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# Exploring Dance Teachers' Perceptions: Video As A Teaching Tool

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EXPLORING DANCE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS: VIDEO AS A  
TEACHING TOOL

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this to my grandmother Patsy Lee Rogers. Without her, our family traditions in the dance field would have never been possible.

EXPLORING DANCE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS: VIDEO AS A  
TEACHING TOOL

by

DARALYN MARIE SCURLOCK, BPA

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## **Abstract**

The process in which dance instructors evaluate dance students' technical skills has been dependent on spontaneity; it is time sensitive and almost synchronous. However, video introduces an asynchronous evaluating component. Video recording can be utilized in the dance profession not only to improve a dancer's overall performance, but as an injury prevention tool. Therefore video permits deeper reflection.

This is a preliminary study designed to open the door for future studies in the dance field. In order to gain the in depth knowledge required for this thesis, an instrumental case-study design was utilized based primarily on the analyses of broad, qualitative emergent frames of discourse. The study includes interviews with dance instructors with various level of teaching experience. The data collected was analyzed using a constant comparative method (CCM). The purpose of this case is to gain an understanding of how adopting video analysis as a tool in dance pedagogy and integrating its use into dance technique lessons could provide the instructor with an effective visual means for improving a dancer's set of skills.



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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The process in which dance instructors evaluate dance students' technical skills has been dependent on spontaneity; it is time sensitive and almost synchronous. However, video technology introduces an asynchronous evaluating component. Therefore video permits deeper reflection. Unfortunately, video technology in the dance field is sparse in its availability of scholarly research demonstrating its benefits. These benefits include, among other things, providing an effective visual means for dance teachers to help in preventing injury and to assist in improving their student's skills. This preliminary study is primarily designed to open the door for future studies in the dance field.

Historically, evaluations of dance movement have been limited to the moment immediately following the performance of a given movement. Instructors often have to make a correction on the spot with very little time to gather their thoughts. They may forget about a valuable comment that could have been useful to their student, and they may miss another critical error during the time they are attempting to correct the last. It is incredibly difficult for a dance instructor to catch every mistake in a performance, to evaluate the performance in real time, and to use that performance to improve the dancer. But emerging technology has allowed instructors to revisit entire performances at their leisure. Upon viewing a video recorded performance, a dance instructor can select the particular viewing mode, which include but may not be limited to: slow motion, frame by frame, scene selection, pausing and fast forwarding, among other things. By using the above-referenced features a dance instructor may be able to thoroughly examine a video recording of a given performance. This can be done within the

instructors' choice of the timeframe they need to properly evaluate the movement before them. Video technology permits for deeper reflection of a dance performance. This technology allows an instructor the opportunity to not only examine every aspect of the performance, but also to record comments and never miss a step.

Over the years, dance competitions have also undergone many changes that are connected to the progress of technology. Video recording software, for example, has influenced how we as dance instructors can watch and evaluate dance. Dance competitions have presented technology that has given dance instructors the opportunity to use video as a highly beneficial teaching tool. To what extent and in which ways the available video recording technology tools are currently being used has yet to be fully identified. As the technology is more fully explored, additional uses continue to emerge.

## **1.1 Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of dance instructors about using video analysis as a teaching tool and the extent of their awareness of using such technology in the classroom. These perceptions influence how dance teachers may see this technology being used in the future to recognize potential technical flaws that could lead to dance injuries. The mastering in the use of this technology may not only facilitate the improvement of dancer's overall performance, but could also be used as an injury prevention tool in a highly demanding physical activity such as dance.

Many different types of theatre dance are thought to be among the more aesthetically pleasing performances to watch, and among the most athletically challenging activities to perform. This is due to the physical and anatomical limits into which dancers are pushed (Peer & Dubois, 2004). The complicated nature of theatre dance styles such as, ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical,

acrobatics, modern and hip-hop, require sophisticated evaluation in order to achieve accurate technique. In recent times, the techniques implemented in these types of dance styles have become highly developed and systematized. Examining the details of each particular movement can be simplified with the aid of video analysis. When a dance instructor is watching a performance during the actual time of occurrence, it is necessary for the performance to be analyzed with immediacy. Video, on the other hand, affords an instructor the opportunity for asynchronous analysis and evaluation. When a dance instructor is able to watch a video recording without fixed time intervals they are able to detect certain aspects of a performance that they may not have noticed during real time. They can pause each frame to analyze the correct alignment of a dancer and perhaps become aware of incorrect transitions that could lead to injuries. As a result dance and technology can merge to shift and improve the education of dance in general.

The high level of human activities in dance is not that different compared to other competitive athletic activities. It presents risk factors that may cause musculoskeletal injuries. For instance, ballet can be considered one of the most demanding activities, both mentally and physically (Shah, 2008). Often times, these demands lead to many injuries that are particularly related to dance (Peer & Dubois, 2004). The majority of studies on dance related injuries have been performed on professional female dancers eighteen years of age and older. However, there is a substantial amount of younger female dancers who participate at local privately owned dance studios in their respective communities. These dance students are considered young recreational dancers (Steinberg et al., 2010), who simply dance for fun, and not as a profession. As a result of the popularity of dance among young women, their risk of dance related injuries is significantly increased (Steinberg et al., 2012). Dance related injuries, coupled with a lack of

proper rehabilitation following such injuries, could have a significant impact on a young dancer's future quality of life (Malkogeorgos, Mavrovouniotis, Zaggelidis & Ciucurel, 2011). With the complexity of dance performance, it is imperative that injury prevention methods be introduced early enough into these young dancers' routine to prevent future catastrophic, possible career-ending injuries. Video technology can be utilized to identify and try to minimize the source of these injuries.

My research grew out of a combination of my experiences as a dancer and as a dance instructor, witnessing injuries in young dancers and my studies of various literatures on dance related injuries. I am motivated from this research to try and develop helpful tools on dance related injuries. In order to devise a way to help dance instructors prevent dance related injuries, we first need to understand what dance instructors are currently doing in their instruction.

I have chosen to explore the pedagogy of dance instructors through their perceptions of available video analysis technology, because these perceptions may indicate how soon and how fully teachers will be willing to implement these new ideas. The underlying hypothesis guiding this research is that eliciting and analyzing instructors' perceptions on the use of technology to review the student's performance, may improve their ability to identify and prevent technique issues. This could be developed by introducing various programs at dance competitions, and/or developing software that could assist the instructors in reaching those goals. The research addressed the following questions:

1. How are video critiques being used by dance instructors? When they are being used? Are they being used effectively for improvement and correction of physical movement and technique?



2. How do video critiques benefit the students while increasing the instructors' efficiency?

Ultimately, the goal of the study is to provide base line data on dance instructors' skills, dispositions, and understandings at a time when the field is changing rapidly due to the availability of new technology such as video analysis.

In particular, this study examines the willingness and the ability of master and novice teachers to study and analyze video of their dance students' performances and the benefits that come from it. The analysis was based both on (a) a teachers individual pedagogical strengths and (b) the familiarity with and ability to use the technology and software. The study focused on (1) the teachers' experiential factors and personal pedagogical strengths which includes their ability to: visually recognize and understand proper movement and general dance technique, and to constructively translate and accurately communicate verbally what they are seeing; and, (2) the teachers' ability to proficiently operate the technology and available software.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Current dance research covers a variety of aspects. Researchers are looking at dance history, philosophical issues, assessment and evaluation issues, among other things. However, although these studies regarding dance history are relevant to the field, there is still a gap in the literature concerning the history of dance competitions in North America. A review of the history of dance competitions will facilitate the understanding of where the idea of video analysis has originated.

### **2.1 History of American Dance Competitions and Conventions**

American dance conventions were once the only opportunities for continuing dance education. These conventions date back to the 1880's (Gold, 2005). The American National Association Masters of Dancing (ANAMD) was established in 1884 in Boston, MA. The association was intended to provide a national dance convention to assist teachers in guiding their students (Gold, 2005). In 1894 another organization called the International Masters of Dancing (IMD) gathered for its first convention in St. Louis, MO. After multiple attempts to bring the two organizations together, finally in 1926 a joint convention was held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. On August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1926 the combined groups became Dancing Masters of America and the association changed its name in 1948 to what is currently known as Dance Masters of America popularly referred to as DMA (DMA, 2010).

In 1964, DMA hosted their first Performing Arts Competition in Washington, D.C. at the National Convention (DMA, 2010). Dance Educators of America (est. 1932) embarked on a non-profit organization with a similar design (Dance Educators of America, [DEA], 2013). Other

organizations started as touring dance conventions, some of which eventually went on to produce dance competitions in an effort to provide an extra educational opportunity to dance students. Additional pioneers to the dance competition industry such as, Showstopper American Dance Championships, Dance America, and American Dance Awards, emerged in the late 1970's early 1980's (Stone, A. & Stone, N., Personal Communication, August 3, 2013). There was only a handful of dance competitions during the 70's/80's compared to approximately 200 dance competition and/or convention companies in North America today. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a huge explosion of new dance competition companies across the United States and Canada. These competitions play a significant role in the evolution and development of the dance industry.

### **2.1.1 Evolution of Critiques and Scoring Technologies**

Dance competitions offer more than just score sheets and awards. They supply feedback from judges who are qualified in their respected fields, to every competitor on their entire individual performance and seek to improve their physical movement through a discussion of technique and adjudication. A judges' panel is typically composed of three (3) to five (5) professionals with experience in a variety of dance genres and field capacities (LaPointe-Crump, J., 2007). A panel ideally includes individuals with specialized knowledge in different styles of dance, e.g. tap, jazz, ballet, lyrical, etc., in addition to ample experience as professional dancers and/or instructors.

The feedback given by the judges was originally composed of hand-written critiques on the score sheets, which were relevant to the judging criteria that would be given to the competitors' dance instructors at the end of the competition. As technology advanced, the feedback was provided in the form of an oral critique first on a cassette tape and then on compact disks (CD's). Only within the last ten years have competition companies started using video

recording to obtain an aligned video and audio recording of the performances. Initially, these recordings contained only one judges' oral critique of each performance and were recorded on VHS tapes. In 2005, DRC Video Productions developed the first DVD adjudication software system for dance competitions called Video Judge® (DRC Video Productions, 2013). More recently, there have been additional production companies that have developed similar versions of this software such as DanceVideo Genie produced by Inchol™. DanceVideo Genie has the capacity to automatically email the critique videos to each dance studio with a click of a button. DanceVideo Genie even has a free iPhone app available for dance teachers to watch the video critiques in their own dance studios (Inchol, 2011).

### **2.1.2 The Benefit of Video Critiques**

Video critiques have become a significant new interface for dance criticism and analysis of movement. Several dance competition companies use similar software to record video critiques during the competitor's performance and then provide them to the instructors as a teaching tool. Dance instructors receive these videos as part of the packaged benefits with the required registration fee. Most dance competitions use these videos as an incentive, implying the assumption that this form of feedback is useful to dancers and instructors.

As times change and technology advances, it is compelling to research the perceptions dance teachers have about using video as a teaching tool. Elite Dance Cup, LLC, a nationally recognized dance competition, of which I am the National Director supplies video critiques to instructors with the purpose of providing feedback to help their students improve. By watching the video while simultaneously listening to the critique provided by the judges of the given performance, the teacher is able to learn from the judges' feedback. These critiques are provided to teachers so that they may evaluate their students' performances. By watching the video while

listening to the judges' feedback and suggestions, teachers can better form an opinion about how to help their students perform the correct movements and advance their individual technique.

## **2.2 Available Technology Tools in Higher Dance Education**

Over the past 50 years many dance educators and choreographers have also explored the implementation of computer technology into their lessons (Parrish, 2007). The majority of the available literature talks about the use of computer technology used by dance teachers in higher education (Doughty, S., Francksen, K., Huxley, M., & Leach, M., 2008). Some of the current software available includes LifeForms and LabanWriter. Such dance software is meant to assist in choreography, archiving, and Labanotation (Birringer, 2003).

### **2.2.1 Implementation of Technology in General Education**

Dance education expands from community-based programs, privately owned studios, general education in elementary, middle, junior and high school programs to higher education programs. Technology in dance studios was not always at the level we are accustomed to now a days. Historically, the extent of its use did not entail more than the use of a record, 8-track tape, cassette tape, compact disk or MP3 player to play music.

Li (2011), a researcher and dance professional within the community, offered his findings from examining the use of technologies in a variety of educational settings. In his presentation he gave information pertaining to the current role of technology in dance education. He noted the situation currently involving technology in general education. Li (2011), who conducted his research at York University in Canada, discussed his experiences with implementing technology in the modern and ballet technique classes he taught.

Giza (2013), talked about how his *Tools, Tasks and Strategies*<sup>TM</sup> (TTS) framework is an easy way for teachers to re-evaluate their available pedagogical methods when using a variety of technology tools in order to achieve their teaching objectives. In TTS, a measure of mastery can be created for each of the Domains – mastery levels of the tool (video), the task (dance criticism), and the strategy (a qualitative assessment of performance). These domains for the integration of technology in the modern classroom can be used in the dance classroom as well. It is through use of these domains that a positive influence of technology can support the enhancement of dance education. Although there are studies currently being conducted, these researchers represent a small area of the field of dance, technology, and evaluation of movement and more studies in the field are needed. The following chapters will explore and elaborate on the possibilities that technology tools can offer a dance instructor.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Design of the Research**

This study utilized an instrumental case-study design, primarily based on the analyses of broad, qualitative, emergent frames of discourse. Lichtman (2013) referred to a case study approach in her book as “an in depth examination of a particular case or several cases” (p. 90). She went on to explain that a case can be a program or a project and it does not always have to concentrate on a specific person. I defined this research as a case study because I explored the details of several dance teachers’ perceptions as they related to specific concepts in the dance field. Baxter & Jack (2008) defined an instrumental case study as being “used to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation” (p. 549). I approached this research in the manner of exploring the details of a case, yet using that case as an instrument towards refining a concept.

A case study is dependent on the quality of the discourse. In this instance, the data was collected from a number of different sources. In addition to the literature, those sources include introductory/background questionnaires, observational field notes taken while viewing participants watching a film segment and interviews. The themes that appeared out of the discourse data were analyzed using one of the five techniques for analysis that Yin (2009) explained as helpful means to link the data back to the proposition (p. 126). This technique is called pattern matching. Based on the results obtained, this study focused on the string of patterns that came from the dialogue expressed from the dance teacher participant interviews.

### **3.2 Data Analysis and Coding**

In the analysis of the data, I used Boeije's (2002) constant comparative method (CCM). In CCM as described by Taylor and Bogdan (1984) a "researcher simultaneously codes and analyses data in order to develop concepts; by continually comparing specific incidents in the data, the researcher refines these concepts, identifies their properties, explores their relationships to one another, and integrates them into a coherent explanatory model" (p126). While implementing CCM I was able to make comparisons between the dance teacher background questionnaires, in addition to the finding of similarities within a single interview and in between interviews of the entire group of dance teachers. CCM was used to investigate the transcript data where I used various codes to produce categories therefore revealing the patterns. I then sorted these categories into groups of similar substance matching the patterns.

This process of analysis required several individual readings of each interview as a whole. Then I read the interviews in portions following each dance teachers' response to the questions. As I went through this process I would highlight key words in the similar responses. In their text Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) introduced a sequence of steps needed to conduct data analysis. In their suggestions they included the concept of a researcher being able to reflect on the observations and interview. I took advantage of this by jotting down any of my thoughts that might have related to the occurring themes.

### **3.3 Instruments**

In general the same tools were used with the participants through this study. Specifically the participants were presented a computer, which they used to view a critique video. The first four participants viewed the same video critique of a student performing a jazz solo. This particular video was recorded onto a compact disc. The fifth participant viewed a more recent



video critique that was downloaded from a server and opened in Dropbox. The video used for the fifth participant was downloaded from DanceComp Genie. Dance instructors commonly use this method after attending a dance competition. Following a dance competition, the competitions' organizers will upload the performance videos with judge's feedback to the Company's servers, and within 24 hours, all studios are sent links to the video center website with access codes, so that the students and their instructors may access and view their videos. This methodology was used with the fifth participant. The figures shown below are images of the video recording critiques utilized in the interviews.



Figure 1: Sample image of solo performance from a judging video critique.



Figure 2: Sample screen shot of solo performance from a judging video critique.

### 3.4 Participants

The procedure for recruiting participants started with a network of associates in the El Paso area, who were a convenient sample of dance instructors. I was able to draw from a wide set of contacts I have come across in my years as a dance instructor. To recruit participants in this study and evaluators for the video used, I sent an e-mail to a large network of professional associates requesting their assistance. The participants were consenting adults in a non-vulnerable group that voluntarily took part in this study. The pool of possible participants included experienced and novice dance teachers age eighteen (18) years and over, out of which five (5) participants were selected.

The interviewed participants included a teaching assistant, a higher education dance teacher, a part-time dance teacher, a full-time student and former dance teacher, and a full-time

dance teacher studio owner. All five participants were high school graduates and had at least some college credits. Some were not already college graduates. A twenty (20) year age gap ran between the youngest and the oldest participant. Three out of the five participants have not had dance competition experience. The technology experience of the dance teachers ranged from moderate to above average. The following table demonstrates the description of each of the participants selected for the interviews.

Table 1: List of Participants Selected for Interviews

<i><b>Participants</b></i>	<i><b>Age</b></i>	<i><b>Level of Education</b></i>	<i><b>Dance Teaching Experience</b></i>	<i><b>Dance Competition Experience</b></i>	<i><b>Technology Experience</b></i>
<b>1. Teaching Assistant</b>	20	High School Diploma, B.S. Psychology Major	N/A	No	Standard
<b>2. Higher Education Dance Teacher</b>	30	B.F.A., MA in Teaching Dance in Professions	10 years	No	High
<b>3. Part-time Dance Teacher</b>	23	B.F.A.	5 years	Yes	Above Average
<b>4. Full-time Student &amp; Former Dance Teacher</b>	40	High School Diploma, B.A. in Dance Education Major	20 + years	No	Moderate
<b>5. Full-time Dance Teacher Studio Owner</b>	26	High School Diploma, College credits	7 + years	Yes	Above Average

### **3.5 Description of Data Collection Methods**

I collected background information about participants including their demographics (i.e. age, gender) and dance and technology experience through an introductory/background questionnaire. I administered the model video for the participants to watch. The participants conducted an analysis of the video critique of a performance that was recorded at a dance competition. The participants were encouraged to take any notes they felt was necessary as they analyzed the video. At this time I made observational field notes. The participants used portable equipment to review the video in a place of their convenience or the participants' home via the Internet. The video was not viewed by anyone else other than the participants in the study. The video was to be observed for several different technical dance elements (e.g. extension, rise, fall, etc.). I analyzed and took notes on the participants' expressions, assessments, and general reactions as they observed the video.

After the participants were finished examining the video, I conducted and recorded a semi-structured interview with the participants focused on the video analysis. All interviews included the same open-ended questions. The use of open-ended questions provided the opportunity for the participants to elaborate as much as possible. The research questions (see Appendix A), covered 4 areas which included: how the evaluators viewed the technology, how the evaluator viewed the dancer/performance, how would the evaluators use the technology, and how it would benefit them in their classroom and structuring of lesson plans. The interviews were conducted with the participants located in a place of their convenience. The interviews were audio recorded and were later transcribed and then coded. The time needed to collect the

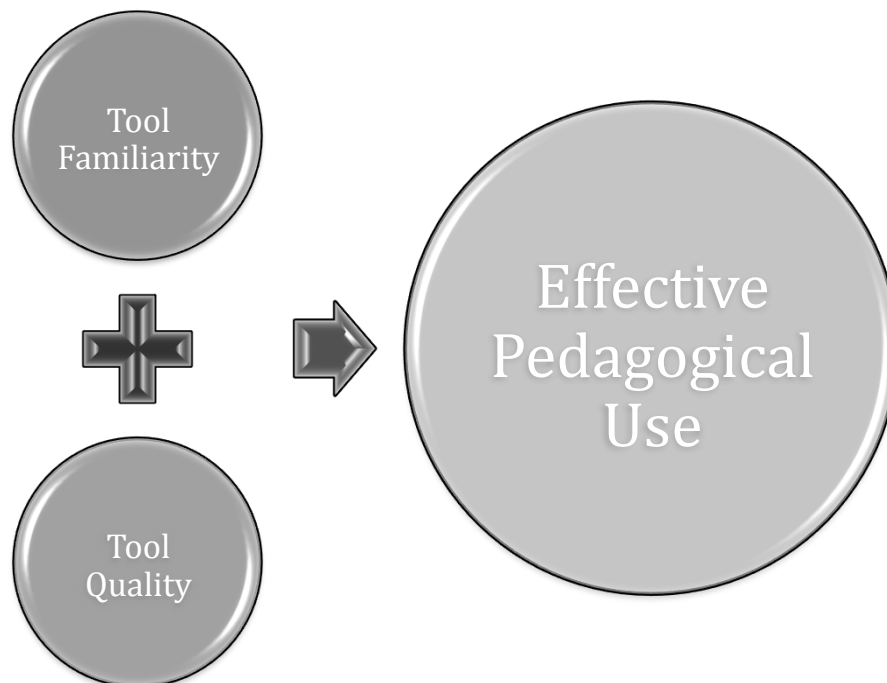
background information, observe the video analysis, and conduct the interview was approximately 45 minutes total per participant.

## Chapter 4: Data Collection

### 4.1 Three Themes

By immersing myself in the data collected from the responses to the interview questions, I was able to become familiar with patterns in the subject of discussion. When searching for any relation between the interviews, I started to understand the bigger picture. Three themes slowly began to emerge from the color-coded highlighted transcriptions and take shape into valuable content. The three themes are (1) video analysis software technology use is foreign to most non-dance competition teachers, (2) video recording equipment has more potential if quality is improved; “seeing is believing” (Participant 4, November 6, 2013), and (3) technology support of pedagogy validates the teacher. The following section describes the three themes that emerged in the guided semi-structured interviews.

Illustration 1: Connection of Three Themes



#### **4.1.1 Integrating technology to non-users**

Users must be familiar with the technology to have effective use. Many of the participants in my study were not familiar with the technology. In this study technology familiarity is critical for the effective pedagogical use.

*Theme 1:* Video analysis software technology use is foreign to most non-dance competition teachers. In the sample, of the dance teachers interviewed in this study, three of the participants were initially unsure of what they were viewing thus causing them to be hesitant to do anything with the video other than watch it one time. For two of the dance teachers it was their first time ever viewing a video critique of this nature. Participant 2 had seen a fellow teacher and their students viewing a similar video in the past, but still seemed uncertain of how to properly use it. Two out of the five participants immediately recognized the type of video they were watching. This is a result of their past experiences of attending dance competitions, both as students and as dance instructors. One participant stated, “Several times we have been to competitions, that most competitions use video critiques now. Where at least one judge, has a video that they’re speaking through as a critique” (Participant 3, October 23, 2013). During the interviews, participants 3 & 5 were the only dance teachers out of all the participants able to go on to explain how they have used competition video critiques in their classes with their students. The following is a narrative of how participant 3 has made use of a competition video critique in one of her dance classes:

Usually sitting down as a group or as an individual whoever was performing on the video and we would sit down and listen first. Questions, we will talk to one another see what was what was said and how through the performance, how we can make it better as a team. As you know, as a teacher I would explain, well what we are going to do to, maybe work on that and as a student I’ll ask them how can you make that better? What do you

need to work on? Then we will try to apply it through the lesson of that day and probably could try to apply it through more lessons than one, but sometimes I would find it's just through one or two lessons after we have viewed the critique. (Participant 3, October 23, 2013)

Although three (3) of the other dance teachers had not been previously exposed to this type of video critique technology, they were still able to recognize and agree upon the usefulness and benefits that video technology used in this manner could provide in their classrooms. All the dance teachers made comparisons of how other technology could be used in recording their students' rehearsals, technique classes, or even auditions for feedback. For example participant 2 explained how she is presently using similar technology with her college students:

I am videotaping them at different stages in the semester... I started at the beginning, and then I am doing one right now in the middle of the semester. Then I am going to do one at the very end and then have them watch, that they in fact have gotten better. Then they write a paper about their progress in the class at the very end, about how they have progressed. (Participant 2, October 24, 2013).

This demonstrates that video critique software should be made available to and utilized by dance instructors who do not compete in dance competitions. Unfortunately, dance instructors are not seeking out the use of such available technology tools. They are either uninformed of the usefulness of these technology tools or they do not fully understand their capacity.

This research clearly indicates that instructors, once introduced to video technology and after realizing the benefits that come from it, became more apt and enthusiastic to implement it as a teaching tool. This research further indicated that once the benefits and usefulness were fully appreciated, the instructors' creativity emerged and other ideas about its use began to surface.

#### **4.1.2 Seeing is believing**

*Theme 2:* Video recording as a tool has more potential if video quality is improved because "seeing is believing" (Participant 4, November 6, 2013). All four-dance teachers agreed



the quality of the video needs some improvements so that they are able to view the dancer and the performance clearly or from different angles for the use of refinement. Participant 3 comments about the quality of the video stating, “I think if it was in more detail, I would have been able to see the outline of her arms and the outline of her feet all the way to the toes” (October 23, 2013). Participant 4 agreed commenting, “I wish, the image was larger” (November 6, 2013).

Later in the interview with participant 3 she makes the connection to the quality of the video and how it can affect what the students are seeing. She explains how these types of videos can give students the opportunity to watch themselves and “apply their level of technique and skill” (Participant 4, November 6, 2013). She reaffirms this with a statement that has become the core of this theme, “seeing is believing” (Participant 4, November 6, 2013). Through these statements all of the dance instructors agreed on the benefits of video critiques to improve technique and motivation.

During questions about the benefits of using critiques similar to the model video, not a single dance teacher thought about the possibilities of preventing dance related injuries. Nonetheless, the participants were questioned directly asked about the potential benefits of preventing dance related injuries with the use of video critiques. All of the dance teachers were in agreement of this helpful assistance that this would be an excellent idea. One participant explained:

So I think, I still think seeing something brings it home, you know. Smack in your face like wow! And you see what you’re doing well and you see what you’re not doing well. So I think definitely for injury prevention. I mean. I think that’s a great idea! (Participant 4, November 6, 2013)

Similarly Participant 3 responded that the video could help prevent injury because the students and teachers “can see that they’re entering a step or a certain combination of steps

incorrectly and maybe realizing how awkward it is for themselves” (October 23, 2013). Participant 1 also agreed but pointed out that, “I think this is not really an ideal video for that” (November 8, 2013), due to the image quality, but if it were clearer it would be better. This could be a reason to why dance teachers have not thought to use video like this because it can become frustrating to watch due to the image not being clear enough to point out errors in technique. One teacher explained how maybe the video could be more helpful if the dancer did not seem so far away by saying, “I was wanting her closer, it doesn’t even have to be closer maybe just a clearer image” (Participant 2, October 24, 2013).

#### **4.1.3 Teacher support**

*Theme 3:* Use of technology in support of pedagogy strengthens a teacher’s knowledge and provides them with additional resources for instruction. The five participants agreed that critiques are certainly useful in helping to support a teacher’s knowledge and perhaps the message or the idea they have been trying to communicate to their student from the very beginning of each students training. For instance, referring to their analysis of the model video, Participant 1 and 2 both pointed out that the oral critique given by the judge was very similar to what they were thinking during the time of viewing. Participant 1 comments about the grand fouetté en tournant (large whipped turn) section of the performance saying, “I was thinking the same” (November 8, 2013). Participant 2 also says, “there was some corrections that I was thinking of, or something she said I was thinking of like a second before she said them” (October 24, 2013). Therefore, due to the continued availability and access to the video, an instructor using this technology, does not have to provide the students with immediate feedback. Instead, this can be used as a reflective tool in which an instructor has the time to analyze the video in detail, reflect on it, and provide feedback and instruction at a later time.

An experienced teacher's perspective was presented by participant 4 who made a great comment about how, "we always need to step outside of ourselves and you know see something that is hopefully objective" (November 6, 2013). She continued to explain, "I didn't have video playback", referring to when she was a young student, so now with this technology as students "you are getting to see yourself so that's, that's, you know invaluable" (Participant 4, November 6, 2013). This shows that video analysis is evidence that will help support a dance teachers' pedagogical knowledge when trying to point something out to a student. Video analysis could also improve instructor's time management as it prevents falling back into old teaching routines and using the lack of time availability as an excuse for not learning or using new technologies. Video analysis is readily available and can enable the development of instructors' immediate perceptions upon viewing a performance, which allows them to identify technique issues and promptly address them to prevent injuries.

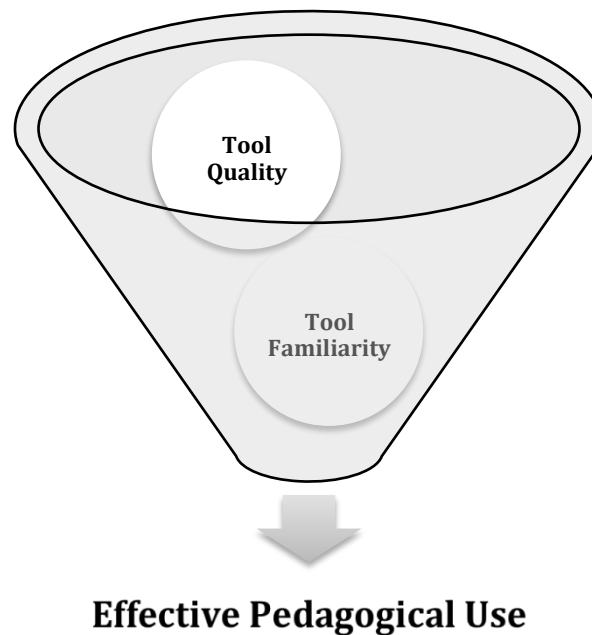
Even if the participants had not previously seen a video critique like the model video, they were willing to critique the performance in the video. Those who had not viewed a video like this before and had less teaching experience were not entirely sure how to initiate this action and were unaware of what to look for without some explanation from the interviewer. This is an indication that experience matters. Through the use of video analysis dance teachers could gain more experience and validity to support their pedagogy.

Example, participant number 5 viewed a video of one of her students that was recorded at an actual competition. Her first reaction was of disbelief upon seeing how much her student's skills had improved over the last few months compared to the skill level at the time of performance. She immediately recognized that this tool could be used to keep track of her student's progress by having a point of reference and identifying the aspects a student needs to

improve and work further. When participant number 5 was asked to describe her first thoughts about the video critique she had just analyzed she was excited to express her findings. The excerpt below is an account of the reaction participant number 5 had during her interview:

Honestly my first thought was how much [student name] got better, from then to now. Like how much she has improved. And that, they (the judge) kept telling her about her turn out, and about her legs being turned in. So I know for a fact, that the ballet class that she takes with the ballet teacher each week is definitely making the students improve. (Participant 5, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014)

Illustration 2: Relationship of Three Themes



## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The goal of this research was to provide base line data on dance teachers' skills, dispositions, and understandings at a time when the field of dance is changing rapidly due to the availability of new technology such as video analysis. The data has shown how four dance teachers from various backgrounds and differing ranges of experiences did not initially think of the multiple benefits video analysis could bring to the dance field. After interviewing them, they soon began to see that this technology could be a breakthrough for their students. As one teacher expressed:

Honestly I feel like this is a good idea! I think I should be doing this more with students because I don't think they realize how they are dancing; because they don't get to see their strengths and their weaknesses, you know. Then, there are some students that think they are a lot worse than what they really are, and there is the other spectrum. (Participant 2, October 24, 2013)

These dance teachers realized it would be a great idea to use video analysis to evaluate their students because they all share a need to ensure that their students are not just being evaluated by a nebulous system, but on a system that provides accountability. Video analysis is a tool in dance education that provides dance teachers with that accountability.

A dance instructor should possess three very important skills in order to be a successful teacher. These skills are the body of knowledge, the eye to see proper movement and the ability to communicate (Giza, Personal Communication, April 29, 2014). No one skill is more important than the other. If a dance instructor is well versed in all of these skills and executes them together in a productive manner then that instructor can be a highly effective teacher. If a teacher cannot readily identify strengths and weaknesses in a students' performance, then he or she may not be able to provide the most constructive feedback to a given student (Tripp, & Rich, 2012). Tripp

and Rich (2012) performed a study to understand the useful aid of video reflection and how it can improve teaching. The results of Tripp and Rich's study promoted a positive change in the teachers' use of video analysis. The six emergent themes were that video analysis helped teachers to: focus on one's own analysis; see new perspectives for teaching; trust in the feedback; be accountable to change their methods; remember to apply change; and, observe the progress. Similar to Tripp and Rich's study (2012), this research also shows that video analysis plays a significant role in encouraging teacher improvement through the use of video analysis.

Some dance teachers are not able to identify students' deficiencies during a performance at first sight. Although this may depend on the skills possessed by the dance teachers, the issue may in fact be the lack of training on visual identification and prompt analysis of skills and deficiencies during a performance (Tripp, & Rich, 2012). Video analysis could be the solution for this issue. Dance teachers can carefully and thoroughly analyze the recorded performance with the ability of stopping, rewinding and replaying a certain dance movement to see whether the student implemented the proper technique, took the right angle, elevation, position and alignment during a certain dance movement. This technology also allows for multiple views and multiple viewers. The convenient ability to slowly and repeatedly view a student's performance enables a teacher to identify issues that may not have been visible during the initial performance. By having the opportunity to carefully identify the strengths and weaknesses of a given student, a teacher can effectively develop a dance lesson that will address the weaknesses while improving the student's overall strengths.

## **5.1 The Unexpected**

Through my research I discovered some unexpected data. Some of the participating teachers were completely unaware of the type of video analysis software that is available in the

dance industry. This unforeseen issue could be due to the fact that some of these teachers do not participate in dance competitions themselves or with their dance students. More than one teacher was also a bit naive to the possibilities of being able to use software outside of the dance competition industry. Originally, the dance teachers seemed to assume that the only purpose for video software was for recording a memorable moment. It is evident that with the influx of technology, most dance teachers have not looked beyond the designated uses of technology tools and have hesitated to become creative with other possible uses. This is an indication that experience as well as knowledge in the dance field matters.

I found that most of the dance teachers were slightly unaware of what the definition of technology encompasses when asked to give examples of similar or any technologies that have been used or could be used in their classrooms. In my experience, in recreational dance studio classrooms, technology does not often go much beyond CD players, iPods, iPads, and MP3 players for music, and movies or (promotional) instructional videos for references. Most dance technology usage is being done in college level dance programs. This may be because of their budgets allowing them more access to these types of technologies, but may also have to do with local small dance studio teachers being unaware of their existence. Access is particularly advantageous because after all, these dance studios are the first places that dance students are trained at and the most influential dance education at the younger ages. Therefore, this should be the time that the dance teachers are introduced to technology and its non-traditional uses.

Most dance teachers who when asked about technology, at first, did not consider unconventional uses of video. Instead, they immediately thought of music playing devices. These teachers seemed a little hesitant at first to move forward with the idea of video analysis technology in their lesson without some guidance and help. Once the idea was presented, they

were very interested and in fact shared a common desire to use it. However, they were less willing to experiment with this technology on their own because of unfamiliarity with the medium. All of the dance teachers were more focused on the technique or step improvement versus the connection of preventing injuries & improving the technique through proper movement.

It would be useful for competition companies to introduce the concept of video critiques to local studios and provide tutorials to help dance teachers understand and grasp the technology. The purpose is not to make them feel ignorant or inferior, but rather to encourage them to not be afraid of the technology and to embrace its usefulness in improving their lessons. The use of this technology could be introduced to local studios through tutorials held at dance competitions and conventions. Target advertising could also be used to introduce this technology to studios that do not attend dance competitions.

Dance competition companies could also suggest other diverse uses so that these instructors can integrate technology into their daily lessons while looking beyond the standard and common one purpose for the video critiques and instead finding other uses for this valuable technology. Often times, teachers get into a comfort zone with their routine lessons and they either do not have the time or choose not to make the time to experiment with and try something different. This new technology will not only make them a better instructor by increasing their ability to visually analyze performances, but it will also improve their students' skills, and allow instructors to better prepare and guide their students' movement and physical form.

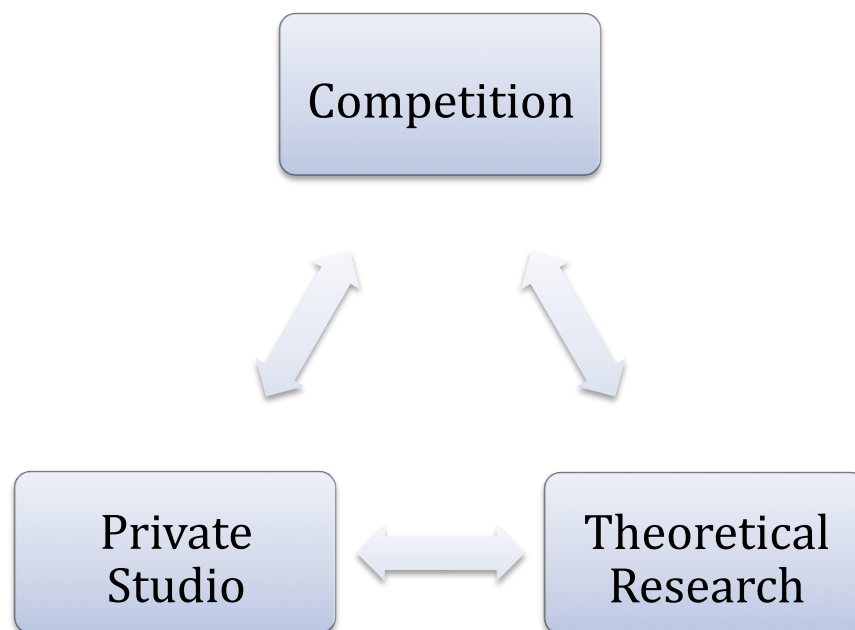
Dance competition companies tend to have access to more current technology, such as the adjudication software systems, than most private studios. This is driven both by budget and competitive factors in the commercial world. Dance competition companies are offering private



studios access to the latest technology tools. Since private dance studios are important potential users of video technology for critiques and pedagogy, both private studios and competitions can benefit from theoretical research in this field.

This study is designed to help build relationships in the effective use of the technology tools and to inform both categories of users. Both dance competitions and private dance studios can benefit from theoretical research. Tool use and pedagogical strategies move back and forth between the practitioner's base and the theoretical base. I am informing the practitioners by contributing to the theoretical base for use in studios and/or the competition circuit.

Illustration 3: Sharing of Technology Tool Knowledge



## 5.2 Learning and Moving Forward

Although the traditional method of teaching dance classes does not involve the use of video analysis (Leijen, Admiraal, Wildschut, & Simons, 2008), this research has explored the

possible advantages of using video as a teaching tool during a lesson. Through this research, the participating dance instructors developed an understanding of the benefits of using video analysis in dance education. The results of this research have been used to generate evidence-based results that reflect the benefits and effectiveness of using video analysis as a teaching tool. Just as the current literature suggests, I expected there to be a heavily weighted traditional style of teaching still being practiced. There was a general desire to implement the technology of video analysis into dance lessons if the right tools were available to all teachers. This study has contributed to a currently limited body of research.

The fifth participant was in a different category from the first four. Participant number 5 is not only an actual dance studio owner but also a dance teacher and user of this technology. She brought a more sophisticated experiential base than the other four participants, with previous knowledge of video critiques. She has used video critiques to help in the improvement process of her own students.

Since participant number 5 had used video critiques to evaluate students before, I chose to include her to understand a more experienced user's perceptions and contrast them with the novice users perceptions. Even though there were two other dance teachers interviewed, that are also experienced users of video analysis technology, participant number 5 represented the kind of user for whom this study was specifically directed. Her previous experience in the field is at a different level of sophistication in comparison to the other participants. She represents the category of future directions that would make for rich additional explorations in this quickly moving field.

This research is intended to be of value to current and prospective teachers of dance. The results from this study may also help the field of dance by furthering the understanding of the uses of video analysis. It might be that in future research, it would be useful to focus a study on dance teachers that have attended dance competitions or have brought their students to compete so that the depth of video critique usage is further explored. Just as Walt Disney pointed out: "we keep moving forward, opening new doors and doing new things, because we're curious, and

curiosity keeps leading us down new paths” (Ruiz, 2010, p. 110), I am enthusiastic to move forward. I intend to conduct further research on the use and the benefits of video analysis tools for all dance teachers.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Video recording can be utilized in the dance profession not only to improve a dancer’s overall performance, but as an injury prevention tool. Although dance teachers’ perceptions and acceptance of this technology were different based on their prior knowledge and already established habits, their contribution to this study was still very significant. Each participant in this study agreed that the use of video technology is beneficial not only as a injury-preventative method by identifying technique deficiencies and promptly addressing them, but also as a general tool to improve and enhance their students skill levels.

How this technology is better implemented differs under different scenarios, as the adoption of tools is situational and experiential. Each dance instructor brings forth prior knowledge and applies it into their personal teaching methods. The technology tools used to get there are different. The dance teachers who come out of higher education are going to be more versed in certain tools, tasks, and strategies than those teachers who have only gained their experiences from private studios. The implementation is not only going to be influenced by the levels of the instructors’ education but the overall eagerness to implement the technology into their lessons.

Technological proficiency and preparedness differs among members of different generations. This study had an impact on the participants because to most of them, it was introducing a new conceptual activity. The opportunity that dance teachers both from older and younger generations were given to explore a new tool and a new environment during this study has created transformational potential in their current occupations. To those that were already familiar with this technology, it presented them with new ideas and a challenge to creatively improve the ways in which this technology is used. Notwithstanding these issues, one of the

outcomes of this study is that supporting the networking of studios and competitions with researchers could create an avenue for the effective use of tools to be adopted more quickly, thus overcoming any lack of technology preparedness and hurdles placed by generational differences.

Although many aspects in this field could benefit from further study, the sparseness of available scholarly research already indicates that the use of video technology could be extremely beneficial. The benefit of this study includes generating an effective visual means for dance teachers to assist in improving their student's overall skills and may open the door to potential avenues of future research for the prevention of dance injuries, although dance injury prevention is not the focus of this study. Adopting video analysis tools in dance pedagogy and integrating their use into dance technique lessons still faces some perceptual resistance from dance teachers. However, this study clearly shows that given the opportunity, dance teachers could see themselves using video analysis tools for improving skills. Through the use of video analysis dance teachers could gain more experience and validity to support their pedagogy.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A Sample/Core Interview Question List

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- 1). What are your first thoughts about the video you have just analyzed (or viewed)?
- 2). Were you able to see the dancer clearly enough? Please explain why or why not?
- 3). Were you able to clearly hear the critiques that the judge was giving about the performance?  
Please explain why or why not?
- 4). Were you able to comprehend the critiques that the judge was giving about the performance?  
Please explain why or why not?
- 5). Have you ever viewed and listened to a critique of this nature before? If so please explain.
- 6). Have you used video critiques similar to this in your classes? If so, how did you use them as part of your lesson?
- 7). Did/would you find using video critiques during your classes beneficial to your students?  
Please explain?
- 8). Do you have any further examples of using a technology of this nature in your classes? Please elaborate?
- 9). Do you study these types of videos when you are trying to improve your students? If so, please explain?
- 10). How would you think using these types of videos in your classroom could be useful?
- 11). Would you use a video similar to this that is of your own students in your classroom? Please explain how.



Appendix B  
Participant Background Questionnaire

Directions: Please answer the following questions as frankly and accurately as possible.

This questionnaire is designed to protect the health of both the participant and investigator. **ALL INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THIS STUDY WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.**

FIRST NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_

PSEUDONYM: (leave blank) \_\_\_\_\_ DATE:

\_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT INFORMATION:

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ years

GENDER: ☐ Male or ☐ Female



**SECTION A: OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY:**

(1). What is your current occupation or job? \_\_\_\_\_

(2). Specify total period at this occupation: \_\_\_\_\_ years and/or \_\_\_\_\_ months

(3). Have you had any teaching positions? \_\_\_\_\_. If yes specify the type \_\_\_\_\_

(4). What age group do/ did your students fall under? \_\_\_\_\_

(5). How many student's do/did you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

(6). If you have taught what subject did you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

(7). If you are currently teaching what subject do you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

(8). List in order of importance to you what subjects you prefer to teach? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(9). If you teach dance classes, please list the structure in which you teach your classes?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**SECTION B: EDUCATIONAL HISTORY:**

(1). Please check the highest educational grade you have achieved:

- ☐ GED – What was your age at time of obtaining GED? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ High School Diploma
- ☐ Undergraduate Degree
- ☐ Masters Degree
- ☐ Doctorate

(2). If you attended college where? \_\_\_\_\_

(3). Please state your degree(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

—

(4). If you are currently a student or graduate, please state your major area(s) of study.

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**SECTION C: DANCE EDUCATIONAL HISTORY:**

(1). How old were you when you started to take dance classes? \_\_\_\_\_

(2). Where did you first take dance classes? \_\_\_\_\_

(3). Who was/ were your teacher(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

(4). What was the first dance genre you took classes in (i.e. ballet, modern, tap, jazz)? \_\_\_\_\_

(5). What other dance genres have you studied and for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

(6). Please describe in detail any other dance classes and/or intensives you have been a participant in?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(7). Please give the names of dance teachers you have studied under?

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(8). Have you participated in live performances as a recreational dance student? If so please list:

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(9). Have you performed as a professional dancer? If so, please list the performances you participated in and your role:

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(10). Do you participate in continued dance education? If so, please list how:

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#### **SECTION D: MEDICAL HISTORY:**

(1). Have you had any dance related injuries? ☐ Yes ☐ No      If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

(2). If yes, what are they?

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(3). How have you treated your dance related injuries?

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(4). How long did it take you to recover back to normal?

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(5). Do you still currently suffer from any dance related injuries? If so, please specify:

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(6). How could have the injury been treated differently?

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(7). How do you take care of your current dance related injuries?

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(8). Do you believe your dance related injuries could have been prevented? If so, how?

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(9). Have you had any student(s) become injured in your class or classes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(10). Was the injury related to a dance skill that was being performed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(11). Could the injury in your class have been prevented? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, How?

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(12). What precautions if any do you take in your classes to help prevent students' dance injuries?

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## SECTION E: COMPUTER EXPERIENCE:

(1). Do you have a personal computer? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(2). How long have you been using personal computers? \_\_\_\_\_

(3). In a typical week, how many hours do you use a computer?

☐ 1 – 5 ☐ 5 – 10 ☐ more than 10

(4). Do you use your computer for any purposes related to your dance classes? ☐ Yes ☐ No

(5). If so, what are the uses?

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(6). Please check the types of system you have used, followed by approximate time you have experience with them:

(a). Operating System

- ☐ DOS
- ☐ OS/2
- ☐ Windows
- ☐ Mac
- ☐ Unix

(b). Applications

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Word       | <input type="checkbox"/> DanceComp Genie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft Excel      | <input type="checkbox"/> Video Judge     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Microsoft PowerPoint |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> QuickTime Player     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> iTunes               |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sony Sound Forge     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spotify              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pandora              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> iMovie               |  |

(7). How many hours per week do you spend accessing the Internet/ World Wide Web?

☐ 1 – 5 ☐ 5 – 10 ☐ more than 10

(8). Do you use Internet resources for dance related information? \_\_\_\_\_ If so please explain:

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What would be the most convenient time to meet to conduct the video analysis and interview?

Thank you for your patience and assistance in completing this background information.

## Vita

Daralyn Marie Scurlock was born and raised in Houma, Louisiana and is the middle child of Darrel and Kayla Scurlock. She graduated from Vandebilt Catholic High School in 2003 and entered Oklahoma City University in the fall under a performance scholarship. She performed with the American Spirit Dance Company and the Oklahoma Opera and Music Theatre Company while pursuing her bachelor's degree. In 2007, while a student, she performed in the *Tournament of Roses Parade Opening Performance* as a Dancer/ Stand –in for Kristen Chenoweth. After obtaining her Bachelor's of Performing Arts and a Minor in History in 2007 from Oklahoma City University's Ann Lacy School of Arts and Dance Management, she pursued a professional performance career. While residing in New York City, she performed for companies such as Walt Disney. In 2008, she established Elite Dace Cup, LLC, a nationally recognized dance competition company along with her mother where she serves as the National Director. Under such capacity, she travels to theaters across the United States to host dance competitions.

As a child in Louisiana, she grew up in her mother's dance studio where she began teaching dance classes at the age of sixteen. Daralyn has taught dance in several different dance disciplines including; tap, ballet, jazz, lyrical, hip-hop and musical theater. She now resides in El Paso, Texas, where she has actively taught dance classes throughout the community and at other dance studios across the country. She enrolled in the University of Texas at El Paso Graduate School in the fall of 2010, with hopes of becoming a College Professor in Dance.

This thesis was typed by Daralyn Marie Scurlock.