the workshop series, Leon's progression of giving and receiving touch to and from other men was quite apparent. On a different note, Harrison expressed that agreed to participate because he felt "loyal to the work and invested in the investigation as an extenuation of the workshops." His commitment to the project appeared to deepen over time. As the work progressed, I perceived in him enhanced levels of ownership and responsibility during the creation of the work. Overtime, he became more willing to contribute to the group's exploration. While none of the participants stated that their initial reasons for agreeing to participate shifted during the process, they all stated that their initial reasons were deepened and solidified.

When asked what aspect of this experience they found most memorable, and to describe why it was so significant to them, all three participants had similar answers. Both Harrison and Leon emphasized the collaborative, non-authoritarian nature of the creative and rehearsal process. They described this approach as being highly inclusive, and stated that it offered them a deeper level of ownership over the work. All three participants stated that they sensed a shared experience and commitment to the work among the group. Also, they all expressed their affinity and excitement for working with this particular group of men. Harrison and Lee both stated that the performance itself was most memorable for them. They described it as being "powerful" and "emotional," respectively. Harrison explained that when performing in an intentionally focused, male-only piece, he feels as though "it's as real as it gets for us [male dancers]." He further noted that over half of the male dance major/minor population of the UO Department of Dance was involved in

creating this work. As there are currently only 7 declared male dance majors/minors in the program, and 4 of us were involved in this phase of the study, Harrison's statement is accurate. Therefore, this rehearsal experience offered the unique and rare opportunity for male dance majors/minors to engage in creating and performing work together. All three participants stated that they experienced a much deeper and meaningful level of camaraderie with each other during the rehearsal and performance experience than they experienced in the workshop series, or in their interactions outside of the study. I feel as though the collaborative nature of the creative process greatly impacted this shared sense of camaraderie, as it encouraged ownership and responsibility in each participant.

Participants were also asked to describe their experience being observed by an audience while performing these work(s), and if they experienced any internal dialogue during the performance. Leon and Lee both stated that they try not to focus on the audience as it distracts them or makes them nervous during the performance. Lee stated that the content of the performance reminded him of "vulnerability," and he felt the choreography took "risks" by challenging the movement expectations of a particular gender. Leon and Harrison both remembered being curious, and nervous, about how particular audience members might perceive the work and what their responses to it might be. Leon was nervous that his mom – who was planning to attend the performance but couldn't make it – would interrogate him about why he was dancing so intimately with and closely to another male dancer. Similarly, Harrison was curious how his housemates and friends, many of whom haven't seen him perform in a concert previously, would receive his performance. Despite their

concerns regarding audiences' potential reactions, none of the participants ever mentioned backing out of the performance or asked that any of the choreography be modified. All three performers were committed to the work.

Furthermore, all three participants stated they felt a close connection to their fellow performers while on stage. Harrison recalled having an "unspoken" connection to Leon and Lee in "Masculation: 2," and noted that he felt a greater sense of connection to the other two dancers after completing performance. I too had this similar experience after performing the duet with Leon. Performing the work offered a sense validation and accomplishment, and it felt nice to have shared that with someone else. Lee emphasized that he enjoyed the opportunities in the choreography that allowed him to witness the other two dancers partnering and dancing while he simultaneously shared the stage with them. Similarly, I felt very connected to Leon when performing the duet with him. I was completely focused on him throughout the work, and don't recall engaging with, or being aware of, the audience. During the performance I don't recall being concerned with the audiences' perception of the work. This was a unique sensation for me as I'm often very aware of the audience's existence and engagement with me as a performer. However, during this work I invested my awareness exclusively on sharing this experience with Leon. I believe our private rehearsal process likely contributed to this experience. The creative process (rehearsals) for this work was never shared live with any publics prior to the concert, which was a direct result of scheduling conflicts rather than a concerted action. While it was video recorded and shared with peers and faculty for feedback, the only live, public performance was during

the concert. I feel as though sharing this experience with Leon solidified our friendship, and helped me better understand and appreciate him as a dancer and artist.

I asked the participants to describe the feedback they received from audience members after the performance, and how that feedback resonated with and impacted them. All three participants stated they received overwhelmingly positive and thoughtful feedback. Collectively, the participants stated that the audience “loved it,” were “excited and moved,” and found the performance to be “gorgeous and beautiful.” Leon stated he believes the works asked audience members to “really think about and feel something.” According to Lee, one audience member stated, “the choreographer has a unique way of diving into social norms and making it visual.” Moreover, all three participants stated that they heard about or saw audience members crying in response to both “Masculation: 1” and “Masculation: 2.” I too had audience members approach me after the performance who cried while offering feedback about the works. Harrison stated that one of his housemates, an individual who he described as being “far removed” from the dance scene, cried in response to the duet with Leon and me. Hearing and witnessing this response to the work was significantly impactful. I very much appreciated that the works I created and presented were able to effectively impact the audience and evoke such emotional responses. However, during the creative process I didn’t consciously emphasize or pursue emotional intent through the choreography. Therefore, hearing about and seeing these responses from audience members causes me to wonder if the rarity of seeing men intimately interacting on the concert stage was

enough to evoked such emotional responses, or if the choreographic design heightened an innately emotional quality of the works.

However, everyone did not perceive the duet similarly. Both during the creative process and after the performance, I received feedback from two older male dance artists. One individual described the work as “sexual,” referred to particular gestures as “phallic”; and even cautioned that it could be perceived as “pornographic.” The other male, after seeing the performance, stated that at times it was difficult for him to watch the performance because seeing two men interact in such intimate ways in a concert dance performance was foreign to him, and would never have been seen in a public performance when he was performing professionally. However, it was never my intention to knowingly or explicitly explore any sexual concepts. Initially, I was very perplexed, and slightly irritated, by this feedback because it was so far removed from the intention behind the work. I immediately asked the individuals if the same feedback would have been provided if the duet had consisted of a male and a female, or two females. The first male responded saying that he would have concerns regardless of the performers genders, while the other stated that it would be very common and less challenging to watch had the performers been male and female or two females. After reflecting back on the work, it was apparent to me how the work could be perceived in such a sexual manner. While it wasn’t the particular characteristic of the performance I was hoping to challenge the audience with, I find myself content with having viewers challenged by two males dancing in such a way that may elucidate ideas of sexual interactions on the concert dance stage.

Harrison and Lee both acknowledged their appreciation for hearing the emotional and positive feedback from audience members. Harrison was especially excited to receive the positive and supportive responses from his male housemates. "The pieces did something for them," he said. He explained that seeing and hearing their excitement for the works and his performance was "cool and very reaffirming...especially with the pushback you sometimes get from being a guy in dance." Lee stated that hearing such positive remarks regarding his dancing was not something he was used to. "There are a lot of times when I question if dancing is the right path I want to take, but moments like these [receiving positive feedback] remind me that it's all worth it...and makes me want to work harder." Moreover, Lee stated that he received hugs and great praises from department faculty members and graduate students who were in the audience, which caused him to feel as though he's "making progress." Similarly, Leon stated that participating in this performance has heightened his want and need to be dancing.

Lastly, when asked if they feel as though having an all-male rehearsal and performance experience is crucial or necessary for males to experience in their collegiate careers, all three participants positively affirmed. Harrison stated he personally believes it's a valuable and often rare experience. Leon stated it definitely should be included because he feels as though it has helped him become more comfortable dancing, and with being close (emotionally and physically) to other men. He stated, "Without this experience I would probably go into more dance experiences not being comfortable with touch or interacting with other males." Similarly, Lee also recognized the uniqueness of getting to participate in a male-only

dance experience, and feels it would be nice to experience “at least once in your career.” He further expressed he enjoyed “stepping away” from the typical, and expected, male/female interactions in order to explore engagements that challenged both him and the audience.

Summary of Phase 3

Throughout the process of creating both of these works, I found the dancers to be highly engaged and willing to physically and theoretically explore each idea I presented. The entire rehearsal experience felt supportive and highly collaborative. Moreover, being able to witness dancers’ growth and willingness to explore new, and potentially sensitive subject matter, was a highly rewarding experience. Also, being able to provide these dancers with the opportunity to have such a unique experience, and learning that they valued it, was equally rewarding.

Based on participants’ responses during the exit interviews, it was readily apparent that all three of them greatly enjoyed the opportunity to work with other males in a rehearsal and performance experience. I find it significant that participants were highly willing to embrace and dive into such sensitive and complex topics during rehearsals and the performance. Throughout the rehearsal process, participants appeared to particularly enjoy movement explorations that involved touch and partnering. In the duet, Leon and I both thoroughly enjoyed and valued exploring and challenging our comfort with engaging in intense, intimate and proximal interactions. When I introduced this concept into the rehearsals for “Masculation: 2,” it was met with the same level of willingness and enjoyment. Based

on the participants' reactions to these specific explorations, these male dancers did not appear to be deterred by engaging in physical proximity, touch, and intimacy with other men. Moreover, all participants expressed great interest in and excitement for performing material we believed would challenge the audience to see male dancers in new, likely uncommon, ways. Dancers described, and I experienced, a wonderful sense of camaraderie while working on and presenting these works. I witnessed dancers take risks in ways I hadn't seen them do previously, and I perceived that each of them gained a deeper understanding of themselves as dance artists. Overall, the creative process for both of these works was relaxed, collaborative, and enjoyable. I felt as though we were all able to relate to one another on much deeper levels due to our shared sex/gender and experiences as male dancers; I don't typically experience this in mixed-gender classes.

Audience's response to the work appeared to be highly impactful on participants' experiences as performers. All of them noted that hearing and seeing such positive feedback from friends, family, instructors, and strangers, encouraged them to continue dancing and reified their decision to study and pursue dance. Moreover, the audience's response offered me a sense of validation in my abilities as a performer, choreographer, and instructor. I feel as though I was successful in my attempt to utilize the lived experiences of male dancers to create a visually informative, and evocative work that impacted the audience. Through this experience I feel as though I was able to become a louder, more informed voice for male dancers and was able to share information with the public through this performance.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Even though this thesis study only officially began two years ago, I feel as though my lived experience as a male dancer has privileged me with over 25 years of data collection and experiential learning that has greatly supported, informed, and inspired this research. Nevertheless, this study has significantly expanded my awareness and understanding of the current climate of male participation in dance, with particular attention to the experiences of collegiate male dancers.

Evaluation of Study

Critically reflecting back on the design and process of this study, I find myself extremely proud and appreciative of the experiences created and shared with participants across all three phases. I feel as though each phase of study was positive, informative, and aided in achieving the goals of this study. However, I recognize that this study had limitations. These limitations encourage and inform my suggestions for future research. Below I discuss the successes and limitations I experienced throughout this study.

Prior to each phase of study I was particularly concerned about the number of participants I would be able to recruit. Fortunately, at each phase of study I was pleasantly surprised by the depth and quality of the participant pools I was able to acquire given the environment from which I was recruiting for this study.

Additionally, the amount of support, dedication, and enthusiasm displayed by the panelists in Phase 1 and participants in Phases 2 and 3, promoted a sense of

community and shared interest among the diverse group of people seeking to improve male dancers' collegiate experience.

The panel conducted at the American College Dance Association (ACDA) conference during Phase 1 of this study was comprised of a group of panelists with relatively diverse and extensive backgrounds in dance performance and education. However, panelists were exclusively from institutions located in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. Panelists represented academic institutions in Oregon, Wyoming, and Utah. Four of the faculty-panelists were at 4-year state universities, and 1 was at a 2-year community college. The only student-panelist was studying at a 4-year institution in Wyoming. While I appreciate the variety of voices that served on the panel, I feel as though more student and female perspectives, as well as representatives from other states, would have significantly enhanced the results of the panel. Additionally, I am curious if altering the format of the panel would have enhanced significant results through more discussions between panelists and audience members. Primarily, only the panelists and I engaged in discussion while the audience observed. While I did make time at the end of the panel for audience questions, I wonder if the panel would have garnered data from more viewpoints had it been framed as a community discussion rather than a panel discussion. Revisit Appendix C (pg. 188) for the results from the evaluation surveys panelists completed after participating.

In regards to Phase 2, I was initially worried about the number of participants I would be able to recruit for the workshop series, as I knew that the community from which I was recruiting didn't have an abundance of collegiate male

dancers. Fortunately, I was able to recruit a total of 9 participants from both Lane Community College and the University of Oregon. Despite representing only two academic institutions, the participant pool was comprised of male dancers who engaged with their respective programs in various and unique ways. Furthermore, participants represented various backgrounds and experiences as male dancers, as well as a variety of entryways into dance. While 5 study participants were originally from Oregon, the remaining 4 participants represented the US states of Texas, Minnesota, and California. Additionally, my personal experience as a collegiate dancer represented the state of Alabama. Therefore, when including myself, 50% of participants represented experiences prior to college from a variety of geographic locations, while the other 50% represented experiences (collegiate and before) exclusively to Oregon.

Scheduling for and participant attendance during the Experiential Movement Workshops and Discussion Sessions were the most challenging limitations during this study. Only 2 out of the 9 participants attended every session. One participant only attended one session. Fortunately, I didn't lose any participants during this phase of study. At the time, I was aware that I was working with a group of male dancers who were in high demand by their dance programs and employers. If I had been able to monetarily compensate study participants, or possibly conduct this phase during the summer months, perhaps attendance would have been increased.

Unfortunately for Phase 3 of the study, I didn't obtain as many participants as I had hoped. Prior to realizing my participant pool, I had visualized the creation of 5-7 new works that would occupy 30-45 minutes of a concert. However, due to

recruiting only 3 participants for this phase of the study, it was necessary to limit the number of works attempted in order to ensure their quality and offer meaningful experiences without overburdening participants with an extensive repertoire of works. Therefore, while I didn't get to explore all of the movement concepts and theories I uncovered during the research process leading to the creation of my review of related work, I did get to physically explore the concepts that prominently emerged in Phases 1 and 2. Regardless, the resulting works and creative processes were deep and meaningful for participants and myself; were successful in eliciting valuable audience responses; and exemplified the body of work we had explored in Phase 2 and the rehearsal process for Phase 3.

Due to the sizes of the participant pools in Phases 2 and 3, I would caution readers not to make generalizations about all collegiate male dancers based on this study's sampling. Nevertheless, I do feel as though the participants in Phases 2 and 3 of this study were highly representative of the kind of male dancer I desired to learn more about, as they were a diverse group with a range of experiences prior to and now during their collegiate careers. Moreover, the group consisted of undergraduate and graduate students; had an age range of 19-39; represented diverse training backgrounds and performance experiences; and studied 5 different academic majors.

This research has contributed to the extremely limited number of existing studies that focus on male dancers in general, and has given particular attention to the collegiate male dancer. It is my hope that this study leads to future research into the male dancer and his experiences as a collegiate dancer.

What I Learned About Myself

Due to my direct relationship with this research topic, this study has been highly reflectively informative. As a male dancer researching men in dance, I found it challenging to recognize and understand, from an external perspective, the significance of some of the emergent concepts and phenomena involved and experienced during this study. However, through facilitating and participating in each phase of this study, I was able to learn a lot about myself as a dance artist and educator. Specifically, this study has caused me to further understand the following:

- How my gender has influenced, and continues to influence, my role as a male dancer in the field,
- How and why I relate to and interact with other male dancers as I do,
- The impact my teaching and performing can have on current and future male dancers, and
- My responsibilities as an educator and researcher, specifically as they relate to supporting and propelling current and future male participation in dance.

Hearing the journeys, struggles, and considerations of the participants in this study further solidified my own dedication to dance, and provided me a new sense of comfort in knowing that others who have endured similar experiences as male dancers have been successful in their pursuits. Additionally, my involvement in this research study has inspired me to want to conduct future iterations of this research, and to continue immersing myself in the relevant research of other scholars.

Summary Commonalities

Phases 2 and 3, the keystones to this study, provided substantial information regarding the collegiate male dancer. The intake interviews of Phase 2 were highly informative, as they provided significant insights into the lives and experiences of the research participants. Moreover, these interviews were very influential on the design and trajectory of this study. Understanding the questions, concerns, struggles, and experiences of these young men guided my curricular decisions, shined light on new areas for consideration, and inspired the works created in Phase 3.

Through these two phases of study participants and I identified and explored theoretical and practical considerations and concerns discovered and outlined in my review of related work, as well as personal inquiries and hypotheses that emerged from personal experience and contemporaneous discussions regarding male participation in dance and ideas about masculinity. Specifically, during Phase 2, the following principal concepts were investigated:

- Male-to-male observation and analysis,
- Ideas of and comfort performing masculine and feminine movement,
- Male dancers' reactions to the application of existing pedagogical suggestions,
- Male-to-male proximity and touch,
- Relationship between sports/athletics and dance,
- Utilization of athletic/sports imagery and language in dance pedagogy,
- Familiarity and comfort wearing typical male dance attire,

- Male dancers' experiences participating a collegiate dance program, and
- Impact of and male dancers' reaction to various dance styles.

All of these concepts were further explored, embodied, and understood through rehearsal and performance during Phase 3.

Through these two phases of study I gained a deeper, more profound understanding of how these particular collegiate male dancers have constructed and continue to shape their identities as male dancers; think about and experience dance as males; interact with their respective programs; and respond to particular pedagogical approaches and expectations.

Twelve common themes emerged from participants' experiences, responses, and feedback during Phases 2 and 3. These 12 themes were prevalent across the participant pool and evident throughout Phases 2 and 3. Therefore, they appear to be pertinent and integral to understanding collegiate male dancers' experiences and perceptions of male participation in dance. They can be situated in three overarching categories:

- Perception Themes,
- Workshop/Experiential/Interaction Themes, and
- Participant Background Themes.

Perception Themes

1. Participants were/are astutely aware of the disparity between the number of males and females in dance. This can cause them to question the validity of

- their participation in dance, experience isolation, and impact the way they interact and relate with other male dancers.
2. Participants desire an increase in the number of males participating in collegiate dance programs and in general.
 3. Participants want society, including family and peers, to realize and respect dance as a viable academic and/or professional pursuit for males.

Workshop/Experiential/Interaction Themes

4. Participants greatly appreciated and value the opportunity to share their personal experiences and journeys with other male dancers, as well as hearing about their peers' experiences.
5. Participants appreciated and valued interacting with other male dancers in class, rehearsal, and performance.
6. Participants were willing to engage in, and often enjoyed, physical touch and proximity with other males through partnering, movement exploration, and feedback.
7. Participants valued utilizing their personal experiences to source material for compositional/choreographic explorations.
8. Participants valued exploring movement that both adhered to and defied the masculine/feminine binary.
9. Drawing parallels between sports/athletics and utilizing sport/athletic language did not appear to significantly hinder participants' artistry or ability to execute movement. Additionally, use of these did not appear to

alienate those participants who were inexperienced in or unfamiliar with athletics.

Participant Background Themes

10. A majority of participants indicated that their parents were, and remain, highly supportive of their dancing, which appears to positively impact their ability, desire, and willingness to study dance in higher education.
11. Participants only minimally endured, if at all, teasing, bullying or harassment due to their dance pursuits prior to and during college.
12. Four out of nine participants' engagement with dance began through hip-hop, and six participants acknowledged a socially and culturally perceived/expected association between male participation in dance and hip-hop.

Throughout the entire study, three particular concepts emerged as paramount. These three concepts were Connecting Dance and Sports/Athletics, Male-to-Male Proximity and Touch, and Family and Peer Support. Due to their prevalent manifestations throughout this study and their perceived and realized potency, I find it necessary to further expand my discussion on these particular concepts.

Connecting Dance and Sports/Athletics

Eight out of the nine participants in this study expressed that they had participated in sports/athletics prior to or during their dance experience.

Participants were familiar with and participated in a wide variety of sports/athletics. Participation in martial arts appeared to be particularly prevalent among study participants; one male faculty-panelist from Phase 1 also noted his involvement in martial arts. Thusly, due to participants' experience in sports/athletics, the use of sports and athletic imagery, motifs, and language in Phases 2 and 3 didn't appear markedly problematic for this particular group of dancers. Even though 2 participants expressed that they sometimes found the incorporation of athletic imagery and language confusing, they were still able to effectively produce the desired movement by conceptualizing the ideas, emulating others, receiving explanations from peers, or with the assistance of supplemental language/cueing from me. Additionally, none of the participants in this study indicated they felt "alienated" or artistically hindered by the incorporation of these concepts, as cautioned by Doug Risner (2009a).

Risner's considerations regarding the linking of sports/athletics to dance causes me to think about pedestrian movement and its incorporation into movement explorations. Would Risner argue that task-based and pedestrian imagery and motifs are also hindering to artistry and alienating to those who do not regularly perform those tasks or actions? I think there are several choreographers (historic and current) with established, notable aesthetics founded on the use of these principals who might disagree. Despite my questioning of Risner's cautions regarding these types of imageries and drawing parallels between sports and dance in professional training, I appreciate and value his considerations of how particular language and ideas may impact male dancers. Moreover, I agree with Risner that the

immediate and established reliance on and suggestion for the use of these tactics based solely on gender expectations – a suggestion I’ve repeatedly heard from dance instructors and presented by previous scholars – is too absolute and presumptuous.

Proximity and Touch

Through this study I gained an understanding that this group of male dancers were not only willing to engage in male-to-male proximity and touch, but also thoroughly enjoyed it. One-third of participants in Phase 2 indicated that the partnering explorations were most valuable to them. Based on my personal experiences, as well as the information I learned from participants in Phases 2 and 3, the use of male-to-male proximity and touch is often minimal or non-existent within technique classes, choreographic processes, and performances. I assume that particular societal ideas and cultural beliefs that dictate and influence the ways in which males interact with other males in general, fuel this.

Leon, who participated in both Phases 2 and 3, initially stated that he was significantly less comfortable interacting with males than females, and revealed his reservations about engaging in physical touch with other men during his interviews and discussions. However, after participating in Phases 2 and 3, Leon credited his extensive exposure to and practicing of male-to-male proximity and touch in both phases with causing him to feel more comfortable with those types of interactions. Additionally, he stated that he now feels more prepared for future movement experiences that may require him to engage in physical touch with other men.

Family and Peer Support

The majority of participants in this study indicated that their parents, families, and peers have always been, or progressively became, supportive of their dancing pursuits. I too come from a family that was and is very supportive of my dancing. I found this emergent commonality particularly fascinating as it undeniably challenged what I expected to uncover about familial and peer support through this study. It appears that there is a direct correlation between parental, familial, and peer support and male's engagement with dance, and their decision and willingness to pursue it in higher education. Furthermore, it is reasonable to posit that those individuals whose families and peers disdain male dance, might find it more challenging to pursue dance in college, and in general, than those whose families and peer appreciate and value dance as a valid male pursuit. So, how do we reach these particular males?

Summary Recommendations

Based on the information gleaned from this study, and my first-hand experience as a male dancer, I offer the following suggestions to dance educators, artists, and scholars to help cultivate, foster, and support new and existing populations of collegiate male dancers.

1. Actively provide male dancers with opportunities to interact and dialogue with other male dancers in the program. Establish a regular men's dance

- forum that encourages males to gather to share, celebrate, and commiserate their experiences as male dancers.
2. Establish a mentoring program that charges seasoned male dancers with supporting younger or less-experienced male dancers as they matriculate through and engage with the dance program. Existing student organizations are ideal catalysts for such a program.
 3. Regularly offer male-only classes, rehearsals, and performance opportunities as men value the camaraderie and sense of belonging that are associated with these experiences.
 4. Provide male dancers with access to and information on proper dance attire for men. Inquire of companies and organizations to donate or sponsor new attire and equipment for male dancers. In addition, it's crucial to provide males with information on purchasing and donning these items. Familiarize yourself, and direct dancers to, resources such as *Doctor Dancebelts' Guide* (found at www.dancebelt.info) in order to assist them with acquiring and utilizing male dance attire.
 5. Offer dance sampler classes for males who are interested in participating; however, I recommend starting with an idiom other than ballet.
 6. Encourage male dancers to explore movement that defies traditional understandings and expectations of masculinity.
 7. Actively incorporate, rather than shying away from, male-to-male intimacy, proximity, and touch into technique classes, rehearsals, and performances.

8. Survey your own expectations regarding male dancers, and embolden yourself with challenging those expectations.
9. Survey your own pedagogical approaches in search of potential hidden/embedded gender assumptions or expectations.
10. Incorporate gender discussions into both theoretical and praxis courses.
11. Utilize “pre-rehearsal” experiences that allow male dancers to explore with one another prior to beginning the rehearsal process for new works.
12. Attend to male dancers who are enrolled in general education satisfying courses such as introductory dance studies course as they may be interested in matriculating into the dance program.
13. Survey the reputation of the program across campus and within recruitment communities with particular concern for understanding how current and prospective students perceive the program’s friendliness and inclusivity.
14. Attend local, regional, and national conferences, especially those focused on male participation in dance or dance and gender, in order to gather and share information with others.
15. Establish networks of dancers, artists, and scholars interested in generating and sharing information regarding the male dancer. Or take advantage of existing networks such as the online Men in Dance forum available to members of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO).
16. Stay abreast of existing and new resources regarding male participation in dance. For example, Doug Risner and Julie Kerr-Berry’s (2016) new volume *Sexuality, Gender and Identity: Critical Issues in Dance Education*, offers

contemporaneous perspectives on gender and dance across public schools, private sector studios, and college and universities.

Recommendations for Future Study

Through the process of sourcing materials for my review of related work and conducting the presentations in Phase 1 of this study, I realized that there exists a small, yet active and enthusiastic community of other dance educators, artists, scholars, and practitioners who are passionate about promoting and supporting male participation in dance. They appear excited about the future of men in dance and acknowledge that more research aimed at understanding male dancers' experiences is crucial to advancing and enhancing male participation in dance. I agree with these individuals, who have become voices for the male dancer, and advise that further research pertaining to and involving male dancers is of utmost importance to the prosperity of our field.

Furthermore, additional research specifically concerning the collegiate male dancer is necessary in order to complete our understanding of male dancers' comprehensive experience in this field. As collegiate male dance majors often pursue professional dance performance, teaching, or related careers, they frequently end up in positions that could be highly impactful on future generations of young male dancers. Moreover, non-major males, and those majors/minors who pursue other professional careers, will hopefully be future dance patrons and supportive parents.

It is imperative that we better understand male dancers' lived experiences prior to, during, and after college, as well as the social and cultural implications that

impact their decision to study dance in higher education. Therefore, based on the findings of this study, I contend that additional research into the following topics is vital to understanding and/or enhancing the collegiate male dancer's experience.

Connecting/Paralleling Dance to Sports/Athletics

The impact of this enduring pedagogical suggestion remains debated and unanswered. Therefore, more research investigating the relationship between males' experience with athletic pursuits and their perception of and participation in dance is necessary in order to understand the positive and negative effects of utilizing sports/athletic imagery and language in dance discourses as a tool for extracting certain movement qualities and encouraging male participation in dance. Furthermore, due to the significant number of participants in this study who noted their participation in martial arts, more research into the relationship and correlations between martial arts and dance could potentially highlight a prosperous avenue for recruiting male dancers.

Male-to-Male Physical Touch and Proximity

It is necessary that we understand how male-to-male physical interactions impact male dancers' experience in, and decision to engage with, dance. What are the social and cultural factors that influence the use or absence of male-to-male touch, intimacy, and proximity in dance? Do these factors remain consistent, or are they constantly fluctuating? How can we challenge social and cultural expectations of male-to-male interactions through dance? These are questions that necessitate

further research. Additionally, comprehending how these ideas can be incorporated into males' dancing, especially at earlier ages/stages in their careers, is important to positively promote engagement in and perception of these interactions.

Parental, Familial, and Peer Support

Based on the findings in this study, and those posited by other scholars on the same topic, familial and peer support appear to be impactful on males' engagement with dance. Most of the research on this topic focuses on adolescent dancers; therefore, I propose that additional research aimed at understanding the impact familial and peer support has on collegiate male dancers is necessary. Information from such studies may inform dance programs on how to interact with prospective students' families, and understand how to better support male students.

Male Dance and Hip-Hop

Based on the participants' interviews, as well as personal experiences, there appears to be an omnipresent association between male participation in dance and hip-hop dance. It appears common for men to begin their engagement with dance through hip-hop. As one studio owner once told me, "hip-hop dance is like the gateway drug for boys!" Why do people find it more acceptable for male dancers to do hip-hop? Similarly, why do people frequently presume that male dancers are hip-hop dancers? Moreover, in my experience as a collegiate educator, hip-hop classes tend to be more populated with males than other idioms. Further research into these particular phenomena, as well as other dance forms that appear

contemporaneously popular among male dancers, could be beneficial in understanding how and why males choose to engage with dance, especially in collegiate programs.

Other Areas of Study

In addition to the four concepts extensively discussed above, I also suggest further research into the following:

1. Understanding how the gender of an instructor impacts male dancers,
2. Understanding how the gender of other students/performers impacts male dancers,
3. Relationship between male dancers' sexuality and their experience in dance,
4. How to attract, cultivate, and support male dance populations on college campuses, and
5. Geographic and demographic impacts on males' engagement with dance.

Personal Ambitions for Future Study

Going forward, I intend to revisit and enhance the design of this study in order to conduct it in a national format. Similar to this study, the national study would also be aimed at better understanding the lived experiences of collegiate male dancers, and the factors that influence their participation in collegiate dance. A national sampling could have significant research benefits including, but not limited to:

1. acquiring diverse perspectives across various demographics;

2. providing insightful information regarding geographic and regional differences;
3. illuminating model programs that have established successful male participation and programs;
4. and illustrating effective recruitment and pedagogic strategies.

Additionally, during the summer of 2017 I will attend a special topics conference hosted by the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) titled, *Men in Dance: Bridging the Gap*. The conference, which will be held at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV, proclaims to be “the first symposium focusing on dance as a lifelong vocation for both boys and men” (“Men in Dance: Bridging the Gap” n.d.). At this conference, I will present an experiential movement class, and serve on a panel that will address strategies for increasing male presence and participation in dance across all sectors of dance education. I hope that this conference will lead to the development of related conferences by NDEO and other organizations.

Lastly, as a dance educator, artist, and choreographer I plan to continue teaching and working with male dancers across various sectors of the field. Working with male dancers of various ages consistently reinvigorates my ambition to support and enhance male dance populations in my community and beyond. As a scholar, I plan to stay current with and contribute to research regarding and pertaining to male dancers.

APPENDIX A

ACDA PANEL DESCRIPTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

An Inquiry Into Men's Experiences in Collegiate Dance – Panel Description

Students and educators of all genders are invited to participate in a facilitated discussion forum to dialogue about males' participation and experiences in collegiate dance programs. Perspectives from a variety of viewpoints, experiences, and roles are highly welcomed and encouraged. It is the goal of the facilitator to utilize the feedback, insights, and information gleaned from this discussion to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of male dancers who participate in any capacity (i.e. majors, minors, non-majors, community members, etc.) in a collegiate dance program, and to assist him in designing, implementing, and analyzing his research.

Panel Research Questions / Areas of Inquiry:

Despite being geared for use on specific groups, the following research questions were asked of both student and faculty panelists to gain diverse perspectives on each topic.

Questions Geared Towards Faculty Members' Perspectives:

- What means, if any, are utilized to specifically recruit male dancers at your institution? (Marketing materials, resources, videos, photos, etc.)
- Does your program offer courses specifically tailored to male dancers? If so, what are those courses, and why are they incorporated into your curriculum? Are they required courses for Majors/Minors?
- Please speak about the relationships male dancers have with one another in your program. What about the relationships between female and male dancers? Are these relationships known to the faculty or assumed/perceived?
- What mentorship opportunities are available for students with faculty? (e.g. courses and extracurricular opportunities)
- Are male students (non-majors/minors) encouraged / allowed to participate in your dance classes, performances, workshops, etc.? If so, how are they recruited, and received?
- Does your department offer outreach classes / programs to other

departments/programs on campus such as Athletics, Theatre, PE, Recreation, Human Performance/Kinesiology, etc.? If so, what are they, and how are they attended and received?

- Are males and females offered similar/equitable facilities (restrooms, changing rooms, etc.)?
- What is the attire policy for male dancers? Are males and females held to similar expectations regarding attire? Does your program offer support for males who may be unfamiliar with necessary/required dance attire? Also, do males receive training/information regarding dancewear and stage makeup?
- Speak about casting requirements/protocols that happen at your institution. Are males and females allowed to be cast in the same number of works? Are efforts made to create all male, all female, or mixed casts?
- Speak about scholarship opportunities and work-study positions for males. Are they different or the same for females?
- What do you wish someone would ask you about your collegiate dance experience, or what would you have liked to have known preceding/during your college endeavors?

Questions Geared Towards Students' Perspectives:

- What sparked your interest in dance? Why do you participate in your institution's dance program?
- How long have you been studying dance?
- As a male dancer, in what ways do you feel most and least supported in your program?
- Describe your institution's restroom/changing facilities and your level of comfort when using them.
- Speak to the culture of dance and how it is perceived/received at your institution.
- What do your friends and/or out of department classmates say about your participation in dance?
- Are gender differences/discrepancies in your program addressed or spoken about by the faculty or students? If so, how are they discussed and how often?

APPENDIX B

2016 ACDA PANEL DISCUSSION FINDINGS

Through facilitating the panel discussion at the 2016 Northwest Regional Conference of the American College Dance Association, I was able to gain some insights into the current climate of male participation in dance at universities and colleges other than my own. This six-person panel consisted of 5 current university/college faculty members (4 males, and 1 female), and 1 male undergraduate dance major student.

Overall the information gleaned from this panel was not necessarily profound; however, panelists' responses, and the topics they brought up, reified the results, opinions, and expectations of existing research and societal beliefs. Regarding familial support and initiation into the field, panelists produced various responses. Two male faculty members stated that their families didn't fully support their dancing. One noted that his parents didn't "trust" dance as a "viable career," and therefore recommended that he have another skill to fall back on. Among the panelists, gymnastics, martial arts, and musical theatre were all indicated as gateways into their experiences with dance. Another male faculty member stated he recognized that male dance students at his institution tend to begin their dance studies much later in life than female dance students.

In regards to wearing traditional dance attire, specifically dance belts and tights, it quickly became apparent that faculty minimally, if at all, discuss or share information about proper dance attire with students. The male student panelist indicated that his female instructor suggested tights and dance belts to him, but he relied on his male dance peers for further support and guidance. One of the male faculty members stated that when he was a college student he didn't receive any guidance from faculty about attire, but had to rely on peers. Two male faculty members recalled their own "fears" and "discomforts" with wearing tights and dance belts; one stated he found it humiliating.

When discussing what encourages or dissuades students from participating in their respective programs, panelists offered a variety of responses. One particular

topic of conversation that quickly incited opinionated discussion was the idea that ballet proficiency requirements might be hindering participation of male dancers in collegiate dance programs. As one panelist stated, “Spanish majors are not required to speak Spanish before entering the Spanish major, why should dancers be required to be proficient in Ballet before majoring?” This same faculty member stated that at his institution he sees males gain interest in studying dance through activities such as breakdancing and sports. The female faculty member, who teaches at a community college, stated that she believes males are more willing to participate in dance programs at community colleges because less pressure is placed on majoring in dance. Two male faculty members also discussed the concept and potential benefits of offering male-only class experiences.

When asked what theoretical or practical components they feel are missing from research regarding the male dancers, two faculty members stated that more outreach and education should be targeted to K-12 demographics. One faculty member recommended that discussions regarding gender should be incorporated into technique classes. Another faculty member cautioned that research into the male dancer should be careful not to “over fetishize or privilege” the male dancer. The student panelist noted that because there were no other males at his studio during his adolescence, when he attended college he didn’t know how to interact with other male dancers – implying that this should be considered in future research.

Lastly, participants were asked, “What is one thing you wish someone would have asked you during your undergraduate experience?” The faculty response I found most compelling was, “I wish someone would have asked me anything. What was I thinking/considering. I find it imperative as educator to know what my students are thinking.” The student panelist responded to the prompt with, “What is my generation going to do/for dance?”

APPENDIX C

ACDA PRE-PANEL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Panelist: _____
2. Home Institution: _____
3. Number of years teaching in higher education? _____
4. How many years have you trained & worked as a dance artist? _____
5. Dance Degree Granting Program? yes / no Types of Degrees: _____
6. Number of students (majors/minors/grads) in program? _____
7. Estimated total number of students participating in program? (including non-majors)

8. Total number of male majors/minors/grad students? _____
9. Estimated total number of males participating in program? _____
10. Number of faculty in program? Male _____ Female _____

Responses

n = 4 respondents (faculty)

Panelist (State)	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	
								M	F
Faculty (Oregon)	15	24	BA, BS MS, MA, MFA	70	2,000	5	200	5	8
Faculty (Utah)	27	37	BFA, MFA	215	415	28	Not Known	9	8
Faculty (Wyoming)	3	12	AA	7	50	1	10	0	1
Faculty (Wyoming)	10	18	BFA, BA	50	100	4	15	1	3
<i>Medians and Averages of Responses</i>									
<i>Median</i>	<i>18.5</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>257.5</i>	<i>4.5</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>5.5</i>
<i>Averages</i>	<i>13.75</i>	<i>22.75</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>85.5</i>	<i>641.25</i>	<i>9.5</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>3.75</i>	<i>5</i>

APPENDIX D

ACDA POST-PANEL PARTICIPANT SURVEY AND RESPONSES

**While all participants were asked to complete the survey, only 4 out of 6 were returned. n=4 respondents (3 faculty, 1 student)*

1. Please rate the panel from 1 to 5 (with 5 being best) in terms of:
 - a. Overall Usefulness 3.75
 - b. Information Covered 4.75
 - c. Relevance to Conference 4.50
 - d. Necessity 4.50
 - e. Benefit to the Field 4.50
 - f. Questions Posed 4.25
 - g. Answers Given 4.25
 - h. Quality of the Panelists 4.50
 - i. Quality of the Researcher 4.75
 - j. Diversity of Perspectives 3.75
 - k. Duration of Panel 4.75

2. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being least likely and 5 being most likely), how likely are you to:
 - a. Continue discussions on this topic? 4.75
 - b. Encourage, start, or continue discussions on this topic at your institution? 4.25
 - c. Continue communication about this topic with other panelists? 3.00
 - d. Continue communication about this topic with the researcher? 3.50
 - e. Participate in future research regarding this topic with the researcher? 3.50

3. Please describe your experience as a participant in this panel.
 - *“Panel had positive affect on the audience” and “received positive feedback on panel during the conference” (student)*

 - *“Well curated in terms of questions and panelists. The facilitator did a great job covering pertinent information. As the singular woman on the panel, it was interesting to be a voice of many within this conversation of gender in dance.” (faculty)*

 - *“Great experience. This was a lot to cover in such a brief time.” (faculty)*

- *“Enjoyable and though provoking. I connected some dots that I hadn’t before.” (faculty)*
4. As a participant in this panel, what information did you find most valuable?
- *“I appreciated hearing each person’s experience of how they came to dance and struggled with things such as wearing tights for the first time. Also, the discussions on ballet and rethinking academic ideas to better fit men and their interests were valuable.” (student)*
 - *“The range of perspectives in age group and background; having a woman’s perspective.” (faculty)*
 - *“Colleagues perspectives and questions from the audience” (faculty)*
 - *“Questions from audience.” (faculty)*
5. As a participant in this panel, what information did you find least valuable?
- *“I found it heavily focused on community college experiences and wished as much on 4-year experiences.” (student)*
 - *“I don’t think anything lacked value.” (faculty)*
 - *“Nothing. It was great.” (faculty)*
 - *“None.”(faculty)*
6. Based on your experience in this panel and your experience as a male (and/or working with males) in collegiate dance, what is your current thoughts regarding the status of men in collegiate dance?
- *“I think men will always have a presence in collegiate dance, but the presence could always be stronger. How can we actively recruit men to come to dance, and how can we get more men involved in any stage of collegiate dance?” (student)*
 - *“I simply wish we had more high-quality men of good talent and character to reflect reality in the work we create.” (faculty)*
 - *“I feel there are too few men dancing in collegiate dance programs. This creates a variety of conditions that influence the cultural climate in*

collegiate dance programs and the contribution these programs are making to the professional field.” (faculty)

- *“I believe that the presence of men in is healthy, yet complex. I believe that finding positive inroads to the dance field for men is crucial for the health of the form, while balancing the leadership roles, and funding roles between genders to ensure equality and diversity in the field.” (faculty)*

7. After participating in this panel, do you have any thoughts, opinions, or concerns for the researcher as he continues his investigation of this topic?

- *“I’m curious if the study will focus on men in his department, the region, nationally, or a mix of all. Also, how many interviews will be included?” (student)*
- *“I encourage the researcher to consider ‘men in dance’ as an issue that all genders should care about. How does information about the male-identified experience reach those who really need it? How do we disseminate research, as well as write it, in a way that is digestible by those who really need it?” (faculty)*
- *“I think this topic is not just about men, but more about diversity. Masculinity and femininity were not the major topics discussed. What stood out to me was that the feeling of alienation that men experience when entering college dance (i.e. not knowing what to wear, not having role models or a community, needing support connecting with the culture) are common to students who enter the college dance settings from backgrounds other than ballet or competition dance studios.” (faculty)*

8. Please use this space to provide any additional feedback you may have; comments or questions you’d like to add to the subject matter or information you were not able to discuss during the panel; or to expand upon your responses to any of the previous questions.

- *“Relationships to fathers might be an aspect of this topic that we could have discussed if we had time. I think a key here for further research is the millennial-aged males. Gender is different across generations.” (faculty)*
- *“I thought the panel was an excellent addition to the conference, and would hope that it continues.” (faculty)*

APPENDIX E

PHASE 2 – VERBAL AND EMAIL RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Verbal Recruitment Script:

Due to your personal experience with dance and your participation as a student in a higher education program, I am requesting your participation in my MFA Thesis study, titled *An Inquiry Into Men's Experiences in Collegiate Dance*. Specifically, you are being invited to participate in Phase 2 of this research in which a series of Exploratory Movement Labs & Discussion Sessions will be conducted in order to gain insights into men's experiences in collegiate dance programs. Participation in this phase of the study will ask that you attend as many meetings as possible. Meetings will occur over a 4-8 week period during Fall term 2016 at The University of Oregon. You will be asked to participate in an audio/video-recorded intake interview, maintain a journal during the study, and complete a post-participation survey. Also, you will be asked to sign a consent form in compliance with the University of Oregon's Institutional Review Board that outlines the responsibilities of both you and me, as the researcher, prior to participating.

Email Recruitment Template:

Due to your personal experience with dance, and your participation as a student in a higher education program, I am requesting your participation in my MFA Thesis study, titled *An Inquiry Into Men's Experiences in Collegiate Dance*. Specifically, you are being invited to participate in Phase 2 of this research in which a series of Exploratory Movement Laboratories and Discussion Sessions will be conducted in order to gain insights into men's experiences in college dance programs. This phase of study will occur during Fall 2016 at The University of Oregon. You will be asked to sign a consent form in compliance with the University of Oregon's Institutional Review Board that outlines the responsibilities of both you and me, as the researcher, prior to participating.

By consenting to participate in this phase of the study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Complete an audio/video recorded individual intake interview with the investigator prior to commencement of the labs & sessions.
- Attend labs & sessions as frequently as possible, with a required minimum participation of at least one (1) lab & session.
- Arrive to the labs & sessions prepared to physically participate through movement; work collaboratively with other participants sometimes using close proximity and touch; reflect on and share experiences in a group setting; and respond to questions and prompts presented by the researcher.
- Provide truthful information relevant to the research topic.
- Be audio and video recorded during the all labs & sessions. Audio/video files will be kept indefinitely so that the researcher may reference this data for the research purposes described above.
- Having information you share attributed to you through the use of a pseudonym in any publication that may result from this phase of research.
- Start and maintain a personal journal for the duration of your participation in this phase of study. This journal will be submitted to the investigator or analysis.
- Complete an audio/video recorded exit interview regarding your experience in this phase of study.

Agreement to be contacted by the researcher or a request for more information about your participation does not obligate you to participate in this research. If you would like additional information about this study, including the detailed consent form, please contact Bryant Henderson at 541-346-4096 or bhenders@uoregon.edu.

APPENDIX F

PHASE 2 – RECRUITMENT POSTER

Male Participants Needed For MFA Research Study



Study aims to gain insights into the experiences of males who participate in collegiate dance programs. If you are currently enrolled as a student at The University of Oregon or Lane Community College AND have participated in either institution's dance programs, you may be eligible to participate in this study.

Study will be conducted during Fall 2016 and Winter 2017. Participation may occur during one or both terms.

This thesis study is being conducted by 3rd-year GTF and Dance MFA candidate, Bryant Henderson, in accordance with The University of Oregon's Research Compliance Services



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON

School of Music
and Dance

For questions or more information
please contact Bryant Henderson.
bhenderson@uoregon.edu or 256-404-3679

APPENDIX G

PHASE 2 - INTAKE INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Name: _____ Age: _____
Telephone #: _____ E-mail Address: _____
Circle One: University of Oregon / Lane Comm. College Year in School: _____
Degree Pursuing: _____ Major(s): _____ Minor: _____

Experience Questions

- How many total years of dance training do you have?
- How many total years of dance performance experience do you have?
- Please elaborate on your dance experience. Include participation and performance in professional, recreational, educational and social dance experiences.
- What dance courses you have enrolled in at your institution, and why you chose to enroll in those particular classes? If possible, include the number of terms studied and duration of your participation.
- Why did you agree to participate in this study? What expectations do you have?
- What are your current thoughts/opinions regarding male participation in dance?
- Please provide a brief personal history / autobiography.
- What/who sparked your interest in dance?
- Family and peers' thoughts and opinions towards men (you) in dance?
- Impact or awareness of dance in social media, pop culture, and media (television, radio, newsprint, etc.) on your (or men's) dance endeavors?
- Societal expectations of men. Society's opinions, assumptions, reactions to men in dance.
- The dance culture of your institution.
- Relationships among/between male dancers at your institution? In general?

APPENDIX H

PHASE 2 - POST-PARTICIPATION EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, SURVEY, AND SURVEY RESULTS

1. Please describe your experience as a participant in this study.
2. As a participant in this study, what information did you find most valuable? Why?
3. As a participant in this study, what information did you find least valuable? Why?
4. Which Movement Labs did you find most valuable? Why?
5. Which Movement Labs did you find least valuable? Why?
6. Which Discussion Sessions did you find most valuable? Why?
7. Which Discussion Sessions did you find least valuable? Why?
8. Which Movement Labs and/or Discussion Sessions resonated with you the most? Why?
9. As a participant in this study, please elaborate on the relationship/experiences you had with other study participants?
10. Based on your experience in this study, and your experience as a male in collegiate dance, what are your current thoughts regarding the status of men in collegiate dance?
11. After participating in this study, do you have any thoughts, opinions, or concerns for the researcher as he continues his investigation of this topic?
12. Is there any additional information you'd like to share that you weren't able to or asked about during the Movement Labs/Discussion Sessions?
13. If you were asked to pitch this research to an outsider, how would you summarize your experience? What would be most important to tell them?
14. Please use this space to provide any additional feedback you may have; comments or questions you'd like to add to the subject matter or information you were not able to discuss during the study; or to expand upon your responses to any of the previous questions.

Phase 2
Post-Participation Survey Questions and Results

n=9 respondents

15. Please rate this phase of the study from 1 to 5 (with 5 being best) in terms of:

a. Overall Usefulness & Quality	4.89
b. Quality of Information Covered	4.67
c. Relevance to You	4.45
d. Necessity to Field of Dance	4.78
e. Perceived Benefit to the Field of Dance	4.56
f. Quality of the Movement Labs	4.67
g. Quality of Discussions & Topics	4.78
h. Quality of the Researcher	4.78
i. Diversity of Perspectives	4.22
j. Duration of Study	4.11

16. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being least likely and 5 being most likely), how likely are you to:

a. Continue discussions on this topic?	4.22
b. Encourage, start, or continue discussions on this topic at your institution?	4.00
c. Continue communication about this topic with other participants?	3.67
d. Continue communication about this topic with the researcher?	4.22
e. Participate in future research regarding this topic with the researcher?	4.00
f. Participate in a future dance course?	4.45
g. Participate in a dance performance?	4.56
h. Encourage other males to participate in dance?	5.00
i. Encourage others to participate in subsequent phases of this study?	4.78

APPENDIX I

PHASE 3 - POST-PARTICIPATION EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did you agree to participate in this performance opportunity? Has your reason for participating changed during this process?
2. What is your greatest memory from this experience? Why was this so significant for you?
3. Discuss your sense of camaraderie with fellow dancers? How did it change throughout this process?
4. Speak about your experience as a dancer/collaborator during this choreographic and performance process.
5. What was it like to be observed by an audience? Did you have any internal dialogue during the performance, and if so what was it?
6. What was it like for you to share the stage with other male dancers during the performance?
7. What feedback did you receive from audience members about your performance? How did their feedback resonate with you?
8. Do you think you will perform in future dance performances? Why?
9. Do you feel as though having an all-male rehearsal or performance experience is crucial or necessary for males to experience in their collegiate careers? Why?

APPENDIX J

PHASE 3 – PERFORMANCE PHOTOGRAPHS



“Masculation: 1” photo by Emma Frank



“Masculation: 1” photo by Emma Frank



“Masculation: 1” photo by Emma Frank



“Masculation: 2” photo by Emma Frank



"Masculation: 2" photo by Emma Frank



"Masculation: 2" photo by Emma Frank

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