Master's thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Department of Teacher Education

Linnéa Marielle Norton

Embodied dialogue in the classroom:

Critical reflections as a teacher on creative dance practices for 1st graders

Master's thesis in Master of Arts Education
Supervisor: Dr. Rosemary Martin
May 2022

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Kunnskap for en bedre verden

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Abstract

This research investigates the embodied dialogue between teacher and students, and between peers, in a dance workshop series of six dance classes. The key question motivating this research is: *How might I, as a dance educator, facilitate a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders that focus on sensitivity and awareness towards self and others through an empathetic embodied dialogical approach?* In this thesis, I investigate the embodied dialogue that occurs between myself as the teacher and the student, as well as between peers, through a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders in an international school context. Taking a hermeneutical phenomenological view, I am involved in this study as both a dance teacher and a researcher, and I critically reflect on my embodied experiences when interacting with the students. The discussion that emerges from this research points out how awareness and sensitivity through embodied encounters and bodily listening inform an empathetic approach towards self and others. I connect these findings with stories from the dance classes that set the scene for what my students and I experience as embodied encounters in the classroom. These insights acknowledge considerations that teachers might choose to make in the creative dance class and the value of reflecting on one's own pedagogical practice as a teacher. At the same time, the study also highlights the meaning creative dance might have for young children in educational settings, and how this meaning might resonate in their lives more broadly.

Sammendrag

Denne studien undersøker den kroppslige dialogen mellom lærer og elever, og mellom elever i en danseworkshop som strekker seg over seks dansetimer. Problemstillingen som motiverer studien er: *Hvordan kan jeg som dansepedagog legge til rette en kreativ danseworkshop for 1.klassinger med fokus på sensitivitet og bevissthet mot seg selv og andre i lys av en empatisk kroppslig dialogisk tilnærming?* I denne masteroppgaven undersøker jeg den kroppslige dialogen som utspiller seg mellom lærer og elever, og mellom elever, i en kreativ danseworkshop for 1.klassinger i en internasjonal skolekontekst. Ettersom studien befinner seg i et hermeneutisk fenomenologisk forskningsparadigme, er jeg aktivt tilstede som både dansepedagog og forsker, og gjør kritiske refleksjoner over mine kroppslige opplevelser når jeg samhandler med elevene. Diskusjonen som kommer frem fra denne studien peker på hvordan bevissthet og sensitivitet ved kroppslige møtepunkt og ved å være kroppslig lydhør, har innvirkning på en empatisk tilnærming til seg selv og andre. Funnene blir sett i lys av situasjoner fra dansetimene som beskriver kroppslige møtepunkt i klasserommet. Disse innblikkene anerkjenner vurderinger som lærere kanskje må forholde seg til i en kreativ dansetime, i tillegg til verdien som finnes i å reflektere over sin egen pedagogiske praksis. Samtidig fokuserer denne studien på betydningen kreativ dans kan ha for barn i skolesettinger, og hvordan denne betydningen kan gi gjenklang i deres liv.

Acknowledgment

Completing this Master's thesis is an achievement I cannot embrace all alone. There are many people who have contributed to helping me complete this research project.

First of all, I would like to give my greatest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Rosemary Martin. I am most grateful for the time you have spent giving me regular feedback, online, in person, and on paper. Your supervision has constantly guided me, and given me insights into how to best carry out and convey this research. Your knowledge and critical questions that appear in our conversations have generously helped me steer this thesis forward to an outcome I am most proud of. Thank you for always clarifying my writings and for helping me improve the flow and structure of the text. This thesis would not have happened without your encouragement and guidance.

Thank you to the faculty of NTNU and the study coordinator of the Arts Education Program who generously facilitated the process for me to complete this thesis from Nairobi, Kenya. This has allowed me to implement and complete this research project while my husband has been working internationally, as well as balance family life, and coordinate being a stay-home mom and wife.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who has stepped in and babysat Jenna, my daughter, while I have had in-person classes in Trondheim, Norway, or online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Mamma, your consistent positive attitude and service, including taking the train for three hours to spend time at our house and help watch Jenna has been more than we could have asked for. It has made it possible for me to complete my courses and exams while knowing she is in the best hands. To my dear friends, Maria, Yasmin, and Tiffany, you

have all contributed to babysitting Jenna as well, and I'm utmost grateful for this. This thesis could not happen without all of your help.

I also need to express my gratitude to Margunn, who hosted me during the weeks I needed to attend in-person classes in Trondheim. Staying at your house always made me feel welcomed and close to family. It made it all more doable to take on this significant research journey.

Thank you Jeff for believing in me, and supporting me throughout this Masters-program. I know it hasn't always been easy, and I applaud you for allowing our family to make the sacrifices and prioritization needed for me to fulfill this with a happy heart.

Finally, but never the least, thank you Rosslyn Academy for allowing me to carry out the dance workshop series of six dance classes in your school, and for welcoming my contribution to dance education to some of your youngest students. It has been a great joy to get to know both students and teachers at Rosslyn. I couldn't be more blessed to have had such a positive collaboration with you, that allowed me to take part in the Rosslyn community in the way I know best, bringing dance into the lives of some of your students.

Keywords

Dialogical pedagogy, embodiment, embodied dialogue, bodily listening, creative dance, education, awareness, sensitivity, empathy, inclusion

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When I teach dance at the cultural school in Stavanger[1], Norway, I teach creative dance, jazz, and ballet to various age groups. Part of my teaching through this cultural school is to offer dance to very young students as an after-school program in their classrooms at several local schools. This program, called 'a carousel of culture'[2], offers interdisciplinary learning of the arts, where dance plays an important role. Together with a colleague who specializes in instruments, vocal education, and choir, we offer classes to 1st and 2nd graders. During these classes, I work to take the students on imaginary travels where they explore musicality, creative movements, and expressions connected to various themes. Once or twice a year a short performance for parents and siblings is offered in the facilities of the cultural school in Stavanger.

When working on something like 'a carousel of culture', my husband often looks at me with confusion when I arrive home from teaching bubbling over with enthusiasm from everything I want to tell him that has happened in the class. Several times it has been hard to even explain to him why I feel so engaged, happy, passionate, frustrated, and driven. It is something I 'experienced'. It is felt in my body. I am not sure that he fully grasps what it is that engages me when I teach dance to students, and why I come home from work with more energy than when I left the house.

Writing this thesis has allowed me to explore and reflect on my embodied experiences when dancing and engaging with my students in six creative dance classes. This past year I have been situated in Nairobi, Kenya, where my husband has been working at an international school. I had the opportunity to investigate dance education and creative dance

[1] Stavanger kulturskole is an afterschool program that offers a variety of classes in music, drama, dance and visual arts for mainly students between 0-18 years old. Information in English | Stavanger Kulturskole
[2] Kulturkarusellen is an interdisciplinary arts class offered to students at Stavanger kulturskole who enrolls in 1st or 2nd grade, as an afterschool program at the local schools.

for 1st graders in the same international school, a context that was new for me. One of the embodied encounters I experienced as I engaged in one of the dance classes during this research illustrates some of the feelings that occur when I engage with my students through dancing, and I share it here as an offering to 'set the scene' in these early pages of the thesis:

> I observed that my students thought it was funny that I started exaggerating the shakes. This movement encouraged them to also make big movements. They seemed to really enjoy this movement of shaking their arms and their body while drawing closer to one another until the circle was transformed to a smaller space where everyone was close together. I also love the experience of 'shrinking' a circle like this, while moving, because you can suddenly pay attention to everyone, they are close to you, you can look them in the eye, you can smile, wink, share energy, you hear their noises. You also see the ones who are most eager to close the circle first, and then you have this new rush of energy when you exit the circle. This experience fuels me and keeps me engaged in the dance. It reminds me of how to expand movements, how to receive and share energy, and sometimes it also distracts me, because I get so caught up in the 'fun' time we share.

This thesis is driven by curiosity to explore embodied experiences that unfold from six creative dance classes, and how these embodied experiences affect me and my students in the class.

1.1 Research question

This study is motivated by the query: *How might I, as a dance educator, facilitate a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders that focuses on sensitivity and awareness towards self and others through an empathetic embodied dialogical approach?*

This research question helps the study to investigate how embodied dialogue facilitated through a creative dance workshop series over six dance classes, informs our bodily sensations and awareness of self and others through dancing, creating, exploring, and interacting together. Embodied encounters in the dance classes can impact our understanding of self, each other, and the world (Anttila, 2007; Buono, 2021; Payne & Costas, 2020; Pape-Pedersen, 2022). It has been noted within the literature that children in early education often find it helpful to respond with embodied and nonverbal responses (see for example Gilbert, 2015; Sasha & Russ, 2006; Stinson, 2002). Creative dance within the context of dance education also offers possibilities for teachers and students to explore embodied encounters, and how they impact us individually and collectively (Gilbert, 2015; Giguere, 2021; Pape-Pedersen, 2022). This existing literature is relevant as this study is situated in an international school setting for 1st graders and seeks to explore how embodied dialogue might emerge within the experiences I have as the teacher, the relationship between me as the teacher and the students, and within the interactions amongst peers.

The literature I have explored within this research (see literature review chapter, p.19) has centered on relations between teacher and students, and between peers, in creative dance, relying on theories of dialogical pedagogy and embodiment. Applying dialogical pedagogy to this study helps examine what kind of relationships are built in the dance workshop series, and theories of embodiment explore how these relationships might develop in the classes. Specifically, the research question examines how I as a dance educator might facilitate, guide,

and support my students' learning of how their bodies feel and how to relate to others in the class. The research query opens the possibility to look closely and critically at my own teaching practice, my embodied experiences in the class, and how my embodied dialogue with my students might inform awareness, sensitivity and empathy towards self and others.

I take a phenomenological approach to this study of experiencing, and the research question is explored through embodied encounters over six dance classes that I designed and facilitated. Alongside these classes, I kept a reflective journal and the material from the journal was the basis for shaping auto-narratives from each class that then became the core data for this thesis (see methodology chapter, section 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, for further explanation). Multimodal interviews and video-documentation has also been applied to this study to gain additional documentation when aiming to reflect on, and discuss, the embodied dialogue in the six dance classes.

To further explore the main research question noted above, there are two sub-questions that also help frame this investigation:

Sub-question 1: How might reflections on pedagogical approaches and strategies give insight to the embodied dialogue in the creative dance classes, and how might these experiences affect my pedagogical practice?

According to literature, reflections on pedagogical practices have value in educational settings (Anttila, 2007; Gose, 2018; Lipson Lawrence, 2012; Van Manen, 2007). This sub-question helps me examine my own teaching practice within creative dance. The query specifically explores how my embodied dialogue with the students might shape and inform my teaching practice. The teacher-student relationship is therefore at the center of this query as I am part of this study as a researcher and as a participant.

Sub-question 2: How might embodied experiences in creative dance contribute to connections between my body and other's bodies?

Literature within dialogic pedagogy and embodiment points out how potential in experiencing from 'the other side' arise when one is engaged in something together with others (Anttila, 2007; Buber, 2012). This sub-question investigates what kind of embodied encounters in the dance classes could lead to bodily and emotional connections with self and others. This sub-question seeks to explore how embodied dialogue between teacher and students, and between peers, could affect our understanding of self, others and the world when interacting in a creative dance class.

1.2 Context for research and terminology

This research has been situated at an international school in Nairobi, Kenya. The participants of the six dance classes were first grade students at the ages six and seven years old. The class of 19 students all participated in the six dance classes unless they were unable to attend school for other reasons. The students were from various countries, such as Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, The Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States of America. The students have lived in Kenya for different lengths of time. This international school uses an American system for teaching the curricula to their students, and most teachers have a teaching degree from the United States of America or from Canada. The context for this research is noteworthy because it acknowledges the diversity of students who participate in the creative dance workshop series. The purpose of this research is not to investigate the international school itself, however it is the location where the research is

situated and therefore informs the study. I also seek to outline key terms that relate to the main research question, offering a contextual understanding of the ideas explored.

1.2.1 Contextualization of key terms

Words and phrases can have different meanings according to their contexts. To offer a clear idea and understanding of key terms and their meanings that are used within this study, I contextualize the essential key terms: Creative dance, sensitivity and awareness, and empathetic dialogical approach.

Creative dance

In this study I seek to explore how "creative dance has the potential to open up new worlds for you and your students" (Gilbert, 2015, p. 3). However open this statement is, I find it has significance in the context of teaching creative dance for 1st graders in an international school, as teachers and students 'worlds' within the schools do not necessarily always include creative dance. To grasp the potential of what 'worlds' could open within creative dance settings, I highlight Gilbert's (2015) notion that creative dance may foster and "develop the next generation of leaders who are able to creatively solve problems, collaborate with others, express feelings, accept and value individual differences, and be respectful and responsible citizens" (p. 3). Creative dance in the context of educational settings can therefore be understood as embodied encounters that bring out the teacher and students' potential in connecting, exploring, and understanding ways to interact with self and others in the dance workshop series.

Sensitivity and awareness

The terms sensitivity and awareness in this thesis draw attention to how creative dance might allow one to become conscious of the feelings in the body when moving and interacting with others. Anttila (2007) points out: "a conscious connection to bodily actions and sensations may lead to a sense of personal agency and ownership of the body" (p.50). Bodily sensations supported by awareness towards the body and how the body engages in the six dance classes has relevance to this study because such an approach could develop consciousness of embodied experiences. In the context of my research, sensitivity and awareness explore how the understanding of one's body relates to our encounters and responses to others in the dance classes (Anttila, 2007; Barsky, 2021; Buono, 2021; Stinson, 2005). This in turn encourages relational approaches that hold respect and generosity in focus (Anttila, 2007; Sansom, 2009; Wise et al., 2019). Sensitivity and awareness focus specifically on how we feel when moving, and how we might connect with others when dancing creatively together (Anttila, 2007; Barsky, 2021; Buono, 2021; Pape-Pedersen, 2022).

Empathetic embodied dialogical approach

For this study I connect with Martin Buber's (2012) idea of dialogical pedagogy, which is a theory that has been used in the context of education. Dialogue in the context of my research emphasizes how relationships might develop in relation to embodied encounters through creative dance, and our responses in and towards these encounters. The embodied experiences and encounters that emerge when interacting in the six dance classes focus on how the body is central in how we perceive and understand the world, and our interactions with others (Catalano & Leonard, 2016; Engelsrud & Standal, 2013; Giguere, 2021; Merleau-Ponty, 2004; Payne & Costas, 2020). Developing the skill of 'experiencing from the other side' also proposes how inclusion and empathy is essential in Buber's (2012) theories

on dialogue. In the context of this research, an empathetic embodied dialogue seeks to explore how relationships are affected when the body is central in the encounters in the dance workshop series. Empathetic embodied dialogue focuses on how we approach, connect, and interact with one another when dancing creatively together.

1.3 Research aims

In this research I aim to explore what emerges from an embodied dialogue between myself as the teacher and my students, as well as the embodied encounters I notice between students in the creative dance classes. To facilitate this main goal, five aims are set as follows:

- To consider how dialogical pedagogy unfolds in the context of dance education as a creative dance class for 1st graders in an international school.
- To explore peer interactions and teacher-student interactions in relation to dialogical pedagogy and embodied dialogue.
- To investigate how embodied ways of connecting with one another might impact interactions and relationships in the class.
- To understand how pedagogical approaches might connect with ideas of inclusion, empathy, and generosity towards self and others in the dance classes.
- To explore how engaging in a creative dance workshop series, and an embodied dialogue, might give experiences that impact the students' expression of emotions.

These five aims provide this study with focus and contribute to its significance which will be outlined below.

1.4 Research significance

This thesis seeks to contribute to knowledge regarding the impact dance education might have in educational settings, such as the early years of elementary school education, when students participate in six creative dance classes and engage in an embodied dialogue with their teacher and their peers. There are several areas of significance within this research.

Firstly, I am involved in this study as the researcher and as the dance teacher for a group of students – so I am also a participant of sorts within this thesis. Therefore, I find significance in how embodied encounters and dialogue might unfold in the six dance classes and influence my pedagogical practice. As a dance educator, I strive to offer my students a thriving learning environment. This study explores how an embodied dialogue affect my teacher practice and my interactions with the students. Even though I have explored creative dance with students of various ages prior to commencing this thesis, this was the first time I have offered a three-week creative dance workshop series for 1st graders in this school. Being immersed in a different teaching environment and teaching the six dance classes in my second language, English, also has significance for my understanding of how I might approach students, convey ideas in the dance classes, and reflect on my empathetic embodied dialogue when interacting with students.

The context of this research also has significance to me as a dance educator. Research points out that there is little discussion around the concept of creative dance in a school context, as well as the potential of embodied encounters between students (Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019). Building on the extensive research on embodied awareness and embodied dialogue within dance education (Anttila, 2003, 2007; Braun & Contera, 2021; Jeffrey, 2017; Østern, 2013), research emphasizes the need to include embodied approaches to foster knowledge for students in general school settings and broader educational environments

(Gibbons, 2010; Sansom, 2008; Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019). Randee Lipson Lawrence (2012) points out how bodily intuition and embodied knowledge is evident in adult education. Therefore, I acknowledge the responsibility and importance I might have as a dance educator when I teach and look closely on my own teaching practice, with participants who are children, finding themselves engaged in dance education in their school.

This study also has significance for the students who are directly involved as participants in the six creative dance classes. Dance scholar Adrienne Sansom's (2008) research focuses on arts in education and early childhood education, emphasizing the need to consider how often children in school are provided opportunities to move in a way that actively engages their body awareness. As the participants of this study are given the opportunity to engage and interact with their peers through creative dancing, they might gain a broader awareness and understanding of how dialogue plays out. Experiencing bodily encounters might add to my students' understanding of who they are and who their peers are, and how one can move together and share space together. Through this study, there is potential to investigate students' understanding and experiences of how embodied dialogue might inform the practice of generosity and respect towards self and others.

Researching embodied dialogue and creative dance in a school context offers opportunities to investigate the role dance has in educating students and providing space for children to develop their understanding of relationships and the world (Catalano & Leonard, 2016; Temple et al., 2020; Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019). Eva Anttila and Charlotte Svendler Nielsen (2019) draw out the significance dance has in fostering learning and transformation in a special way, stating that: "Dance connects non-symbolic, multimodal sensations with symbolic, cultural meanings in an embodied, performative way where multiple meanings can be shared, negotiated, and interpreted" (p.331). Karen Gibbons (2010) also urges schools to

consider their responsibility in fostering responsible citizens and future leaders through creative and somatic approaches that promotes and empowers wellbeing for students as well as positive social skills. In the world today, there are various levels of tensions, conflicts, and now, even war on the European continent. Within such turbulent times, it is perceived that this research has significance as it gives relevance to how embodied dialogue and creative dance offer ways to resolve tension and possible conflicts, and to understand difference (Anttila et al., 2019). This study offers insight into how embodied dialogue could foster skills that are helpful when approaching situations of tensions and negotiating inside and outside of the classroom.

Finally, there is a relevant and present discussion about dance education and its place in the school (Giguere, 2021; Sansom, 2008: Stinson, 1997, 2014; Temple et al., 2020; Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019). This study may benefit researchers who investigate dance and its relevance for students in educational settings, such as the early years of elementary school education. By understanding how embodied dialogue unfolds and informs teachers' and students' experiences in class, the potential of adding this study to the body of literature on dance in educational settings might strengthen the relevance of dance in environments such as the school. Literature reveals the lack of research on the impact and effects on embodied dialogue within creative dance classes in the early years of elementary education in an international school context, therefore this study also adds significance to the context of it being an international school.

1.5 Overview of the thesis

This thesis includes six chapters, which present how an empathetic embodied dialogue might foster sensitivity and awareness towards self and others in a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders. The five chapters following this introduction are outlined below.

Chapter 2 of this thesis presents the literature review. This chapter explores conceptual and contextual literature that shares the ideas of Martin Buber's (1923/2012) dialogical pedagogy, and theories of embodiment (Engelsrud & Standal, 2013; Guilherme & Freire, 2014; Merleau-Ponty, 2004). Firstly, the chapter differentiates what teacher-student relationships and peer relationships might look like in educational contexts. Secondly, this chapter examines how dialogical pedagogy has been applied to dance education, and how embodied and verbal approaches to dialogue might offer various strengths to students' learning. Thirdly, this chapter presents contextual literature related to dance education, creative dance, and dance in educational settings.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological framework for this study. The chapter starts with an exploration of the characteristics of qualitative research. The chapter goes on to offer insight into how hermeneutic phenomenology is used as a method to investigate and understand the auto-narratives that are central to this study. Data collection methods and the process of analysis are also explained in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter identifies my positionality as a researcher and participant and attends to the ethical issues, challenges, and limitations encountered in this research.

Chapter 4 presents one part of the results, analysis, and discussion that emerges from this research. This chapter focuses on the reflections I make related to my own embodied

experiences, strategies, and approaches as a dance teacher. This chapter offers ten auto-narratives and additional notes from my journal, that are analyzed and connected to the discussion of how embodied dialogue is impacted by emotions, empathy, and inclusion. This chapter also points out the role of pedagogical tact and multimodality within teaching practice, and how this is part of the embodied dialogue in the dance workshop series.

Chapter 5 builds on the results, analysis, and discussion that has been offered in chapter 4 and goes in-depth with eight narratives, additional notes, and excerpts from my journal, the multimodal interview, and video documentation that was gathered in the data collection. This discussion explores the embodied experiences and encounters of the participants involved. This chapter brings the discussion towards the awareness and sensitivity to self and others, and how conflict resolution and trust have the potential to inform, and emerge from, the embodied dialogue.

Chapter 6 provides a conclusion to the thesis. The key findings from chapter 4 and chapter 5 are offered at the beginning of the chapter. Recommendations are also provided based on the key findings. Possible directions of future research are also suggested.

Chapter 2. Literature review

This chapter offers a literature review based on the main research question:

How might I, as a dance educator, facilitate a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders that focus on sensitivity and awareness towards self and others through an empathetic embodied dialogical approach?

Dialogical pedagogy and embodied dialogue are the theoretical frameworks that holds this research. Therefore, I start this chapter by offering a short introduction to Martin Buber's idea of the I-It and I-You relation as it will guide the understanding of how this relates to the teacher-student relationships and the peer-relationships that I explore in this research. From there I review how dance education has related to dialogical pedagogy in previous research. The way dance education relates to dialogue emphasizes the embodied experiences that could be felt when engaging in creative dance classes. Embodiment can be grounded in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory that focuses on how the body is central in how we perceive and understand the world, and our interactions with others (Guilherme & Freire, 2014; Merleau-Ponty, 2004). This is further explored in relation to how scholars investigate dance and embodiment (Catalano & Leonard, 2016; Engelsrud & Standal, 2013; Falkembach & Icle, 2020; Payne & Costas, 2020).

Building on the idea that dialogue and embodiment open possibilities of how to connect and engage with others in various ways, I am curious about exploring literature that gives insight into relational approaches and aspects to which I can relate. Later in the thesis I discuss my embodied experiences throughout my dance workshop series that this research is grounded within.

I first dive into dialogical pedagogy and what this could look like in educational settings. From there I explore dance in relation to dialogical pedagogy and embodiment. With the creative dance practice unfolding in an international school context, I also find it vital to investigate how dance has been and can contribute to international education settings, which will be discussed further in the last section of this chapter.

2.1 Dialogical pedagogy

Dialogical pedagogy expresses ideas related to how relationships are different, and what identifies relationships. Seeing how dialogical pedagogy has been applied to educational settings and in dance education, I provide a short introduction to the background and philosophy of dialogue in this section.

Israeli philosopher Martin Buber introduces the idea of dialogical pedagogy in his main work, *Ich und Du* (1923//2012), and offers insight into different views on relationships. The two main themes which he explores and illustrates are the 'I-It' and the 'I-Thou' relation. Buber (2012) discusses how the relationships one forms in life, as well as the encounters one has with people in different situations, will determine what kind of relationship it is and what kind of characteristics these relationships will hold. In the educational system, Buber (2012) explains that one will face both the 'I-It' relation and the 'I-Thou' relation which allows for balance and space to either engage in relations or distance oneself from a reciprocal relationship. This balance can be seen in light of how differently man experiences his world as well as what one sees as objective and subjective (Baniwal, 2014; Buber, 2012). To give further insights on Buber's theories which are considered relevant to this study, the following sections explore specific points in further detail.

2.1.1 Dialogue in different relationships (‘I-It’ and ‘I-Thou’)

In Buber’s (2012) opinion the ‘I-It’ relation is described as a process where one person is positioned as the ‘I’ and the other person an ‘It’. Further examination on this relationship reveals that one will be met with little reciprocity and instead have an attitude of less acknowledgment toward something or someone. The person who is met as an ‘It’ in the encounter has little influence on the relationship. This relationship does not then allow for equality and is often seen in educational and therapeutic disciplines where one is the talker and the other a listener. Scholars agree that inclusion within such a relationship is often more or less one-sided (Baniwal, 2014; Buber 2012; Lawrence, 2019; Stern, 2013). An ‘I-It’ relationship may not offer equality; however, it could still be tied together with a sense of mutuality (Baniwal, 2014; Buber 2012). An example would be that those involved in this kind of relationship might have a mutual interest in learning about something or someone, or they might have mutual respect/disrespect for one another. If I, in my role as a dance educator, entered an ‘I-It’ relationship with one of my students we would have a mutual interest in dance, but I could potentially see the student’s body as an object that will be trained and obtain technical perfection, rather than focusing on the aim of getting to know and understand the student fully. The lack of effort in getting to know the student as described in the example above blocks the possibility of turning this relationship into what Buber (2012) calls an ‘I-Thou’ relationship.

The ‘I-Thou’ relationship values inclusion, which according to Buber, means experiencing from the other side (Anttila, 2007; Buber, 2012; Kauppila, 2007). With this in mind, Buber's own words may reveal another depth to this relationship: “For Thou is more than It realizes” (Buber, 1971, p.9). Therefore, the ‘I-Thou’ relation can be seen as embracing inclusion and empathy. This relationship assumes that encounters with other people lead to a

responsive experience. The responsive experience is what Buber declares to establish the world of relation (Buber, 2012, p.73). Buber (2012) describes this kind of relation by acknowledging the encounter as being a space between the I and the You. In His own words: “Spirit is not in the I but between the I and You” (Buber, 2012, p.120). By this, we can understand that there is always a point of connection, an awareness of the other. The mutual experience of sensation and awareness of the other can be an inner action like a stillness, or it can be verbal speech. Literature shows how an embodied sensation also can have value for that relational encounter and the embodied dialogue that may take place (Anttila 2007; Buber, 1947/2004, 2012).

Dialogical pedagogy highlights encounters with people and approaches towards people. In light of dialogical pedagogy, we may say that it is the encounters between one and the other, and the responses to one another that are valued (Banival, 2014; Buber, 2012; Lawrence, 2019). Vikas Baniwal (2014) offers reflections on educational practice considering Buber’s ideas. Baniwal (2014) discusses the difference in *sharing* experiences with other people as an observer contrary to being *engaged* in experiences with other people. Being engaged in an activity activates a response. This is something that can be looked at closely in the classroom, as there are students that might choose to not engage in activities given by their teachers. Baniwal (2014) underlines that the action of engagement may impact the natural response from one being to the other. One could say that the impulsive and immediate response in dialogue encourages a holistic approach to the relationship. Scholars who indicate how response in dialogue might not only be verbal but also nonverbal and embodied, bring a perspective that relationship can encompass the whole being (Baniwal, 2014; Buber, 2012; Lawrence, 2019).

Penny Lawrence (2019) expands on the ideas of dialogical pedagogy and in her study of smaller children defines a dialogical approach as: “shared attention to potential dialogical relation as participants perceive, co-construct and communicate meaning together” (p1). The idea of shared attention conforms with the responsive attitude Buber (1923/2012) enlightens, and which Baniwal (2014) discusses as an act of being engaged in the experience. The potential relation that Lawrence mentions emphasizes how one and the other relies on the act of engagement and response. Looking away from the shared attention, Buber also suggests an important aspect of the self in a dialogical I-Thou relation which he names: “the openness and vulnerability of the self in the presence of the 'other'” (Buber, 2002, p. 106). The potential of a relationship may gain from being open and vulnerable in the situation with other people around. Such a view can then be extended to the context of the classroom, as discussed in the next section.

2.1.2 Dialogue in the Classroom

Building on the ideas presented above, it can be asked: How might dialogue be different for teacher and student and in peer relationships? Heli Kauppila (2007) points out that there is an ongoing dialogue between the self and the world, like the dialogue between student and teacher, between student and his or her surroundings, and dialogue amongst students. In this section, I will look to scholars that differentiate the relationship between teacher and student and peer relationships.

Teacher and student

Buber (2012) encourages the teacher to see the student as more than the sum of qualities and aspirations and rather approach the student holistically, by apprehending and affirming the student. A caring approach to the students embraces empathy and aims to foster

the student's growth by inspiring and assisting them (Anttila 2003; Buber 2012; Gose, 2018; Kauppila, 2007). This kind of pedagogical approach can show that the teacher holds a lot of responsibility in guiding the student without overstepping and being controlling (Baniwal, 2014; Buber, 2012). A teacher's challenge could be to balance mutuality and inclusion in the relationship, and Baliwan (2014) claims that the delicate balance between mutuality and inclusion weighs on the teacher's shoulders. Buber (2012) advises teachers to view the student as a 'thou' and practice this by relating to the student and experiencing from their side, which could awaken the 'I-Thou' relationship in the students. However, Buber (2012) argues that the relationship must be balanced in a way where the student won't live through the shared situation from the teacher's point of view if the intention is an educational relationship. The educational relationship is sustained by an approach where the teacher gains the student's trust which allows a space of mutual trust and respect. Teachers who gain their students' trust have the possibility to create an open and thriving learning environment. Dance scholar Eva Anttila (2007) summarizes dialogue with students as the key to understanding the pedagogical moment and the children's experiences. The teacher-student relationship can therefore lead to reflection and improvement of pedagogical practice, as well as getting to know and understand the students.

Literature related to dialogical practice points out that a teacher-student relationship may not be meant as a long-term or in-depth relation (Gose, 2018). However, the teacher still holds the most responsibility in being self-aware in their ways of engaging and communicating with their students, and it is encouraged that teachers should intentionally cultivate a process of reflection and dialogue that may be critical to their own ways. This reflection can happen through writing, discussion, or as a close examination of one's own teaching practice. The reflections should aim to improve empathetic awareness among teachers and students, which could lead to inspiring students to engage in dialogue (Anttila,

2007; Gose, 2018). Dialogical pedagogy related to the teacher-student relationship reveals that teachers should be aware and reflect on their pedagogical approaches and interactions with students. This has inspired me to explore what pedagogical approaches and strategies are needed to create a safe environment for the students where they feel safe to respond and engage in the creative dance class. This section has pointed out that the teacher holds the most responsibility in being aware and attentive to their students. The next section will explore how peer relationships could look from a dialogical viewpoint.

Peer relationships

Scholars point out that there will be many personalities and dynamics that shape a group of students in the classroom (Mir Mohammed Sadeghi et al., 2019). According to Buber, "Every actual relationship to another being in the world is exclusive. Its You is freed and steps forth to confront us in its uniqueness" (Buber, 2012, p.174). In Buber's view, students all carry uniqueness and values that could shape relationships differently. Being with other students may have such an impact that it creates bonds and connections with people. This makes me curious to see how students respond differently to interactions with their classmates within the creative dance classes, and to explore what might evoke their different responses? What kind of connections might the students experience, and what might link students together in a way where they experience a bond with their peers? Contrary to the teacher-student relationship, Buber (2004, 2012) underscores that peer relations may welcome mutual inclusiveness. When the relationship is characterized in a way where two people experience the viewpoint of the other, they have entered an 'I-Thou' relationship. This action, according to Buber, allows for friendship (Buber, 2004, 2012), and friendship is a relationship where emotions also play a part (Anttila, 2003; Buber, 2012; Mir Mohammed Sadeghi et al., 2019).

Looking at the friendship between peers in a dialogical frame one is relying on both mutuality and inclusion from both parts (Anttila 2003; Buber 2012). An example of what this could look like is glimpsed in a childhood memory: “I recalled deep involvement with my best friends: this involvement and commitment was very profound and all-encompassing as if it formed an imaginary circle around us as if two became one” (Anttila, 2003, p.90). This representation shows a strong connection between peers, and as Anttila (2003) reflects over friendship through Buber's ideas, she also questions if they are romanticized and idealistic. Throughout her own research, she concludes that “friendship is a complex place that cannot be neatly organized and controlled” (p.92). Since friendship here is seen as a complex matter, more questions arise: “Are children capable of inclusion, or is inclusion an idea that has significance in children’s lives?” (Anttila, 2003, p.91). Without sharing answers to her own questions, Anttila concludes that the teacher's responsibility in this matter is to practice inclusion in his or her relations to children, which may have an impact on their understanding of inclusion, relationships, and friendships (Anttila, 2003). In my own practice, I am curious to see what kind of emotions affect relationships between peers, and how children respond to the idea of inclusion in the dance class.

2.1.3 Dialogic pedagogy in dance education

Having established the theoretical foundation of dialogical pedagogy, in this section I point out how dialogic pedagogy has been applied to the context of dance education. I seek to offer practical examples shared through research of how dialogue might be connected to dance, therefore I mainly illustrate this by using examples from dance education research. However, it can also be acknowledged that in education more broadly, there are various examples of how approaches relatable to dialogical pedagogy can be valuable for this

research, such as participatory, community, and democratic practice. Such approaches engage interaction and inclusion and therefore dialogue from different standpoints (see for example Biesta, 2011; Furholt, 2018; Ree & Johansson, 2019; Wise et al., 2019). However, examples from research that specifically captivates dialogue and dance give the possibility to focus intently on dialogue and dance.

Anttila's (2003) doctoral project *A Dream Journey to the Unknown* was an art education project for 3rd graders who were engaged in dance classes at an elementary school in Helsinki, where dialogue was also applied to this context. From a dance educator's viewpoint, Anttila, reveals how dialogue consists of many layers, for example, dialogue between participants, dialogue with the music, dialogue with the body. Scholars confirm that dialogue can take place in various ways (Dils & Crosby, 2001; Dysthe 1997). Key findings from the study *A Dream Journey to the Unknown* uncovers what layers dialogue may consist of and are discussed further in the following sections.

The inner dialogue where one is aware and sensitive to the body is according to Anttila (2007) the first dialogue students have when dialogue is applied to dance education. This is also in line with research that highlights sensitivity towards the body and the kinesthetic sense (Svendler Nielsen, 2009; Stinson, 2005). Training the skill of being sensitive to the body creates consciousness around the body. Sensitivity and consciousness around how the body moves and how it feels being still, how the weight of body parts feel in different movements, how energy flows through and affects movements may lead to a sense of ownership of the body. Anttila (2007) proposes that this inner dialogue may even lead to an appreciation of our bodily integrity. Anttila (2007) also emphasizes how establishing a conscious body allows one to relate sensations to our feelings. Feelings, according to Buber (2012), are what is "in here" where one lives and recovers from the institutions (p.126). The

inner dialogue can bring experiences we have in the classroom or in relation with other people to life by connecting them in relation to the world. Charlotte Svendler Nielsen (2009) highlights bodily awareness by saying: “It is through our bodies that we translate our perceptions to actions and vice versa—actions also color our perceptions” (p.80). The inner dialogue is in a continuous conversation with the surroundings and the ones around us which communicate to our bodies and to the world.

The inner dialogue, which involves sensing with our own bodies, may help us respect, understand, grow empathy and be sensitive to other people’s bodily existence and their bodily integrity (Anttila, 2007; Sansom, 2009; Wise et al., 2019). If our inner dialogue has helped us connect sensations to feelings and learned to sense how the body is throughout pleasure, pain, comfort, or discomfort, Anttila (2007) proposes the possibility that we may have a more generous approach to other people’s bodies too. Serenity Wise, Ralph Buck, and Rose Martin (2019) discuss how the potential for empathy towards other people lies in and through movement, where moving together can favor a space for emotions that feel non-threatening. From an inner dialogue that engages sensitivity, emotions, and empathy one might connect with other human beings, and relationships can take place. Buber (2012) calls attention to how the drive for contact and tactile contact with people is essentially a drive for a reciprocal relationship that is closed in by tenderness. Moving together in a dance class with a focus on dialogue may therefore foster a tender and generous approach to other people. It is therefore curiosity that brings me to ask: how might I as a dance teacher incorporate a pedagogy that clearly connects with the idea of inclusion, empathy, and being generous towards each other in the dance class? This question also leads me to another thought: what kind of experiences will the students meet that hold potential to bring out their own generosity to other peers within the dance classes?

The nonverbal and verbal approach to dialogue offers different strengths to the embodied experience of connecting with one another. Scholars who highlight nonverbal communication might say that the world expands through the sense of exploration, awareness, silence, and movement and creates opportunities to relate with one another through sensing and being aware (Anttila, 2007; Buber, 2012; Koff, 2000; Svendler Nielsen, 2009) Buber (2012) acknowledges the many ways a man might express oneself: “Man speaks in many tongues - tongues of language, or art, of action” (p.120). Anttila (2007) finds from her own experience how silence signifies listening as one might receive signals from the body while it makes dialogue with the body, music, or surroundings. This suggests how embodied dialogue that springs from awareness in my own body might help establish a dialogue with others.

On another note, Buber (2012) claims that language is perfected through speech and reply (p.210). The speech and reply offer confrontation and inclusion in a way where people can recognize and be recognized. Practically using language in a dance class is more than often a huge part of the class. A verbal approach to dialogue in a dance setting finds voice and words to be generating an atmosphere in the class. Anttila (2003, 2007) emphasizes how tones and intensities might be added to dialogue by shifting between softness, firmness, warmness, and coolness (p.54). Having explored dialogical pedagogy in relation to dance education, the following section steps into the concept and context of dance education more broadly to offer a clear frame of relevant ideas in relation to this research.

2.2 Dance education

This section gives further insight into what dance education is, and how dance might find its place in educational settings. Firstly, this section seeks to offer an understanding in

how dance education is perceived by dance scholars, followed by characteristics of how dance might impact learning in various ways.

Miriam Giguere (2021) outlines how dance can be perceived: “Dance holds a place in culture, commerce, and education. It is a social, cultural, and personal practice, as well as a field of business and a subject in education at all age levels across the world” (p.132). Dance scholars give insights into how dance education is culturally affected, and in constant change due to globalization and global implications (Heyang & Martin, 2020; Rowe et al., 2018; Shapiro, 2008; Svendler Nielsen & Burridge, 2015). Dance education wraps dance and education into one concept that is broadly defined; it may include “anything from semi-professional ballet training to community dance projects. Generally speaking, the connotation is toward humanistic, student-centered practices where dance is seen as a means for personal growth and well-being” (Anttila, 2007, p.866). It could be perceived that these definitions of dance education are very open, however, dance educators clarify what it could look like by giving examples from research and experience. Scholars highlight how student-centered practices, where dance may impact personal growth and well-being, are key in dance education (Anttila, 2007; Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Becker, 2013; Sansom, 2009; Svendler Nielsen, 2009; Theocharidou et al., 2018). Dance focuses on achieving personal growth like the development of self-discipline, self-expression, communication skills, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Anttila & Svendler Nielsen 2019; Barsky, 2021; Becker, 2013; Koff, 2000; Svendler Nielsen & Burridge, 2015). Anttila and Svendler Nielsen (2019) even propose that dance is: “a location for personal excellence” (p.331), which gives dance an opportunity to draw out one's unique potential.

Dance education seeks to learn about the body and how it can move (Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Becker, 2013; Gilbert, 2005; Koff, 2000; Svendler Nielsen, 2009;

Payne & Costas, 2020). Koff (2000) emphasizes how dance education provides an arena for students to let out energy and movements in a structured outlet. Susan Koff (2000) goes on to say that dance education can open the possibility to explore body parts, motions, and movements in relation to time, space, and energy in an environment that includes self and others. Kelly Becker (2013) highlights how dance allows students to strengthen muscles and increase flexibility, as well as potentially improving balance. Extending on these ideas, dance scholars strongly assert that dance education should apply to fostering the students' kinesthetic sense (Sansom, 2008; Stinson, 2005; Payne & Costa, 2020). Encouraging students to be aware of their inner sensations can strongly impact how one learns and performs dance, as well as how one perceives the art. This awareness may initiate a response to our feelings and allow us to move freely and with integrity. Other dance educators would emphasize not only the quieter, inward sensations, but the louder, outspoken expressions and languages of dance. Dance educator Anne Green Gilbert (2015) argues that “dance is an essential part of every person because people are dance. The body is a tool for communication. People express themselves through movement. They cannot read, speak, touch, hear or write without movement” (Gilbert, 2015, p.7).

Supported by this broad understanding of what dance education is and how dance education might impact learning, the next section focuses on the expressive aspects of dance education which often might occur in creative dance practices. Creative dance and its place within dance education is further explored and outlined below.

2.2.1 Dance education and creative dance practices

As noted in the section 2.2, dance education is broadly defined, and supports several genres like ballet, jazz, modern, improvisation, and creative dance as well as a range of pedagogical approaches, needs, and settings. As this research specifically focuses on the use

of creative dance this section seeks to offer an understanding of what creative dance might mean within dance education.

Dance scholars state that one of dance education's aims is to stimulate creativity (Anttila, 2007; Bresler, 2004; Gilbert, 2015; Stinson, 2002). Gilbert (2015) explains that creative dance is something that combines skill development and self-expression and is a form of learning that is relevant for all ages. Research shows that when challenging children in dance and creative movement activities there is potential for the students to feel empowered and seen and more engaged (Anttila, 2007; Gilbert, 2015; Sansom 2009). Creative dance can also apply to pretend imagery as an approach that suits younger children (Sasha & Russ, 2006; Stinson, 2002). Dance educator Susan Stinson (2002) points out that connecting movement to real or the imaginary worlds allows children's experiences to feel more meaningful and relevant. Stinson (1988, 2002) also highlights the importance in bringing dance and embodied experiences through creative expression into the school. Liora Bresler (2004), an educator in music, highlights the value of embodied education, and expresses that creative dance promotes natural movements, and that creative dance also encourages qualities of movement.

Similarly, Gilbert (2015) proposes that concepts of creative movements should be applied to the classroom because it allows students to go in-depth of the theme for the class. Concepts that foster dance skills and movement awareness could be space, time, force, body, and choreographic forms, which are building on Rudolph von Laban’s movement theory (Dörr, 2003; Gilbert, 2015). Sansom (2009) states that creativity is closely connected with playfulness and thoughtfulness and that it, therefore, brings forth a holistic experience of moving, thinking, knowing, and making choices. Tori Sasha and Sandra Russ (2006) agree that when teaching children new skills, the learning environment should be connected with

playfulness, as it allows children to have an experience that connects a new skill with familiarity. When opening space for a playful arena where the kids might experience dance closely connected to a safe space where play and meaningful learning are intertwined, students might naturally be engaged even though the students may have very different levels of interest in dance (Sansom, 2008; Stinson, 2002). Play and playing can promote children's holistic wellbeing and should therefore be promoted as an important place in education and early childhood education (Sansom, 2008).

2.2.2 Dance education applied in an international school context

The previous sections 2.2 and 2.2.1, point towards the relevance of dance education and creative dance practices within my teaching practice of this research, as I am engaging with 1st graders in the school. Now that I have communicated an understanding towards what dance education is and what creative dance practice looks like, this section will look at dance education in the context of international educational settings. As I carry out the research for this study in an international school context it is helpful to find how dance education has been applied internationally in schools that feature multiculturalism and diversity.

There are many educational settings around the world that offer dance education (Bamford, 2006; Gilbert, 2005; Mabingo, 2019; Melchior, 2009, 2011; Sansom, 2009; Svendler Nielsen, 2009; Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020). Some schools offer dance as part of the music or physical education class and curriculum, or dance might be its own subject in school; dance might also occur in the school as a short-term event, a workshop, or a visit from guest teachers (Bamford, 2006; Gilbert, 2005; Melchior, 2009; Sansom, 2009). However, when looking at dance education in an international school context, one could draw examples from and parallels with dance that might occur as part of student exchange programs, international projects, or political efforts that aim for collaboration or cultural

connections (Anttila et al., 2018; Dils & Crosby, 2001; Mabingo, 2019; Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020). Within the literature it seems clear that internationalization in dance education is a topic of investigation (see for example: Mabingo, 2015, 2019; Martin, 2013; Svendler Nielsen & Burridge, 2015). At the same time there appears to be a body of literature on diversity in the classroom and culturally sensitive, relevant, and responsive pedagogies (see for example: Ferro et al., 2019; McCarthy-Brown, 2017; Melchior, 2009; Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020). Within the range of literature, it seems that the specific context of dance in an international school (as noted in section 1.4, p.20, in the introduction chapter) is somewhat limited. Therefore, to help frame the context of dance education in an international school, the following sections explore themes such as culture, diversity, and interculturalism which are themes that are perhaps particularly relevant to an international school setting.

Pedagogical practices with diverse cultures

Ideas of how education segues with culture is found in research that focuses on diversity in educational settings. In a school context that is immersed with diversity such as interculturalism or multiculturalism, scholars highlight the importance of applying a certain pedagogy (Melchior 2009, 2011; Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020). This makes me aware of how I as a researcher and dance educator should be sensitive in my approaches to the students, and I am curious to investigate how best to approach such a diverse group. In an artistic educational project for diverse groups of elementary school students in Denmark and South Africa, Charlotte Svendler Nielsen, Gerard Samuel, Lisa Wilson, and Karen Vedel (2020) found that it is important to consider the cultural dimension of the children's diverse, embodied and lived experiences as meaning is culturally formed and embedded (Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020). In the project initiated by Svendler Nielsen et al., titled *Red apples green apples*, dance and visual arts was offered as an arts-integrated pedagogy focused on

giving multiple learning entries for enriched learning. Key findings from this research show that cultural and embodied sensitivity were found to be a condition for their pedagogical practice. Svendler Nielsen et al., (2020) explain their pedagogical approach is: “to situate learning in both the lived and embodied here-and-now experiences and frames of reference of the children” (p.20). The embodied and culturally sensitive approach is in this project found to enrich learning, foster inclusion, activate deeply meaningful experiences, and initiate sensitivity, and responsiveness in relationships with others and activities that unfold. The strategies I need to take as a dance educator in my approach to the students and their experiences hold possibilities of limiting or expanding their learning, and I question how I can apply a culturally sensitive and embodied pedagogy in the classroom. If approaches I take foster inclusion and responsiveness in the students, I have awakened an “I-Thou” relationship, which allows for meaningful interactions.

Finding examples from literature that displays the relation dance has in a school context immersed with diversity, I have discovered that projects offered by dance educators in an international school context seek to explore the embodied relationship towards self, others, and towards learning experiences in class. Dance classes could either foster sensitivity to embodied explorations and learning experiences (Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020), foster awareness in relationships, especially in the frames of inclusion or integration (Anttila et al., 2018; Melchior, 2009; Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020), or discover understanding of one's experience and meaning as well as other’s experiences and meanings (Mabingo, 2019; Svendler Nielsen et al., 2020). This inspires me to investigate how I may apply ideas that foster sensitivity within embodied learning experiences and awareness of the other ones involved in the creative dance classes.

2.3 Summary

The conceptual and contextual literature review has explored relationships and dance through the ideas of Martin Buber's dialogical pedagogy and ideas on embodiment in relation to dialogue in dance. Through reviewing the literature, dialogical pedagogy provides my research with a theoretical framework to understand relationships, especially in the context of education, like teacher-student relationships and peer relationships. Dialogical pedagogy has also been applied to dance and creative dance practice. Literature has also been explored in relation to what dance education is, and how it has been applied in an international educational context and led to questions of its value and place of dance in the school.

The following chapter presents the methodology I have used for this research, and its relevance towards the research question: *How might I, as a dance educator, facilitate a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders that focuses on sensitivity and awareness towards self and others through an empathetic embodied dialogical approach?*

3. Research methodology

In this chapter I articulate how qualitative research, and within this phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology, is used as the methodological frame for this investigation and how it is relevant for this study. Susann Laverty (2003) proposes: "A methodology is not a correct method to follow, but a creative approach to understanding, using whatever approaches are responsive to particular questions and subject matter" (p. 28). I start by explaining why this master's thesis has engaged with qualitative research, before I then dig deeper into what phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology look like as a methodology. Next, I point towards the research methods I have used for this study before I outline the process of analysis. Furthermore, I discuss my positionality as the researcher, as well as ethical considerations that have been made in relation to this study. Lastly, I discuss the challenges and limitations I have encountered as I have been working on this master's thesis.

3.1 Qualitative research

This research sits within a qualitative framework. Therefore, it is pertinent to offer an overview of how I, as the researcher, understand and apply qualitative research in this study. Qualitative research differs from quantitative research in a way where it emphasizes an interest of subjective experience and meaning rather than objective facts (Brinkmann & Tangaard, 2012; Sherman & Webb, 1988; Silverman, 2021). David Silverman (2013) advises that qualitative research should be favored if there is interest in exploring people's life histories or everyday behaviors. John Creswell and Cheryl Poth (2017) underscore how qualitative research often addresses a social or human problem, and how a theoretical framework helps inform the study and shape the design of the research. Scholars also point to

how qualitative approaches are sensitive to people and places, and often focus on finding the meanings and experiences held by a few participants (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Qualitative research allows the researcher to be close to the participants, and through interactions and communication go in depth on a specific research question or topic (Kvarv, 2021). Sture Kvarv (2021) explains how qualitative research has many different components to it and informs the shaping of a research question and analyzing and conveying the empirical material. These different components do not necessarily happen in a set order, but rather qualitative research often involves a process where the different parts of the study intertwine and 'talk' to each other in a way that can be adjusted along the way. The flexible and dynamic nature of qualitative research proposes an inductive approach that also allows the research question to morph and adjust throughout the study to better reflect the questions needed to understand the research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It also means that the data collection strategies and processes of analysis will also modify in response.

The research question I ask focuses: *How might I, as a dance educator, facilitate a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders that focus on sensitivity and awareness towards self and others through an empathetic embodied dialogical approach*? Therefore, it is suitable to engage with a methodological view that allows my own experiences to be centered and explored in this study, as well as closeness to the participants, and ways of capturing the subjective experience of those involved. The aim for exploring the lived experience that I and my participants encounter is therefore fitting to qualitative research.

3.2 Phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology

Having set the broad frame of qualitative research that this master's thesis sits within, I now offer insight to phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. Laverty (2003) discusses the methodological similarities and differences within phenomenology and hermeneutic methodologies by pointing out how the data collection and the understanding of lived experience may be similar, but the position of the researcher and the process of analysis can be very different. In the next two sections of this chapter, I explore both understandings. I am involved closely with the participants inviting my own and their experiences to become apparent, therefore I find both standpoints informative and useful for my research. Firstly, I point out the phenomenological viewpoint. Then, I explore hermeneutic phenomenology which I experience and believe will enlighten this study further.

3.2.1 Phenomenology

As I have positioned myself as a researcher who directly and actively engages with the participants through my role as the dance educator of the workshop series I am delivering, I find phenomenology to be an appropriate choice of methodology as it embraces the experiences of those involved in the study. Phenomenological research is a study of the structures of consciousness and experience one may have in the encounter of a phenomena, like the encounter of a situation or a person (Fraleigh, 1991; Laverty, 2003; Van Manen, 2016). Phenomenology aims to make the structures of consciousness clearer by seeking meaning and understanding of the lived experience. Max Van Manen (2016), scholar of methodology, focuses on making phenomenology accessible and practical within educational settings. Van Manen (1997) describes this methodology in the following way: "Phenomenological understanding is distinctly existential, emotive, enactive, embodied, situational, and non-theoretic" (p. 346).

Sondra Fraleigh (1991), professor in dance and somatic studies, stresses that motion and time will influence our attention and perspectives. Fraleigh (1991) explains further that "phenomenology develops unpredictably, according to the contents of consciousness. This is its first level of method. Its second level develops philosophical perspectives from the seed of consciousness" (p.11). We perceive phenomena through the existence of time, and because of this, Fraleigh highlights how we should carry an awareness of how our present state of being in certain situations will be influenced, and in turn influence our experiences.

Van Manen (2007) underscores the practical look on phenomenology when he says: "phenomenology of practice operates in the space of the formative relations between who we are and who we may become, between how we think or feel and how we act" (p.26). This is in line with the phenomenological understanding that encourages a non-theoretic view together with a distinctly existential emotive, enactive, embodied, and situational view. Van Manen (2016) also highlights that phenomenological research includes linguistic and descriptive aspects to research which I will explain further in the next section.

3.2.2 Hermeneutical phenomenology

In hermeneutic phenomenology tools of interpretation are offered to make meaning of lived experiences (Guillen, 2019; Laverty, 2003; Van Manen, 2016; Velten Rothmund, 2019). The interpretive processes that hermeneutic phenomenology offers seek to not just understand the lived experience and phenomena, but they allow reflection through various modes of verbal and written communication such as text, music, movement, and visual arts (Laverty, 2003). Laverty (2003) further explains the interpretive process between the investigator and the research participants by pointing out the primary aims which should be

understanding and reconstruction of experience and knowledge. These aims are the focus for the interpretivist, but the investigator's perspective may evolve in the research process which one may also consider. This means that the experiences I gain through interpreting the empirical data might guide me to see things with more clarity or differently than I first expected when I started the interpretive process.

It has been noted that writing may bring a reflective attitude that could also limit the immediate description of the lived experience, yet at the same time, the value of writing is deeply acknowledged as it may contain reflective accounts of human experiences that are of phenomenological value (Velten Rothmund, 2019). In the interpretive process, there is another essential aspect to understanding, and that is questioning. In the search for meanings, questioning opens possibilities for transformation in a way where personal experience allows one to see possible meanings and truths (Laverty, 2003; Velten Rothmund 2019). Irene Velten Rothmund (2019) uses her own and students' logbooks in her research and points out from her experience how she aims to gain insight into possible meanings and truths, rather than one singular or universal understanding.

In discussing hermeneutical phenomenology as a methodology, research shows that this approach is oriented to the meaning and value of the pedagogical experiences. Research shows that this methodology represents a cogent approach to the analysis of important components of everyday pedagogy, such as ethical, relational, and practical dimensions (Guillen, 2019). This adds an important layer of why this approach is suitable for this research as I am engaged in pedagogical practice with students in a school context. In contrast to phenomenology, hermeneutic phenomenology also encourages the investigator to step into a process of self-reflection, where assumptions and biases are not set aside but part of the research process (Laverty, 2003). This self-reflection has value to me as I am looking

closely at my own practice. Nienke Wieringa (2011) discusses philosopher Donald Schön's literacy work, and highlights Schön's emphasis on the reflective practitioner and reflection-in-action which might be suggested as a research of teachers' own practical lesson design. Schön proposes that the self-reflection that happens when interacting with students is constantly co-evolving and can give insights into how lesson-design can change and develop (Wieringa, 2011). The context of the six dance classes that I designed and facilitated allows me to step into a mode of being a reflective practitioner and be directly engaged with the students in an international school. The lived experiences that will be in focus with a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective allow me to reflect on these lived experiences.

3.3 Research methods

This section introduces the research methods with which this study engages. Firstly, I outline the design I made for the creative dance workshop series which were the main locations for gathering additional data. Secondly, I introduce how journaling, and in turn the development of auto-narratives, have been relevant in collecting data. Lastly, I discuss how multi-modal interviews and video documentation has also been relevant for this study, and how I have engaged with these research methods.

3.3.1 Dance workshop series

Preparing for this dance workshop series, I knew I had six periods of 45-50 minutes to engage with a 1st grade class. I met with the class twice a week for three weeks. Because of the lack of space inside the school buildings, we were allowed to carry out the dance classes on the tennis court behind the schoolyard. This section of the research methods section gives insight to how the six dance classes were designed, and in turn data has been collected through an embodied approach (Engelsrud & Standal, 2013; Giguere, 2021; Lipson

Lawrence, 2012; Vieira, 2007). Firstly, this section illustrates how the theme of oceans was used as motivation when designing the dance workshop series. Additionally, this section goes into the details of my lesson plans (shared in the appendices of the thesis), how dance concepts and lesson structure influenced my decisions in developing the classes, and how the embodied method of gathering data informed and shaped the six dance classes.

Oceans in relation to dance education

The focus of the dance workshop series was inspired by a topic that I felt had relevance to students' learning which was oceans. Creative dance allows dance to be explored within storytelling and imagery (Sasha & Russ, 2006; Stinson, 2002), and using a theme inspired me to investigate how oceans might motivate the six dance classes to give the students an experience of how dance and oceans might be connected. UNESCO highlights an urgency in bringing water education into the curriculum for children and youth (Children and youth - Water Education). The oceans hold about 96.5 % of all earth's water, all life depends on water, therefore oceans are a key focus when UNESCO stresses its importance in school curriculum. United nations association of Norway (FN-sambandet) also aims to be an informant that might help create awareness in our choices that impact the oceans and our futures (Livet i havet - FNs bærekraftsmål). UNESCO emphasizes that water education should be multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in order to inform people on water issues (Water Education). Therefore, I was curious to explore oceans in relation to dance education and investigate how this topic may be applied in relation to a creative dance workshop series.

The interdisciplinary approach in learning about oceans that is encouraged by UNESCO (Water Education) and scholars (Amahmid, et al., 2018; Bower, et al., 2021) motivated me to see how oceans in relation to dance could influence students' understanding on water-related topics, and in turn explore how the oceans may inspire creative movements and

understanding of movements. The approach I took to present dance to these children sought to be child-centered, which is encouraged by dance scholars who educate young children (Anttila, 2007; Giguere 2011; Gilbert, 2015; Sansom, 2009). The lesson plans I designed guided my focus and intention of each class, and I also made an effort to direct the six dance classes based on the children's discoveries within each lesson. By incorporating ideas that include dance concepts and student-centered learning (Gilbert, 2015; Sansom, 2009), I aimed to create a meaningful and playful class environment where experiences were in focus.

Dance concepts and lesson structure

According to Gilbert (2015) dance concepts provide a deep understanding of movements and teach students to solve simple or complex movements. Teaching based on dance concepts provides an opportunity to expand creative dance skills and gives an arena for students to develop their expressiveness in how to convey their feelings and thoughts with their bodies. The five dance concepts: space, body, time, force, and choreographic forms shown in the table below (Figure.1) according to Gilbert (2015) helps the teacher set a frame for the class that provides exploration and skill development within the class. These dance concepts offer an understanding of how to move in space with other people, and how varieties like the use of energy, isolation of body parts, and speed of movement create dynamics that might be helpful when participating in the dance classes and interacting with each other in an embodied way.

The table below presents to the left, widely used dance concepts encouraged by Gilbert (2015, p.4-5) when teaching and preparing for a creative dance class, and to the right, some selected keynotes that I have highlighted as an inspiration for lesson planning. The table reminded me of the many possibilities and options I have when teaching certain dance

concepts and was helpful when I needed to narrow down the focus regarding what each class should contain.

Space	Self-space and general space, size, level, direction, pathway, focus
Time	Speed (slow-medium-fast) Rhythm
Force	Energy (smooth/sharp) Weight, flow
Body	Body parts, Body shapes, relationships, off balance and on balance
Choreographic forms	ABA, ABC, narrative, abstract, broken forms, chance dance,

Figure 1. Dance concepts

The creative approach to the six dance classes allowed me to go in-depth on the topic of the oceans with various approaches that turned into the five sub-themes represented in the table above. These sub-themes of space, body, time, force, and choreographic forms, inspired me to make titles that related dance to the theme of the oceans for further inspiration and are seen in the table presented below.

1.	Oceans as part of the Universe	(Space)
2.	Oceans in their various forms	(Body)
3.	The Oceans in constant movement	(Time)
4.	Force of the oceans	(Force)
5.	Stories of the Ocean	(Choreographic forms)
6.	Review class	Revisits ideas from the dance class. What stood out, what will the students request to do again, and why?

Figure 2. Sub-themes for the six dance classes

Further insights of how dance classes were planned and carried out are seen in how the structure of the lesson plans informed the choices I made before, during, and after class. Structuring the dance classes and aiming for a child-centered approach to allow my students to explore and guide decisions in class which is encouraged (Anttila, 2007; Giguere 2011; Gilbert, 2015; Sansom, 2009), I found inspiration in Gilbert's (2015) ideas of a lesson plan that provides a balance between exploration and skill development. A lesson plan that contains the five parts shown below (figure. 3) according to Gilbert (2015, p.24) provides a frame for teaching each dance concept that children can dive into and allows for deep learning of one concept at a time.

1.	Warming up (teacher-directed work) → Remembering
2.	Exploring the concept (student-centered work) → Understanding
3.	Developing skills (teacher-directed work) → Applying
4.	Creating (student-centered work) → Analyzing/ Creating
5.	Cooling down (teacher-directed and student-centered work) → Evaluating

Figure 3. Five-part lesson plan

By incorporating Gilbert's (2015) ideas into the structure of my lesson plan, which included dance concepts and student-centered learning, I aimed to design a class environment that allowed for playfulness and explorations. I designed the structure to unfold in five sections:

1.	A greeting and a warm-up dance in a circle
2.	An introduction to the theme and an explorative creative dance task
3.	A collaborative dance task
4.	Playful exercise or creating
5.	Cooling down/goodbye dance

Figure 4. Structure for dance classes inspired by Gilbert's (2015) ideas.

The six dance classes emerged from what has been illustrated above: the main theme of the oceans, the five sub-themes that were guiding the classes, titles for the exploration in

the class, and the structure shown in figure four. The next paragraph gives an idea of how lesson plans were shaped before the classes but also developed during the dance workshop series.

Lesson plans and the development of these

I prepared the dance workshop series by designing a lesson plan for each class. The topic of the oceans and the dance concepts steered the ideas I developed for each class. I made a thorough plan for the first two dance classes, and the rest of my lesson plans were developed after I had interacted with my students. The embodied encounters I had in the dance classes emphasize how the six dance classes as a method for gathering data, positioned my body to absorb information that I brought with me when I planned, taught, and developed my dance classes. Erica Jeffrey (2017) highlights: “Within a movement context such as dance, it is important to consider the body as a source of information” (p.36). Giguere (2021) also points out how the dancing body is a source of information and therefore central to the context of dance research.

As I aimed to let students' responses also influence my decisions in the class, the classes did not always go exactly as planned. Tone Pernille Østern (2013) mentions how the bodily dialogue between dance teachers and students in a dance class has the body being informed about and influenced by the interactions and movements that occur in a dance class. Within the six dance classes, I was very much relying on my students’ responses, and sometimes also their ideas to steer the focus of the class. I experienced that I also moved away from the structure that I had intended to be the same each class to a more dynamic approach where students created together came to the foreground. I usually had a very similar beginning to the class by taking time to greet them and acknowledge them by name and repeat the same warm-up dance every dance class. I also aimed to have a similar ending to

the dance classes with a cool-down dance with stretches done in a circle. Otherwise, the content in each dance class relied on my intention for the class and how I had planned to convey dance tasks, but also how it was affected by how much time we spent on each creative dance task, and how my students responded to the different elements in the class. Being informed bodily I would adjust plans, like how to divide groups, how to verbally and bodily explain creative dance tasks, and how much time we should spend on the various elements in the dance classes. The content of each class indicated how my planning of a lesson was gradually shaped by the students' responses and the embodied encounters we had in class. Detailed lesson plans and the development of these can also be found in the appendices for further insights.

The oceans theme has now been discussed as the theme that informed and shaped the creative dance workshop series delivered as part of this thesis. Building on this embodied method of gathering data, I also realized that I needed to apply other methods to gather data to further understand the experiences I was encountering in the six dance classes. Furthermore, I introduce in the following section how the methods of journaling and auto-narratives have been a resource in gathering data for this study.

3.3.2 Journaling

This project uses the method of journaling throughout the data collection period. Van Manen (2016) seeks to gain insight into lived experiences by describing and interpreting the experience. He highlights how phenomenology allows for describing and interpreting the experiences or phenomena that occur (Van Manen, 2007, 2016). Describing and interpreting my experiences through reflective journaling allows me insight that has value for the analysis process. From the process of journaling, I also shaped auto-narratives from each class that will be further explained in the next section.

My reflective journal included my written thoughts, reflections, experiences, and inspirations before and after every dance class. In journaling, there could also be some limitations. Van Manen (2016) articulates the challenges in trying to capture lived experience in the text. The difficulties may involve a lack of creativity, low motivation, poor insight, and insufficient language ability. However, despite the challenges that journaling holds, there are also advantages to consider. Van Manen emphasizes the fact that writing itself is a reflective component of the phenomenological method, noting that "to write is to reflect; to write is to research. And in writing we may deepen and change ourselves in ways we cannot predict" (Van Manen, 2016, p.20). Laverty (2003) points out that researchers who keep a reflective journal will "assist them in the process of reflection and interpretation" (p.28). Through a phenomenological lens, writing a text encourages a reflective process that tries to bring to life a lived experience where the aim is to practically live life with greater thoughtfulness and tact (Van Manen, 2016). With an eye on these inputs on journaling within research, I sought to bring stories to life through auto-narratives that were written shortly after each dance class. The next section outlines how an auto-narrative approach informs my research and how ethical stands are taken when also writing about my interactions with my students in the six dance classes.

3.3.3 Auto-narratives

In a research context, writing itself could be seen as crafting a narrative (Sikes, 2012). Therefore, I see a close connection between journaling and shaping the auto-narratives that attempt to bring my embodied experiences from the dance classes to life. The auto-narratives come from my journaling process and were shaped shortly after each dance class. Through the first step of journaling, I reflected further on examples of embodied encounters in the dance classes, which were shaped as auto-narratives, a day or two after the dance class. In the

discussion chapters (chapters 4 and 5) there are 18 auto-narratives that serve as examples of embodied encounters and the dialogue that unfolded during the dance workshop series. Some of these narratives are excerpts of longer narratives, and some narratives are divided into two parts for the purpose of emphasizing significant moments in the class. Each narrative has a title drawn directly from the story, which also gives attention to the significant moments within the narrative.

Scholars draw out the essential components of narrative work, and explain how narratives act as a means of human sense-making, aiming to re-present the personal and shared truths and perspectives that arise from a human understanding of social situations and life experiences (see for example: McGraw, 2018; Sikes, 2012). As Mary Lynn Hamilton, Laura Smith, and Kristen Worthington (2008) underscore, the study of experiences as stories and narratives offers researchers a way to share and reflect on these experiences. Amanda McGraw (2018) also points out how narratives: "enable us to communicate powerfully as social beings who share and co-create constructions of what occurs in particular sociocultural contexts" (p.156).

Looking further into how auto-narratives play an important role in this research, I look to the work of Hamilton et al. (2008) who point out that the method of narratives mainly is a look at a story of self. Self-study is also a widely used term within educational contexts and brings the focus onto looking at the self in action. These methods both address the self which can be helpful in recognizing and understanding teaching moments in class (Hamilton et al., 2008). To understand teaching practice, Hamilton et al. (2008) also emphasize how critical it is to recognize how the researcher is situated in research. Therefore, I see it to be important to acknowledge that the auto-narratives that I engage with in this research are crafted by me, and the stories I tell are viewed from my perspective. Pat Sikes (2012) points

out the importance of reflecting on whose truth is represented and privileged in narratives to enable the reader to be conscious of narrative power. Since the stories I share in this thesis arise from social interactions and focus on embodied dialogue within the relationships in the dance classes, like the teacher-student relationship and situations that occur between peers, I seek to be attuned to the feelings, responses, and aesthetic reactions of both self and others. However, the stories still are grounded in my observations and experiences in the class, and therefore I cannot claim or try to represent the other participants' first-hand experiences. The method of auto-narratives therefore favors my position as a dance educator reflecting on the embodied dialogue in the class and my experience.

Scholars like Sikes (2012) and Van Manen (2016) who point out the limitations of journaling and narratives in the way they can never be neutral or an exact recounting, still emphasize how reflection on the reality we understand through text has important value for research. Hamilton et al. (2018) also emphasize how the researcher can turn the data collection inward as a method of reflection. I find journaling and auto-narratives helpful as I am looking closely at my own teaching practice in this research. However, I also lean on other methods and the literature and theory to give reflexivity and criticality to my own experiences within the dance classes.

The next two sections highlight the use of multi-modal interviews and video documentation as important supporting methods in the data collection to further understand the experience in the class.

3.3.4 Multi-modal interviews

Interviews are a common research method when trying to understand children's experience in dance (Bond & Stinson, 2007; Giguere, 2011; Svendler Nielsen, 2009). Miriam

Giguere (2011), who has experience in researching dance in elementary school, reveals that "the nature of dance experiences for children are complex, interactive and multi‐modal" (p.41). Therefore, to gain extensive insight into how children experience interactions and embodied ways of connection, I chose to use the multi-modal interview approach that Charlotte Svendler Nielsen (2009) has developed and used in research with children. This approach engages different modalities such as movement, music, sound, drawing, word, and metaphors which allows the children to express themselves in various ways. It has been noted in the literature that young children might feel more comfortable expressing themselves non-verbally as it may feel more comfortable for them (Bond & Stinson, 2007; Cetin & Cevikbas, 2020; Svendler Nielsen, 2009).

Regarding the context of teaching movement and dance in schools, Svendler Nielsen (2009) proposes that the multi-modal interview approach could be applied as a pedagogic tool to help in research. In this multi-modal interview approach, I aimed to grasp the essence of the children's experience in the dance workshop series, and therefore I focused on giving them opportunities to share their experiences in ways that might relate to them and their ways of expression. All participants were invited to take part in the multi-modal interview. As the multi-modal interview happened to be ingrained in the dance classes, all students participated and expressed their experiences through drawing, movements, and sound. I took time to engage with one modality in each class I engaged with this method, and in four out of six classes, the students participated in expressing their experiences through drawing, movements, and sound.

3.3.5 Video documentation

> A researcher with a camera can come very close to the participants' actions and both verbal and non-verbal expressions. It is also possible to focus on becoming attentive in an embodied way, because one can follow the processes very closely without pausing to take notes (Svendler Nielsen, 2012, p.3).

In the quote above, Svendler Nielsen (2012) reflects on her work using video to come close to the participants (who were 2nd graders) in a non-verbal manner. Video documentation seemed to be an appropriate tool for my research as dance in many ways is a nonverbal language and involves interactions with participants.

Video is a common tool for data collection in qualitative research and is widely used within education (Bétrancourt et al., 2020; Creswell & Poth 2017; Hollingsworth & Clark, 2017; Svendler Nielsen, 2012). This way of collecting and analyzing data could contribute to improving teacher expertise. Hilary Hollingsworth and David Clarke (2017) highlight that video is amenable for several reasons, noting that: “The richness and complexity of video records of social interactions provide opportunities for reinterpretation, recoding, and representation of what is captured in the video records of social settings” (p.459). Bétrancourt et al. (2020) highlight how video could be used to foster reflection, as well as improve knowledge and creativity. In this research where I aimed to get close to the participants, reflection has been a central aspect as well, which affirmed that video documentation was a proper tool or method for this study.

Video documentation was not always used during the six dance classes. Rather, I chose to film only selected interactive, creative dance tasks over the dance workshop series. This selective process of only filming some parts of the dance classes was to avoid disturbing

too much of the creative processes and the interactions in the class. I filmed the space we were in, before and after each class without the students being present in the space, to also capture certain traces that influenced the class somehow; this also gave me an opportunity to express my own thoughts in relation to the space and the dance classes. The video documentation has been reviewed in the data analysis as part of the reflection on the embodied dialogue that occurred in the dance class and to also support the development of the auto-narratives created.

3.4 Process of analysis

Within the process of analysis, the six dance classes gave way to an examination of my practice as a dance educator. Journaling, auto-narratives, multi-modal interviews, and video documentation contributed to the empirical data that is the foundation for the analysis that has taken place in this study. This section dives into how thematic analysis is used as a method for analyzing the data.

3.4.1 Thematic analysis

This research employs thematic analysis (TA) to analyze the data material. The method of TA holds the accessibility and flexibility to capture the variety of data that has been gathered in this research, like journaling and auto-narratives, video material, drawings, and artifacts (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Saldana, 2021; Terry et al., 2017). The thematic analysis offers flexibility in how to organize and analyze the data systematically through six steps that can be approached inductively or deductively, or a combination of these two methods (Saldana, 2021; Terry et al., 2017). The six steps meant becoming familiar with the data, generating codes, searching for themes, defining, and naming themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012), and lastly writing the discoveries up in the later chapters of this thesis. In this analysis,

I found inspiration in developing codes and themes from theoretical concepts and ideas that helped me see meanings in the data. This deductive approach gave me an opportunity to seek patterns that were relevant to the research question and the theoretical views that grounded this research.

The thematic analysis encourages the researcher to capture the essence of data that is meaningful concerning the research question, through summative words or short phrases (Saldana, 2021; Terry et al., 2017). My approach in analyzing the data started by firstly writing down ideas for relevant themes, as TA also allows the researcher to engage with different steps in the analyzing process, in the order that suits the analyzing process (Terry et al., 2017). Then I spent significant time getting familiar with the data, which is encouraged through reading and re-reading textual data, watching video documentation, looking over drawings, and making notes on the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Scharp & Sanders, 2018; Terry et al., 2017). According to Saldana (2021), descriptive codes can be a fitting starting point when going through field notes and documents. Therefore, I first read through the textual data on my computer and made some descriptive codes as comments in the text along with marking the text with different colors. Saldana (2021) highlights that coding is primarily an interpretive act that emerges from background, knowledge, and creativity. Coding can help summarize, distill, and condense the data. This view of coding allowed me to interpret through a researcher's lens, but also from a participant's angle as I have been engaged with the participants as their dance teacher. The second time I re-read the data, when I had printed everything out and had the data on hand, I reviewed the codes. Some codes were changed into more analytic codes, and at the same time, I also took notes of developing themes that emerged.

Saldana (2021) points out that looking for patterns when you start the coding process can be helpful through analyzing similarities and differences, frequency of phenomena, if a phenomenon happens in relation to an activity, or causes another phenomenon to happen. I specifically looked for patterns by searching for similarities as well as situations that stood out. I sorted the codes into a table, separating them with different colors, and added page numbers as well as text examples that consisted of these codes to help categorize the different patterns. After coding the data, I reviewed the codes after a few days; even though most codes stayed the same, I found correlations to other codes that better fit some of the text. This way I tried to practice reliability in the data I was analyzing.

The table below gives some insight into how I developed codes, and how themes emerged as I went over the data material several times. This table gives two examples of situations that stood out in the analysis process which helped shape the themes for the analysis.

(pages)	**Descriptive and analytic codes**	**Excerpts from my journal**	**Developing themes/ candidate themes**	**Reviewing themes**
p. 3, 7, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41	Physical expressions, bodily language/explorations, a safe place	"I then said, we're going to make one more piece of art, but pay attention, can you all shake your heads? They did. I said: "be aware that all of you now have the head on top of your body. Next time we make this piece of art, you might wanna use body parts differently, you can twist your body, your head can face downwards, I gave them a couple more	Bodily learning, embodied dialogue, inner dialogue, physical response Awareness of body and space	Bodily and emotionally connections The inner dialogue Awareness of body,

		examples" (p.39)		movements, and space (or lack of it) Sensitivity and awareness towards body, bodies, and the space
p.1, 3, 15, 16, 20, 24, 26, 32, 40, 41, 43	Emotions What stirs emotions to show up in class; become part of a movement, part of an experience, trust, impulsiveness, what will emotions lead to?	"They both seemed to be doing fine with each other after this, and it was interesting to have to manage this kind of conflict in the class because they both showed more vulnerability and emotions. This situation showed emotions and how relationships are not always easy" (p.43)	Emotions	Emotions as part of an embodied dialogue -sensitivity/ empathy -aesthetic moments -Conflict?

Figure 5. Insight into the process of analysis

Themes, according to Saldana (2021), are an outcome of coding, analytic reflections, and categorization. The interpretive phenomenological approach to finding themes in the data

highlights how the researchers find meaning in the phenomena that occur in the data and make choices to interpret these meanings. As a researcher, I was already impacted by the experiences from engaging in the dance classes when I went through the data material, and I saw connections that I felt were 'obvious' and in tune with my interactions and observations in class. However, through the analytic reflections and categorization, I physically grouped the coded text on a large wall and added developing themes to these groups. By reviewing themes on yellow post-it notes stuck to the wall I found new meanings and structures in how certain themes stood out, and how other themes moved more into the background. Through this process, I experienced how certain themes like sensitivity, awareness, emotions, and embodied dialogue resonated with the research question: *How might I, as a dance educator, facilitate a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders that focuses on sensitivity and awareness towards self and others through an empathetic embodied dialogical approach?*

3.5 Positionality

In research it is compelling to acknowledge the researcher's cultural and educational background, political stance, and beliefs, as they may be important variables that may affect the research process (Bourke, 2014; Kovack, 2009; Ringdal, 2018). Reflecting on my positionality as a researcher in this study made me aware of the importance of acknowledging who I am in this project. I am a Norwegian master's student, who has spent most of my life living in Norway and now has the privilege to complete my master's thesis while living in Nairobi, Kenya. I have been exposed to other cultures through exchange programs in Lisbon and in New York City, and I have experience in teaching Norwegian and foreign students in the cultural after-school program where I am currently working (as mentioned in the introduction chapter). My husband is American, and although my background has engaged with what is viewed as a western cultural context, it has nevertheless challenged me in trying

to understand different cultures, languages, and mindsets. Positionality allows me to be mindful of my subjectivity and identity as I position myself in relation to the contexts and the setting of the research (Bourke, 2014; Crewell & Poth, 2017).

As a researcher in the context of my master's research, I acknowledge that I am a foreigner who took part in the children's lives for a short time by allowing them to participate in six dance classes at their school. The group of students I was teaching came from different nationalities and had formed a community within their class environment in the short three months they had known each other in 1st grade. Despite the variety of languages, the school encourages everyone to speak English together. English which for many of the students is a second (or third) language allowed me to feel more of an insider as I too speak English as a second language. When the students realized I was Norwegian, they also very generously invited me into their community within their class. As a dance educator, I have had extended experience in teaching. As I have taught mostly children, I very soon felt comfortable within this international context of teaching despite the language barrier.

Within this study I therefore see myself appearing and operating as both an outsider and an insider within the roles of researcher and dance educator. Being aware of how I am situated as an outsider and insider in this study helps me to reflect and self-locate, which can create mutuality with participants and keep me attentive to the power dynamic flowing back and forth between the participants and me (Kovack, 2009).

3.6 Ethical considerations

Before conducting this research, I applied to and gained approval from NSD (Norsk senter for forskningsdata) to carry out this research. Further, in this section, I share some ethical considerations that were made in relation to this research.

Firstly, the international school very generously accepted my invitation in conducting this research, however the approval to carry out this research required consent from the school and the students' parents. I sent out a form with the information about what the dance class would contain and informed them how the students' identities would remain confidential. Ringdal (2018) stresses that the school and the parents of students have an important role in approving what children are a part of in school, especially since voluntary participation should be essential in research. The participants of this research who all were students at an international school in Nairobi had the option to participate in the dance workshop series or join their homeroom teacher in alternative activities. However, all the students participated in the dance workshop series, unless they could not attend school for other reasons.

Secondly, the cultural aspect of this research considers that the students likely come from different cultural backgrounds, and languages, and have experiences of being in a multicultural environment. The position I have as the researcher and dance educator in a community that was foreign to me opened many cultural meetings and perspectives that I attempted to consider and welcome when I carried out this research. Keeping an open and respectful dialogue with the school is something I value, and therefore I kept close communication with the teacher of this class. This allowed me to keep everyone well informed and comfortable with the research as it was situated in their school.

All data collected was stored electronically through password-secured platforms. Drawings from the multimodal interview were scanned as well as stored in a locked cabinet. The consent forms that were handed out to parents by the students' homeroom teacher were also stored by the teacher to ensure the students' confidentiality.

3.7 Challenges and limitations of the research

The challenges of this research came to the surface as I carried out the six dance classes. Firstly, the timeframe allowed me to meet with the students just six times. However, three of these six classes were shortened as the students traveled from one side of the schoolyard to the other to get to the dance class. This limitation shortened the 45–50-minute class by often at least ten minutes. A few times I had to abruptly end the class, as recess started and lots of other students came running out of the school buildings, and onto the tennis court. I had to keep a close watch on time and make sure I made decisions that kept me from loading the class with everything I wanted to do and rather narrow down the dance tasks I engaged my students in.

Being outside on the tennis court gave me the option to engage in a bigger space, however, it sometimes became very hot from the warm weather and the physical movements. I always had to make sure I urged the students to move more in the shaded areas on the tennis court. The big space was also challenging because of the sound that was being carried from my speaker. The music I was playing could only reach a certain volume, and I tried to position the speaker very intentionally so most students could hear the music that was being played. However, the students who moved farthest away from the speaker in the given space would not be able to hear the music very well.

The linguistic aspect of this research was also challenging in some ways. Teaching a class in English is something I have hardly done. Being clear in the information I gave in class required linguistic skills and preparation. Sometimes it was a struggle to capture the full essence of what I wanted to convey to my students through using English. Becoming self-conscious about saying something I knew was not correct in English made me feel unsure and insecure. My position as an outsider was limiting because I risked saying things

that could cause misunderstandings, however, I experienced the students' honesty, generosity, and respect because of the status I had as their dance teacher.

My role as their 'outside dance teacher' could cause limitations and challenges within the significant aim I had to interact with the students and engage in the embodied dialogue. However, I felt that the students accepted my role as their dance teacher, and they also allowed themselves to interact with me in ways that exposed their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in the class.

This chapter has given attention to the methodology this study has taken. It has also considered important aspects of the research process such as ethical considerations, positionality, and limitations of research. The next chapter discusses the findings that have emerged from collecting the data through the methods that have been mentioned within this chapter. Chapter 4 specifically focuses on my critical reflections on my own embodied experiences within the pedagogical strategies and approaches I have engaged in the dance workshop series.

Chapter 4: Reflections on my embodied experiences, strategies, and approaches as a teacher

In this chapter, I discuss and reflect on the pedagogical strategies and approaches that I have engaged with throughout the dance workshop series. The discussion within this chapter centers around sub-question 1: **How might reflections on pedagogical approaches and strategies give insight to the embodied dialogue in the creative dance classes, and how might these experiences affect my pedagogical practice?** Van Manen (2007) emphasizes how pedagogical reflection involves the educators' need or desire to reflect on the interactions with children so we might understand the pedagogical significance of events and situations in children's lives. Research points out how a dance teacher can use embodied experiences to facilitate a learning environment for students and further understand their experiences (Svendler Nielsen, 2012). To be able to understand my embodied experiences as the teacher of the class, this chapter explores how self-awareness, sensations, intuitive experiences, emotions, and reflections are attached to the interactions that happen in the dance workshop series.

In this chapter, I firstly dive into how reflective teaching practice can relate to the embodied experience of teaching in the classroom, and how this has value for my own development as a dance teacher. Secondly, I focus on how the embodied dialogue allowed my experiences to connect the students with a feeling of empathy and practices of inclusion. Lastly, I discuss how the embodied dialogue in the class and moving experiences inspired my teaching practice and encouraged me to find possibilities of interactions with multimodal practices. The auto-narratives I offer in this chapter describe various embodied encounters in the dance workshop series and set a foundation of understanding in how the encounters of

embodied dialogue unfold within the frames of the creative dance classes, which will be further discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

4.1 Insight into the embodied dialogue in the class

As noted above, reflective teaching is part of the embodied experience one might have as a teacher as it can capture dialogue that engages the body and mind in various ways. By engaging in a process of critical reflection as a teacher I can recognize sensations and emotions that I have experienced in the dance classes to further understand my embodied encounters. Randee Lipson Lawrence (2012) suggests how feelings and sensations occur even before we are consciously aware of them, while also underlining how reflections on our experiences attached to sensations and feelings can guide us towards knowledge. This statement supports research that notes how critical reflection has value for pedagogical practice (Anttila, 2007; Gose & Siemietkowski, 2018; Lipson Lawrence, 2012; Van Manen, 2007). Such views have led me to wonder: What knowledge can be understood from reflections on my embodied encounters as a teacher, and how might these encounters be influenced by my feelings and sensations? The section that follows explores this query through two different auto-narratives. Both auto-narratives reflect on the embodied experiences I meet in the dance class. The first story gives insight into my awareness, sensations, and intuitive choices in the dance class. The second story emphasizes how my feelings are intertwined in embodied experiences.

4.1.1 “She took off”: An expansion of dialogue

Awareness and sensitivity to the body are significant aspects of embodied dialogue (Anttila, 2007; Braun & Kotera, 2021; Schussler et al., 2010). Research points out how embodied practices can be helpful to gain insight to embodied self-awareness (Braun &

Kotera, 2021). Building on what existing research has established, this section explores how awareness, sensitivity, and intuition are not only limited to my inner dialogue, but also a part of the expanded dialogue between bodies, space, and modes that might influence the interactions in the dance classes.

Scarf-exercise

> While doing the scarf exercise, and while students moved around in the space, one girl approached me with a huge smile and said, “Miss Linnea, look at my scarf, it’s blowing in the wind”. She held the scarf up high with her arms straight, and the scarf fell with gravity but picked up and started moving with the wind. The girl was so excited and smiled at me as she enjoyed the movement of the scarf. It seemed to give her a lot of joy and inspiration to use the scarf while dancing, and she took off as soon as she showed me this. I had time to smile and say “wow!” before she was gone, but it didn't seem to matter. For her, it was a huge moment to experience the movement of the scarf, and she wanted to share this experience with someone else, that someone she chose was me, her teacher.

The situation above describes how my felt awareness and encounter with this student are closely connected to embodied dialogue, and it also suggests how the contexts allow for expanded dialogue. Nataliya Braun and Yasyhiro Kotera (2021) express how dance that emerges from life events might lead to embodied self-awareness and creative self-expression. My student with the scarf experienced an inspiring moment as she saw how the scarf had the potential to move in various ways because the wind also moved it around. I saw that her awareness of the scarf’s movement struck her with awe, as she observed how the wind and the scarf were doing their own dance while she also held on to it and danced with the scarf. Awareness according to Braun and Kotera (2021) is determined by connection and setting all

senses into motion, so looking at this girl being so connected and aware of the sensations of movement, I also felt a connection to the girl, her energy, and her experience. From this encounter, I reflected on the question: How did this embodied encounter affect me as the teacher and the choices I made in my dialogue with the students?

Schussler et al. (2010) emphasize that awareness is also connected to being sensitive to the context of a situation. The context of the narrative shared above made me aware of how my students' creative expression inspired my own self-awareness, and the potential of creative movements I can engage in when I interact with my students in the class. The curiosity that emerged from observing how the girl responded to the scarf revealed the potential to enhance creativity. Is the wind moving the scarf gently, or with force, is it blowing high up or twirling around? The dialogue between the girl and the scarf could also translate creative movements within her body movements, which also affected my awareness of how I approached and used the scarf. A perspective on dialogue that Barsky (2021) brings focus to is the ongoing and organic process of communication that is influenced by our environment where everything exists in relation. As Braun and Kotera (2021) suggest, dance can lead to higher embodied self-awareness. It can be understood that the girl’s dance and her encounter with me brought me into the moment and made me sensitive to the movements of the scarves, and how I could move with it in different ways just like the wind did. According to Sipman et al. (2019), pedagogical intuition is sometimes expressed through improvisation and spontaneity. I found myself acting on the spontaneous energy that made me feel connected to the girl and the embodied encounter we had. This dialogue had me thinking about how I could expand this learning experience to the whole class, and I shared this experience with the whole group of students:

> I mentioned to the group how this student had recognized the movements of the scarf, and I asked them all to pay attention to what happens to the scarf when I hold it still. It blew with the wind immediately. Then I showed them how we could hold the scarves in different ways and what we could do with them.

From the moment I share this experience with the whole group of students, my response moves on from my embodied encounter and reaches toward an expanded and continuous conversation with the surroundings and those around me. Sipman et al. (2019) claim that intuition can spontaneously generate ideas that can serve creativity. Lipson Lawrence (2012) explains how embodied knowledge can emerge from an unconscious state and come into our awareness through intuitive bodily sensations. Pursuing the ideas that I had in the moment, I expressed and emphasized physically the possibilities of dialogue that might emerge from this creative dance task. Following my intuitive bodily sensations, I became aware of the embodied knowledge that awareness and sensations often are felt before we are conscious of how they affect us. I felt excitement in moving, and I felt eager to explore movement possibilities. Alexia Buono (2019), who focuses her work on somatic practices in early childhood education, mentions the importance of not waiting until adulthood to connect with embodied sensitivity and urges efforts in making a shift in educational approaches that encourages somatic embodiment. Buono (2021) also stresses the important role educators have in guiding and modeling somatic education for children in order for them to understand the inner and outer being of who they are, as this concerns their "holistic wellbeing, learning, and development of young children" (p.2). When I approached the whole group of students with the scarf, I felt more united with the scarf. When my arm stretched over and around my body leading the scarf, I sensed that I was moving with more tenderness, listening to the scarf and my body. My embodied experience models how somatic practices can be applied to both myself as the teacher, but also for students who engage in somatic embodied practices. Østern

(2013) emphasizes how the bodily dialogue in the classroom has the teacher's body being informed about and influenced by the interactions in the classroom. The sensations that drive intuition forward might therefore sometimes speak more accurately and lead to more effective communication (Sipman et al., 2019). My body language might have informed my group of students of the many possibilities we have when moving creatively more accurately than trying to put it all into words. Realizing how moments of embodied encounters not only hold bodily sensitivity and intuition but also emotions, I am curious to see how I recognize and reflect on my own feelings. The next section discusses how dance can allow space for emotions in the dance classes.

4.1.2 Acknowledging emotions within the embodied dialogue

Lipson Lawrence (2012) underscores how experiencing includes both feeling and embodiment. Therefore, to understand the emotional encounters I have had in the dance workshop series, I look to Van Manen's (2007) work where he explains that one needs to distance oneself from a situation to consider its meaning or significance in those situations. The distance that was created between the time of the workshop series, and my journaling and shaping of the narratives in the aftermath of each dance class, challenged me to reflect on my teaching practice. I experience this created distance to be a very important reminder in always trying to be aware of creating distance from situations in the dance classes and the classroom, so I as a teacher can recognize the meanings that occur. The meaning of emotional experiences I have had in the dance classes, challenges me to act seriously on this distance and further reflect on my interactions in these classes. This section explores the motivating question: How do I experience feelings in relation to bodily sensitivity?

Losing their interest: Feeling emotional disconnection

> Today I experienced a little bit of panic, despair, and questions along the lines of: How can I engage these kids differently? I felt like I was losing their interest in what we were doing. I had wanted to spend more time on one exercise to see how it would develop. I wish now that I had seen beforehand that I could spend more time on one task but go in-depth with different approaches. I experience that the attention span for kids this age is not super long, and maybe that's why I have really enjoyed the previous classes. I've maintained their interest and engagement because I've had several things going on in the class. I have a feeling I lost their interest also because the dance concept of force that I applied to the class felt difficult to dive into and explore.

The situation above describes how I experienced feelings of panic and despair, and the classroom situation made me question how I might need to act differently to help the students understand and enjoy what we are doing. I felt like my body was alert, and that I was looking for some movement in the dance class that I could respond to that might guide my responses further. When I sensed through their embodied way of being and responding, how they were not committed to what we are doing, I felt like my body stiffened. Tone Pernille Østern (2013) points out how the bodily processes within the teachers' bodies during teaching practice include sensations and thoughts and feelings. The feelings I experienced during this class were linked to the students' bodily responses which made me think of how I was not connecting with the students in the way I had previously been, and the way I would have liked to. According to dialogical pedagogy, it is the engagement in an activity that activates a response, students, however, can always choose to observe the activity and not respond (Banival, 2014; Buber, 2012; Lawrence, 2019). Feeling disconnected from my

students is revealed in a situation where I feel that I am not able to accurately approach them and convey the creative dance task in an engaging way. My feelings, sensitivity, and thoughts direct my experience in the direction of bodily processes that Østern (2013) points out. I might feel disconnected from the students because the process in my body has feelings of less confidence, insecurity, disconnection, and worry. Østern (2013) also points out that the teacher could experience situations that cause an analytic reaction due to insecurity of choices within the class. This could affect how one experiences time or being present in the moment. The perspective Østern (2013) brings suggests that I could work to stay in the moment, trusting my body and the awareness of moving, but instead I moved ahead of the moment, trying to figure out my next move. In the extension on the auto-narrative shared earlier, the next example shows my responses to my bodily insecurity:

> Because this is the one time that I haven't had a ton of creative tasks planned, I couldn't shift to another movement task. However, I tried to regain their attention by using my voice to emphasize movements of force and sharpness, like "ta ta ta" or "pa pa, pam". This seemed to draw the kids' attention to how to execute movements, and it made it more fun to keep going. When I now think about it, I should've slowed down and let them also do the sounds with me. That would have been so interesting to see if it helped their focus, inner dialogue, and awareness of their bodies. How will sharp sounds affect a sharp movement? Maybe they could've been going into pairs and decided a sound together that they could add to particular movements.

Trying to figure out the 'best' strategy to take in this situation I responded to my feelings and jumped onto the first idea I had, which was to add sounds to the movement. Østern (2013) and Anttila (2007) indicate that the use of voice in a dance education setting can propel the lesson forward. However, instead of managing to let this concept of sounds

and movement develop in a playful and embodied way that possibly could engage the kids, even more, I still felt driven by my feelings of disconnection and kept trying to plan out another next move. Barsky (2021) emphasizes how dialogue always is informed by the situations one meets in time and space. Gunn Engelsrud and Øyvind Førland Standal (2013) discuss embodied learning as significantly meaningful when learners can be present in the moment and learn from each other. My experience of time was affected by feelings of disconnection and despair, and I experienced that I was not fully present in the moment with my students. My experience might supplicate the understanding that the embodied experience draws out our emotions due to external factors like social interaction. The next example further emphasizes how interacting with time in the dance class promotes several feelings.

I wish I could: Feelings of regret

> For me, I wish I could explore the concept of energy (smooth and sharp movements) with them one more time. Maybe having an approach that had the students experience the creative dance tasks differently, would make this an easier concept to understand and explore. I also have this feeling that all the concepts I have introduced so far should maybe be introduced over two classes each, so it is possible to go more in-depth.

Regret in this context is, for me, related to a desire of spending more time with these students so that we could explore the dance concept in several ways. As I am interacting with the children, new ideas appear around how I could develop creative tasks from several angles that would be interesting to explore. Part of teaching dance to young children is being able to adjust, improvise, and change due to the embodied encounters in the class (Anttila & Svendler Nielsen, 2019; Engelsrud & Standal, 2013; Glad, 2012; Greenberg et al., 2017; Sansom, 2008). The embodied dialogue I have with the students acknowledges what Østern

(2013) calls bodily listening. Østern (2013) says in research on dance teachers and their bodily listening: “When they allow the movement to influence them, it is exactly as if the movement feeds itself. Movement creates focus, and movement feeds more movement” (p.40). Paying attention to the body and being engaged in movement informs bodily listening, which can be helpful to understand the students’ experiences, and can guide and develop the class further. The ‘teacher side’ of me was telling me to keep rolling with the initial plans and sustain what Buber (2012) calls an educational relationship. This has me reflect on which role I take on as the facilitator. The ongoing dialogue between me and the students informed me of the potential to grow in-depth experiences as we explore together. I felt torn between the curiosity of what would occur when building on the dance concept that I had originally planned for and staying with my ‘plans’, in contrast to slowing down to revisit fewer dance concepts but with more depth.

Scholars affirm that emotions lie at the very heart of teaching (Chen, 2020; Mahfouz et al., 2021). According to Svendler Nielsen (2012), emotional meaning is a prerequisite for creativity, which reminds me that making sense of my emotion of regret is important to be able to foster creative processes in my own teaching, and be better aware of the creative process that can unfold in the dance classes. Giving attention to my feeling of regret and making meaning out of my emotions suggests that creative processes have the potential to improve my teaching practice. Other scholars acknowledge that teachers’ emotions have the potential to affect motivation, professional identity, and wellbeing (Chen, 2020; Wang, 2021) By acknowledging my emotions there is potential to also strengthen my values within my professional identity. One of my values is to always be well prepared for my classes. The idea of considering a theme for each class like space, body, time, effort, and choreographic forms is encouraged by dance scholars (Cleland Donelly & Millar, 2019; Gilbert, 2015) and helped me prepare for the workshop series. However, if I was true to the bodily listening I

experienced in class and restructured the workshop series in a way that highlighted maybe two or three concepts in which I could go more in-depth, I would perhaps recognize and be more aware of the students' bodily expressions. The experience of being true, and attuned to my bodily listening, is a value I want to bring with me into my teaching practice. Ida Pape-Pedersen (2022) mentions how: "Being a bodily listening teacher in becoming with human and non-human agents is a way of trusting the body" (p.9), and she further explains that finding self-contact within the body requires playful exploring of embodied and somatic possibilities. The practice of trusting my body is also investigated in the next auto-narrative.

Feeling of worry

> I am so worried that I plan too much and leave less space for the kids to respond and for me to respond to their responses. I feel like I need to have a set plan to create a space to explore within, but I find it hard to leave those frames in the class. I wonder if I should have fewer creative tasks and try to go in-depth with the ones we have and spend more time on them. I will try to have this in mind as I teach today.

In most educational settings there is a focus on planning and lesson planning in particular (see for example: Didaktisk relasjonsmodell - mestring.no; Norsk kulturskoleråd, 2016; Sawyer et al., 2019). However, planning before a lesson is sometimes required to change or not be used at all in classroom situations. My feeling of worry relates to my relationship with the students and how I aim to create a space where students can share their responses. Dialogical pedagogy underlines how a caring approach to the students, which we also might call a student-centered approach, challenges the teacher to not overstep or be controlling, but rather guide the students towards the learning goal, and in turn potentially fostering further inclusion in the learning experience (Baniwal, 2014; Buber, 2012, Sansom, 2009). My feelings of worry regarding how I plan the class is motivated by a desire to get to

know the students better and facilitate an embodied dialogue that allows space for the students to share their ideas, experiences, and responses with me. The notes I share below, which were made after this class, draw attention to how reflections guide the teacher's practice towards growth:

> Oh, what a fun class! I felt a lot calmer in the class as I was conscious in taking my time with each task and letting the task develop and decide how far we get, and what emerges from different situations.

Research points out how emotions and cognition work together in relation to decision-making (Mahfouz et al., 2021; Wang, 2020). The emotions I carried with me from the embodied experiences in class, encompassed feelings regarding interactions with students and interactions with time. Being engaged in social interactions leads to various feelings (Østern, 2013; Wang, 2020). Bringing together my experiences of feelings in the class and writing down my thoughts shows the beneficial act of keeping a reflective journal that clearly connects emotions and cognition into a fuller (deeper) experience that can propose ideas related to decision making.

Reflective teaching practice and dialogical pedagogy insist on the useful work on reflective journals (Gose, 2018; Lawrence, 2012; Van Manen, 2016). Keeping a reflective journal helped me acknowledge and understand my own emotions, more clearly see what different choices I can make to develop creative processes, and be more aware of the decisions I make before, within, and after the class. Research points to the value journaling has for professional development when one can recognize their own emotions (Anttila, 2003; Chen, 2020; Cleland Donelly & Millar, 2019; Mahfouz et al., 2021). For my own growth I experience vulnerability in recognizing emotions encountered in my teaching practice that are not necessarily pleasant to acknowledge and share, but by placing myself in a vulnerable

position of revealing these feelings, there is the intention to contribute to understanding the complexity of teaching and assists me in affirming the values I have and seek to apply to the dance classes. These reflections are also a reminder of what responsibility I have in being self-aware of my feelings as they affect my bodily sensations, and it leads to a greater understanding of what embodied dialogue can hold in a creative dance workshop series. These reflections on embodied encounters which give insight into how awareness, sensations, and intuitive choices relate to the interactions in the classroom, also reveal how feelings are intertwined in the embodied experiences. Such reflections lead me to ask: In what ways might these emotions relate to empathy and inclusion as a part of the embodied dialogue? This thought also prompts curiosity towards the query: How might an empathetic embodied dialogue draw attention towards inclusion in the creative dance class?

4.2 My moving experiences: A look at empathy and inclusion

Anttila (2007) highlights how a conscious body allows one to relate sensations to our feelings. Research shares how bodily sensitivity, with all of the emotions that it can hold, might allow the opportunity to grow empathy and be sensitive to other people's bodily existence and their bodily integrity (Anttila, 2007; Sansom, 2009; Wise et al., 2019). This section explores how empathy is part of the embodied dialogue, and I ask: How do I experience the connection between empathy and inclusion in relation to bodily sensitivity and pedagogical tact?

4.2.1 Moving with empathy

When dancing with my students I experience many encounters in one class. The way I feel on a particular day, and how the students are feeling, might affect the way we express movements, as well as our verbal dialogue. Giguere (2021) highlights that dance is often

tasked with communicating or expressing emotion, and social interaction is, therefore, an important link in recognizing the relationship between emotion and embodiment. The next example draws attention to how social and embodied interaction holds the potential to practice empathy and inclusion and foster what Buber (2012) notes as an 'I-Thou' relationship.

Inclusion in dance

> I made sure to move with the kids, except for in the "fish and wave" exercise, and I exaggerated the movements to try to inspire them and give them ideas about how to move. I also tried to pick up on some of their movements and integrate them while moving. In the scarf exercise, there was one boy that had frozen into a shape a little farther away from everyone else. I tried to make the rest of the group aware of this space and the boy by moving with grand movements towards and around him, and he smiled when I drew closer as if he enjoyed the sensation of someone also seeing him and noticing where he was, and how he was standing.

The 'I-Thou' relationship values inclusion, which according to Buber, means experiencing from the other side (Anttila, 2007; Buber, 2012; Hyvönen, 2007). The example above shows how I am moving with the students, which Østern (2013) also encourages as an important factor when a dance teacher wants to engage in bodily listening, and in turn, become closer to the students' experiences. It can be suggested that when listening to the body one is more likely to approach other bodies with care as one might get insights into how the 'other' is experiencing something. Scholars agree that a caring approach to students embraces empathy (Anttila, 2003; Buber, 2012; Gose, 2018; Hyvönen, 2007). The 'I-Thou' relation can therefore be seen to embrace inclusion and empathy.

Giguere (2021) focuses on how the dancing body in the context of a group is central in understanding how our body and our environment are central aspects of our thinking, reasoning, and acting. In the situation described above, I see how one student was separate in the space from most of their peers, and I experience that the other students did not necessarily pay attention to him. This made me feel drawn to him, and I wanted him to experience inclusion, and I wanted him to feel like a part of the group and the embodied experience. Giguere (2021) points out that an embodied group creative process fosters social learning. The creative dance task we engage in can offer a way for me to practice empathy and inclusion. I was already moving and responding to the students' movements, so I extended this experience to become a more meaningful practice. Moved by empathy, I danced with exaggerated movements, finding movements that led me towards the student in the space he was in, and my embodied expression intended to create an inclusive experience for him and the rest of the students. Giguere (2021) reminds us how "environments and experiences change" (p.134) due to embodied practices. This proposes that when the boy starts smiling when he can sense my presence and my efforts to include him his experience changes, the environment was also shifting. Dialogical pedagogy stresses the role the educator has in practicing empathy and inclusion in the classroom (Baniwal, 2014; Buber, 2012). Giguere (2021) also stresses how social interactions are learned from the embodied experiences we have and what we observe other people do. She goes on to say, "the cognitive processing of what we observe is influenced by the socio-cultural context of who we are and where we are when we observe a phenomenon" (p.134). In the space, I am in, and with the role I have as a dance educator, I am drawn to respond bodily and with empathy. This action introduces the idea that embodied encounters through creative dance may also have an influence on how early dance experiences can shape our thinking about who we are and who the "other" is.

4.2.2 To sense pedagogical tact within the act of inclusion

To further understand how empathy is part of my teaching practice, this section proposes how pedagogical tact is connected to empathy when the aim is to foster inclusion in the dance classes. Pedagogical tact is used in educational settings to better understand teachers' ability to instantly act upon classroom situations (Sipman et al., 2019; Van Manen, 2007). The two examples below offer different approaches to how I sought to practice inclusion when the students were working creatively together in pairs or small groups, and I ask: How does pedagogical tact occur in situations where I aim to practice inclusion in the classroom?

Giving the students choices

> I started giving them numbers of one and two and asked them to show me with their fingers. I asked all the 1's to come to stand on one line, shoulder to shoulder. Then I asked the 2's to come to stand in front of one of the 1's. I didn't decide who should be paired together because I thought about how this is an exercise that requires trust. If their best friends come to stand in front of them, maybe this will be a good introduction to this kind of task.

Some tasks, like the one I engaged with my students in the auto narrative described above, require attentiveness and trust. How the children are paired up in this task challenges one student to rely on their peer, and the other student to be the leader. The moment I was dividing the group in half I suddenly thought of how this was the first time the students engaged in a movement task that focused so clearly on trust. In each pair, one person would close their eyes and be led around the tennis court by their partner, while trying not to peek or feel tension while walking. I made an intuitive choice while I divided the group in half to let

the students make the decision about who they would work with. Van Manen (2007) talks about how tact is an interaction and an immediate response that can be emotional, responsive, and mindful. The choice I made was based on my knowledge about these students, my experience of responsibility as their teacher, and the embodied experiences I have had while doing trust exercises myself in dance classes. My embodied knowledge informed my choices and decisions and helped me respond with tact to a complex creative dance task. Van Manen (2007) points out: "Without thoughtfulness, there is no tact, and without tact, thoughtfulness is at best a merely internal state. Thoughtfulness is the product of self-reflective reflection on the human experience" (p.13). Thoughtfulness in this situation considered how sometimes it might gain the students learning experience to do a trust exercise with a peer they know well, one they already trust.

My previous experiences related to trust in dance classes also impacted this choice because I wanted the students to feel safe and find the capacity to sense how their dialogue with each other and with themselves was affected by closing their eyes and practicing trust. To exercise tact when engaging with children means according to Van Manen (2007) to see a situation calling for sensitivity, and to sense the significance of this situation. Dance educators who work creatively with children emphasize how children feel empowered when they are at the center of creating from their own bodies, and how one can learn from the other when working creatively together (Glad, 2012; Sansom, 2009). From the embodied experiences I had in the classroom I sensed that this situation had the potential for the students to practice empathy in the way they were being led by their peers, practice trust by relying on their peers and bodily listening and therefore also be connected to emotions that foster empathy within social and embodied interactions.

Refraining from giving the students choices

> I decided to choose the pairs who would work together today for the mirror exercise. I know that if I let them choose for themselves, most students would choose their best friend in the class. I wanted to challenge them in working with someone different, and practice inclusion this way. Some kids didn't seem to mind, and someone grimaced and didn't respond wholeheartedly.

Van Manen (2007) characterizes pedagogical tact as: "pedagogical understanding in being attentive to young people, through what we notice about them, in the way we listen to them" (p.12). By this time in the workshop series, we had met four times already, and I had noticed who in the class were best friends and who were interacting more with each other. I had paid attention to the relationships in class, and I felt like I could challenge them to include other peers with whom they were not necessarily best friends. The process of thoughtful reflection gave me an experience of what Van Manen (2007) refers to as "thought-engaged body knowledge" (p.23) which is based on the attentiveness of the everyday activities and experiences we had in class.

The communal and social aspect of dance hints at its potential to create an inclusive environment (Faber, 2016; Giguere, 2021; Wise et al., 2019) Faber (2016) also emphasizes how creative dance might help young children develop intrapersonal intelligence. To encourage the students to experience inclusion, I decided to choose the pairs, and I tried to divide the pairs in a way where I was sensitive to the relationships I had observed in class. Scholars point out how peers in a class not always will become best friends, however, they can all choose to act on inclusiveness (Anttila, 2003; Buber, 2004, 2012). If both peers welcome mutual inclusiveness, they practice an 'I-Thou' relationship and have according to Buber, the potential to develop a friendship (Buber, 2004, 2012). However, it is clear from the

example above that not all the students practice inclusion, and some choose to become less engaged in the creative dance task since they were not exploring with one of their best friends.

In my relationship with the students, I sensed how I had the potential to guide them towards learning experiences that might allow them awareness of being inclusive with each other. Van Manen (2007) notes that each situation with children is pedagogically charged because something is expected and required from the teacher. However, I was not only driven by responsibility, but also from the experiences of inclusiveness in the class and a desire for the students to also share empathy and inclusion towards each other. As the facilitator, I made this tactful response based on the embodied experiences I had in the class.

4.3 A dialogue that inspires teaching possibilities and engagement in the class

Building on the idea that dialogue is deeply intertwined with embodied experiences and emotions, this section focuses on how the embodied experiences in the dance classes can foster creativity in the teaching practices in the class. Reflections on the dialogue in class have been discussed in the previous examples, however, this section of the chapter focuses on what inspired, challenged, and arguably improved my teacher practices over the series of classes with the students, and I ask: How might multimodal practices engage the students and challenge/refine my teaching practice?

In the first section, I discuss how the embodied experiences I had while teaching expanded my horizon to see other teaching possibilities. The second section focuses on how interacting with multimodal practices engages both the students and I in dialogue with each other.

4.3.1 Multimodal practices as part of the dialogue in the dance class

Scholars acknowledge that multiple modes or multimodality are part of the dialogue in which we make sense of something (Jewitt et al., 2016; Kress & Selander, 2012; Price & Jewitt, 2013; Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019). Research also points out how engaging in dialogue with different modes can put something into memory (Cleland Donelly & Millar, 2019). From my own personal experience, such ideas resonate, and one of the moments I had in the space before the dance class started expresses this.

Inspired by pictures

> I was inspired already before the children arrived to hang up pictures onto the steel fence, near where my speaker and computer were sitting. I didn't have any paper clips and the situations that happened in the class when I used the pictures the way I did would maybe not have occurred if they were all hanging up like an artistic installation. However, I wonder if I can build on this idea for another class.

Before this class I printed pictures of oceans in various forms to visualize the concepts and ideas we were exploring in class. When I arrived at the tennis court it was as if I saw opportunities to use the space and the environment with new eyes, and several ideas came to mind. This suggests that dialogue with different modes also pursues creative practices, which also complies with research that sees creativity as something that emerges from embodied interactions (Gilbert, 2015; Ørbæk & Engelsrud, 2019; Price & Jewitt, 2013). I approached the space and looked at the pictures I had brought along. Looking at the pictures and the space, I felt like they were communicating together, and I got ideas that made me see how the space in the environment we were in and the pictures I had brought along could be used to expand the students' learning experiences. Sara Price and Carey Jewitt (2013) express how:

"multimodality investigates the interaction between a variety of communicational means" (p.44). The impressions I got in the space did not leave my mind, so the next time I brought along the pictures I hung them up like a wall of art before the students came into the space.

A picture installation

> I took my students over to my little wall of art that showed pictures of different animals associated with the oceans, as well as pictures of water in different forms that they've seen before. I had them step back so they could all look at them without touching the pictures. I mentioned that some of these pictures represent how we have explored movements in this class. These pictures were meant to give some sort of inspiration to explore new ways of moving or repeating some qualities of movements.

Price and Jewitt (2013) emphasize the meaning potential between artifacts and modes, the resources, intentions, social and cultural environment, and prior experiences that are brought to the encounter. The students and I had already, in previous dance classes, engaged with some of these pictures. These pictures were a reminder for the students too of the embodied experiences they had when we explored different dance concepts in previous classes. I brought along the pictures they had not seen before, with an intention that they might be inspired to explore differently this time. The picture installation was also a reminder for me to see possibilities and have them visible during the whole class as a mode of dialogue in that class. Some scholars investigated how embodied engagement encouraged by different modes engaged the students to physically explore concepts by moving within and acting upon an environment (Birchfield et al., 2008). Barsky (2021) explores how dialogue with the environment develops an embodied and holistic sense of self. Svendler Nielsen (2009) discusses how a multi-modal approach could: "highlight an embodied perspective of learning in movement by expanding the children's consciousness in and about movement" (p.91) and

goes on to argue how this multimodal approach could be applied in dance and movement education in schools. Building on these experiences when engaging with different modes, the next section investigates how multimodal practices and creative ideas that I picked up on within the extended dialogue affect students' engagement in the class.

4.3.2 "Sparkling excitement": Student engagement in class

A suitcase of treasure

> I had brought along a small suitcase for this last class with two pictures inside, one mirror, and a wristband made of several small hairbands. These things represented things we'd done in class. I had them gathered in a circle. I showed them the suitcase, and I asked them: What do you think this is? One girl said: "It's your lunch box!" I laughed and said: "Yes, I'm always so hungry so I brought along a big lunchbox today" … "No, (laughing), it's not my lunch box, what else might it be?" Someone said, "A dance suitcase!" I said, "yes! And it's full of treasures". I explained how the artifacts inside of the suitcase represented things they had done in class, and I asked if someone could help me. I picked out a boy from the group to help me. He came up, we tried to make it a secret where the others wouldn't see immediately what he picked out. He chose the picture of an ice sculpture. After he picked it up and gave it to me, I revealed it to the rest of the class. Their response was of sparkling excitement, like the one they had in the second class. Wow! Ice sculptures! Their eyes lit up, they leaned forward, and it was so fun to see their excitement in this. They knew now, that in this class they were going to be making ice sculptures.

It is noted within the literature that one of the aims of dance education is to stimulate creativity (Anttila, 2007; Bresler, 2004; Gilbert, 2015; Stinson, 2002), and such an aim hints

to the idea that there are so many possibilities within how one can engage in a dance class. My dialogue with the students, the space, and the modalities I chose to use in the class opened my eyes to the many creative responses that situations can lead to. The thought behind this suitcase was to engage a dialogue with modalities and by doing so active students' full sensory capacities, which multimodality, according to Birchfield et al. (2008), should strive for. The students could see a suitcase, but they did not know what was inside. Their first visual encounter and the guessing game were an opportunity to create curiosity. Oya Gürdal Tamdogon (2006) looks at how creativity and curiosity are connected in an educational context and states: "Creativity in education starts with curiosity" (p.40). For me, keeping a playful and secretive attitude towards the suitcase reminded me to stay grounded and curious about the responses it would offer in the class. In my journal I mentioned:

> Anyways, the suitcase was a reminder to me to keep developing the class with some secrecy and anticipation to stir their curiosity. This tool was a very hands-on task that included the kids and invited them into participation and dialogue.

The suitcase offered an opportunity to also stir the student's engagement and curiosity to open an embodied dialogue through a visual and tactile encounter. Tamdogon (2006) observes that curiosity triggers questions and thinking, and therefore contributes to the dialogue in the classroom. As the example shows, I asked questions to the group about what the suitcase might contain, and when the students perhaps did not take the path I was looking for, more questions, thoughts, and curiosity emerged. In this dialogue, I experience an atmosphere of playfulness which connects with Sansom's (2009) observations that creativity in dance is closely connected with playfulness and thoughtfulness and that it brings forth a holistic experience of moving, thinking, and knowing. My experiences of interacting with modes like the suitcase and the artifacts inside brought me a fuller experience of how senses

are engaged in the interactions of the embodied dialogue. From this experience, I was surprised by how the students' engagement seemed to be heightened, and their attention became more attuned to what we were doing at that moment in class. Svendler Nielsen (2012) points out how: "attention is not only important in the creative process, but also in the appreciating process of spectators" (p.8). She goes on to explain how children become attentive to what they see when they experience something different, for example, if something is especially slow, fun, or surprising. This experience informs how the use of a suitcase engaged the students in a dialogue they, as well as I, could find meaning in.

4.4 Summary

This chapter has discussed and reflected on my pedagogical strategies and embodied encounters in the creative dance workshop series. Situations described through 10 auto-narratives and two additional excerpts from my journal, highlight how self-awareness, sensations, intuitive experiences, emotions, and reflections are connected to the embodied dialogue. My embodied encounters in the dance classes have reminded me of the importance of understanding my experiences so I can better understand my students' experiences, and better facilitate a teaching practice that understands and is aware of the embodied dialogue in the classroom. Building on these reflections, the next chapter focuses on what situations in the dance classes draw out significant aspects of the embodied dialogue when moving together in the space.

Chapter 5: The embodied dialogue

This chapter builds on the findings I have discovered within my own embodied experiences as a teacher in the six dance classes. Having established that embodied dialogue is connected to awareness, sensitivity, emotions, and intuition, this chapter turns the discussion towards the second sub-question: **How might embodied experiences in creative dance contribute to connections between my body and others' bodies?**

This discussion explores in more depth how the embodied dialogue in the six dance classes emphasizes bodily and emotional connections between peers and in the teacher-student relationship. Anttila (2007) highlights how: "This bodily dialogue includes inner and outer movement of turning toward the other, sensing, feeling, and listening, as well as bodily involvement with other bodies, as in touch and contact work" (p.46). The interactions within this creative dance workshop series reveal how bodily involvement as a way of communicating puts the student and the teacher in constant dialogue between the I and 'Thou' which Buber (2012) points out consists of an effort in getting to know the experiences that occur within the interactions.

In this chapter, I firstly dive into how somatic experiencing can allow space for individual feelings to be expressed, aesthetic moments to occur, and examples of how students face confrontations and inclusions that might impact peer relationships in the class. Secondly, this chapter explores how the embodied dialogue facilitates a space where students experience a playful and fun arena to explore creative dance within. Lastly, I investigate what kind of situations initiate tension in the dance classes, and how tension and trust find ways to impact the embodied dialogue.

5.1 Awareness and sensitivity of self and others: Embodied dialogue in my experience as a teacher

Building on the literature that already has been discussed in the sections of the literature review 2.2 and 2.3 and in the introduction of discussion chapter 4 and its following section 4.1.1, the examples that follow highlight how significant aspects of the embodied dialogue is connected to awareness and sensitivity (Anttila, 2007; Braun & Kotera, 2021; Schussler et al., 2010; Stinson, 2005; Svendler Nielsen, 2009). When applying dialogue to a dance context the inner dialogue and awareness towards self and others is heightened. Anttila (2007) suggests: “educating "a conscious body" means, first, supporting awareness of subtle bodily sensations that can be depicted as dialogue within our bodies, or an inner dialogue” (p.50). The narrative that follows exemplifies how I experienced what educating “a conscious body” might look like in dance class.

It is so hard

> So, I had the students sit down, and I asked if they thought this was a difficult task. One boy said that it was difficult, and I asked why. He said: “because my leg was like this” (he kicked his leg up). I said: “Oh, so it was hard because your leg moved so high”? He nodded. Another girl said it was hard to move her head so fast and sharp, and that it made her head hurt. These responses had me realize that their inner bodily dialogue had begun. They started becoming aware of how their bodies felt while moving in certain ways. Especially in this class when incorporating force into their movements, they experienced some kind of discomfort, something they wouldn’t necessarily do if they weren’t told to explore movements within the concept of energy, and applying various energies like sharp, force, smooth and fluid, to movements.

It is clear from the responses from the two students that they felt discomfort while exploring how to move with force. Bodily movements that my students were exploring when they added the concept of force, might not necessarily feel comfortable, smooth, or easy. Developing “a conscious body” in this class is connected to the experience the students had with their own bodily actions and their awareness and sensations of what this felt like. Anttila (2007) proposes that students may experience a greater sense of ownership of the body when they develop “a conscious body”. It can be suggested that feeling discomfort or limitations, as well as comfort and possibilities, within their own bodies creates a sense of who they are and what their bodies are capable of. Exploring the capabilities of their own body movements and experiencing feelings of various movements might strengthen their embodied consciousness of who they are. This reflection aligns with research that points out: “If given the time and the place to explore, through a guided kinesthetic awareness, the young child can begin to develop a deeper inner sensing of the body beyond that of identifying parts of the body and what skills the body can perform” (Sansom, 2008, p.30). Another view on kinesthetic awareness is related to how somatic-based learning environments can stimulate students' development of a holistic embodied sense of self (Barsky, 2021; Buono, 2021; Pape-Pedersen, 2022). Payne and Costas (2020) state that: “Dance integrates active, kinesthetic learning with understanding” (p.285). My students and their “felt” experiences emphasize how in dance the body and mind work closely in their embodied learning experiences. Scholars in somatic practices and dance emphasize how embodied experiences in dance don't separate mind and body, but instead promote a holistic approach to body awareness and an understanding of social interactions and the environment (Buono, 2021; Payne & Costas, 2020; Pape-Pedersen, 2022) One can recognize how kinesthetic learning experiences are connected to the inner dialogue because it connects thoughts, feelings, and sensations to movements, like Buono (2021) points out: “Somatic movement literacy can be

fostered with young children within movement education settings that emphasize feeling, sensing, and perceiving" (p.18).

Being aware of my students' experiences in class is a skill I seek to continually develop as a dance teacher as I engage with the students in an embodied dialogue. Ida Pape-Pedersen (2022) reflects: "Maybe we are not there to define, describe and label, but to collectively uncover, discover, and become" (p.9), hinting at young children's embodied approaches when first discovering the world. Anttila (2007) expresses the importance of focusing on the bodily sensations in the present moments within the process of learning dance. Scholars also point to how teachers can help students connect their movements to ongoing thoughts and sensations to help stimulate the students' understanding of self (Barsky, 2021). Knowing that as their teacher I had already put my students in a situation where some students expressed difficulty and discomfort in exploring the concept of force and navigating this dance skill, I felt like it was time to pause. I felt uncertainty and discomfort in my own body, debating how much time I should let the students keep exploring, when I observed some of them were having a hard time. We stopped moving and I asked the group to sit down together to hear about their experiences. By inviting my students to a discussion about their experiences, a space was facilitated where my students could express their thoughts and draw connections between their experiences and their reflections. This tactful 'move' relates to what Barsky (2021) discusses when emphasizing how the inner dialogue can move on to become part of a broader dialogue within the environment or context in which the self is situated. With the understanding of Buber's (2012) conception that verbal expression (as discussed in section 2.1.3 of chapter 2) encourages people to recognize and be recognized, I find it interesting to ponder on how this space of verbal dialogue fulfills the embodied experience in how students might recognize and understand what happens inside of their bodies through their own verbal expression. These reflections lead me further into the

discussion on how inner dialogue might help us recognize other people's bodily existence and their bodily integrity, through sensitive approaches, and become part of a broader dialogue.

The two auto-narratives that follow express how embodied encounters can rely on other bodies moving in the same space. As already mentioned in the literature, creative dance can foster a space for embodied learning that nurtures social learning like empathy and inclusion (Anttila, 2007; Giguere, 2021; Østern, 2013; Wise et al., 2019), it is apparent that once our own inner dialogue can be recognized it could lead to greater awareness towards other people in the space. I ask: How might my embodied encounters with the students who are moving in the same space as I inform and foster my kinesthetic senses, emotions, and experience of aesthetic moments?

The feeling of moving with others

> Half the group had frozen into various shapes that represented oceans. The other half was each given a scarf. This was our second creative dance task, and I had divided the groups into two colors, blue and purple. The students in the purple group were not supposed to move and created a shape to be still in, and they managed to hold their bodies still throughout the exercise. The other half, the blue group, moved in between the bodies and their shapes. First, I felt like they had enough to negotiate by navigating the use of their scarves and figuring out how to move with the scarves.
>
> I purposefully moved with them and soon they understood that they could approach each other in a gentle way that allowed them to come as near as possible if they managed not to touch anyone with their movements or their scarves. There were a lot of smiles that appeared in this exercise, the excitement of standing still and sensing the others moving close to them, the feeling of other movements close to them, and the movement of the scarves. Students were finding pathways in between groups of

> people; they were moving with their scarves playfully around the shapes of bodies. They tried to incorporate big and small movements in different directions, however, they moved mostly in their middle-to-high level as they traveled a lot and were occupied with moving from one person to another. I found it joyful to see how the students immediately showed care in their approaches to each other; they were bold and gentle at the same time. I especially noticed a group of three girls that were frozen into different shapes close to one another. One of these girls, the one closest to me, kept on smiling like a couple of other students danced around them and twirled their scarves around their heads and bodies. The moving group was coming as near as they could without touching the frozen group, and this seemed to thrill this student that couldn't even turn her head to see what was going on. The only thing she could do was to stand still and feel the other students rushing past her and taking the time to move in between them and around them. Her hair was loose falling down her shoulders, her knees were bent, and her arms I think were placed to one side, and this still shape was a contrast to a very lively face that expressed a lot of emotion.

The narrative above starts off by showing the importance of how my bodily interactions with my students influenced their understanding of how to physically approach each other. Through bodily listening, which Østern (2013) emphasizes as key in the bodily dialogue in the classroom, students become informed and aware of how they can move in space in a way that shows care toward their peers. Other scholars highlight how children develop the skill of spatial awareness through embodied activities (Stinson, 1988; Temple et al., 2020), which also indicates the close relationship between the body and bodies when dancing. My students were exploring the possibilities they had in where they could travel in space, how to move with their bodies, and the scarf they held onto, without coming near anyone else. This way of exploring gave them both freedom and responsibility to figure out

how bodily listening informs and is informed by the moving bodies in space. While research strongly draws a parallel between how embodied learning includes body and mind (Catalano & Leonard, 2016; Cetin & Erdem, 2020; Payne & Costas, 2020; Vieira Pedreira, 2007) it is more specifically explained that embodied experiences include feeling, sensing, perceiving and meaning making (Buono, 2021; Payne & Costas, 2020). It is clear from the narrative above that our senses are alert and attentive to the sensations we feel within our bodies when moving together in space. Helen Payne and Barry Costas (2020) state: "Relationships develop nonverbally when collaborating in a creative endeavor in a group to make dances" (p.282). While the aim of this dance task was not to make a dance choreography, it turned into a dance of moving bodies and scarves between frozen body shapes. While the dance tasks allowed my students to make choices in their own movement expressions, movement patterns, and shapes, I found that their bodily communication and listening with each other were engaged in a broader expansive dialogue that made the students rely on each other.

This narrative also gives a close image of one of the girls in this class. The 'thrilling' sensation that this girl seemed to experience in this narrative suggests in a way how skillfully the students navigated in space. Peers kept on moving next to this girl, besides her, around her, and she was true to her task and did not move away from her frozen body shape. The heightened awareness that is seen in my students' bodily sensations guided them in respecting other bodies in the space by being sensitive to their existence, which researchers also point out can be a result of an embodied dialogue (Anttila, 2007; Sansom, 2009; Stinson, 1988; Wise et al., 2019). This experience also seemed to heighten the girl's sensations of herself in space amongst her peers. Dance scholars discuss how emotions are part of the reactions one has within embodied encounters that arise from bodily sensations (Pape-Pedersen, 2022; Payne and Costas, 2020). It was evident to me, as I could see the girl's face, that she experienced excitement, mystery, curiosity, and connections to her peers. This situation

affirms what research points out in how dance is often used to express almost all emotions of human beings (Cetin & Erdem, 2020). To dive into a broader understanding of bodily sensations and emotions, the next narrative focuses on the experiences of aesthetic moments that occur within the embodied dialogue in the classroom.

Aesthetic moments that arise from an embodied dialogue

> In the previous dance class, I observed how the students felt more comfortable in the way they responded bodily in class, and even more in today's class! The students were clearer with their directions in the room. Some of them managed to move bigger and with variety, and others managed to think of only directions and hold on to the scarf. I paid attention, especially to a boy who really caught my eye. He used wavey movements with the scarf, but also with his arms and upper body while at the same time was moving forward. It was easy to see that he managed to combine several skills, and this stood out while the students explored movements. To me watching this boy in the class move felt like an artistic moment, and I felt both emotional and excited to see this beautiful way of moving.

This narrative draws out how I, as a dance facilitator, give attention to how the students have received, and are able to, convey the dance concepts they have been introduced to throughout the dance workshop series. Fraleigh (1980) points out how experiences in life shape our skill in directing our attention in different ways according to purpose. She explains this further by emphasizing how our aesthetic attention or attitude is cultivated through education of the senses, and how it is often perceived with contemplativeness and intuition. My background as a dancer and dance teacher has educated my aesthetic attention so that when I am in a dance environment, I perceive aesthetic moments. This moment of the boy who used wavy movements with the scarf, and his body, while he was traveling in the space,

stood out to me in an aesthetic way because he seemed to navigate easily through various dance skills. His bodily expression had the capacity to convey skill, energy, expression, and creativity. I was also drawn to this moment because I wasn't expecting to be emotionally touched by how my students were moving. According to Torun Mattsson and Håkan Larsson (2020) 'experience' in relation to dance accesses reality and comprises the embodied encounters one accesses through expression and movement. My reality was concentrated on the present moment that held me captured to what I perceived in my student's way of moving in space, and the sensations and emotions this experience gave me. According to Pape-Pedersen (2022), the present moment when engaging in somatic practices like dance promote emotions intertwined with the encounters in space, which has essential value for teaching/learning in professional practice.

Even though creative dance, as an educational tool for children's learning, is not often associated with performing arts or staged performances, it could suggest that creative dance might have less of a focus on the aesthetic moments in dance (Payne & Costas, 2020). However, I recognize that the embodied encounters in the dance classes have heightened sensations in my own body and supported my aesthetic attention toward my moving students in the space. Theresa Catalano and Alison Leonard (2016) explain how: "dance and movement bring something to the table that other modes cannot since the body in dance takes a primary role in sense-making and contributes to aesthetic experience" (p.64). The body is considered vital in the experience of dancing, and the creative dance tasks my students engaged with were offered to allow freedom in expression and perception of how they might want to move. The embodied dialogue that has educated me in being aware and sensitive to my body and other bodies throughout my experiences in my dancing career, and the experiences I have had in this workshop series with my students, have informed my awareness and appreciation of the potential of aesthetic moments in class. This encounter

support what Fraleigh (1980) mentions: “The kinesthetic sense, important in the perception of dance because it is the movement sense, is just as involved in aesthetic awareness as are the commonly recognized senses of sight, smell, touch, and hearing” (p.25). Noticing how closely my perception of aesthetic moments is ingrained in the embodied encounter with how my body is sensing, feeling, and acknowledging moments of other bodily movements in class is a reminder of how closely connected my bodily involvement with other bodies is in class.

With the discussion that now has established how embodied dialogue connects bodily awareness and sensitivity to self and others in the space, the next section focuses on how the space that my students and I engage in allows play and fun to become part of the dialogue in class. The embodied interactions that occur in the dance workshop series show that dialogue gives access to awareness and sensitivity, inclusion, and empathy. This part of the discussion focuses on the query: How might creative dance facilitate fun experiences in the classroom that strengthen the empathetic and inclusive approach towards self and others?

5.2 Fostering play and fun through embodied dialogue

This section explores how experiences of ‘fun’ emerge within the creative dance classes, and how these experiences impact the community in the classroom. Susan Stinson (1997) explores how students perceive ‘fun’ in the dance class and reflects on how students might experience what is ‘fun’ differently. She highlights how dance educators should “acknowledge the significance of both pleasure and enjoyment in dance, and use strategies that make it more likely for students to experience dance as satisfying on both of these levels” (p.65). Strategies that can promote experiences of fun could be to give them “choice, freedom, and a sense of control” (Stinson, 1997, p.65). ‘Fun’ in this discussion relates to situations that reveal how the students might express comfort, delight, playfulness, and ease. The four narratives in this section explore how fun emerges when students are given the

freedom to explore movements as well as create something together with their peers. The narratives shared in this section also show the impact of moving through storytelling and pretend imagery, as well as creating experiences of togetherness.

The narrative below was written shortly after the dance class and the experience I write about was also captured on video. Svendler Nielsen (2012), points out how video recordings are useful when describing and interpreting human actions, and shows my experiences during this dance class.

Children who improvise

> The mirror dance today really caught my interest. Several of the students today started to explore movements that led them in various directions and with various qualities, backward, sideways, standing up, some on one leg. Their movements curved and stretched. They managed to keep their movements somewhat slow. Even though the mirror task really demands slow movements, it was incredibly fascinating to see how the children started exploring with more body parts and directions than their hands and facing forward. Their peers were mirroring them while the leader was leaning on one hand or bending the back, and someone even came up from sitting to standing positions. This experience was also touched by an artistic atmosphere showing beautiful duets. I saw the children suddenly improvise and manage movements they hadn't explored before, and their peers followed them faithfully, if not perfectly timed or detailed. Watching the improvised choreography unfold they took it to a new level of creative exploration.

"The mirror dance" offered the students an opportunity to improvise within a clear frame, which gave them an opportunity to explore and enjoy the journey of improvisation. The simplicity of the creative dance task shown above is an example of how the students

could explore how to guide and follow improvised movements in pairs, which gave them freedom in how to move. Stinson (1988) talks about how significance occurs in creative movements, but how it relies on someone to pay attention to it. The peer that was the follower was the one that really had to pay close attention to the movements and try to imitate them by adding the same body part, direction, energy, and size of this movement. Jed Dearybury and Julie Jones (2020) note that: "Anytime we have been creative it feels like play. It feels *good.* We get lost in the moment" (p.23). The notion scholars have of the relation between dance, creativity, and fun underlines the importance of letting students explore their creativity and spontaneity (Stinson, 1988, 1997; Dearybury & Jones, 2020). My observations of how the students played with their creative expression mirror what Dearybury and Jones (2020) call attention to above. However, as much as this dance task requires focus, the students managed to create their own world with their peers and did not seem to mind everyone else moving in the space, they were in a way 'lost in the moment'. Stinson (1997) stresses how educators should give their students choice, freedom, and a sense of control, so the students themselves find their way to experience fun, rather than depending on the teacher to make it 'fun' for them. The way creative dance offers freedom for students to make choices and explore their ways within a set frame gives way to what research calls "holistic process of learning" (Payne & Costas, 2020) or "child-centered approach" (Anttila, 2007; Gilbert 2015) and it highlights the importance of facilitating a fun and playful learning environment which research claims has an important part in early childhood education (Anttila, 2007; Cetin & Erdem, 2020; Dearybury & Jones, 2020; Payne & Costas, 2020; Sansom, 2009).

Extending on the narrative above, the following excerpt from my reflective journal shows my observations of how students respond to freedom in movement within set dance frames and builds on how creative dance offers 'fun' experiences:

> I think I realize that a lot of the joy I feel today is based on how I see connections emerging within the group. I see how the creative dance tasks invite the children to take part, and especially when they work and dance in groups or pairs, where they rely on each other, I see they also take more responsibility, they become more engaged and active, they express their ideas or thoughts.

Noticing how creative dance links to what research calls a child-centered approach, it appeared to offer the students I was working with a space to engage in and direct the choices made during the class. A child-centered approach to learning within dance education supports environments where children might feel empowered and meaningful (Anttila, 2007; Sansom, 2008, 2009, 2016; Stinson, 2002). When children find learning meaningful, it connects with the idea that they might experience fun within the class. Sansom (2016) notices how "the connection between dance and play offers not only the opportunity to make the experience enjoyable or fun, but also meaningful, whilst enhancing self-understanding, our relationships with others and the world" (p.39). This observation points out how fun learning environments strengthen a child-centered approach that might favor the students' learning because it nourishes our understanding of the world and our embodied dialogue within the dance classes.

Students drawing of explorative expression from the mirroring in multimodal interview

To get insights into the children's experiences, the drawing below is an example of what emerged from the multimodal interview when the students expressed through various modes what they felt and experienced in the dance classes. This excerpt from the multimodal interview shows a student's expression of her experiences in the mirror dance after being the 'leader' and the 'follower'. Two questions guided them when they sat down to draw: What

movement did you enjoy the most? Can you draw the shape of this movement or the body part that did the movement?

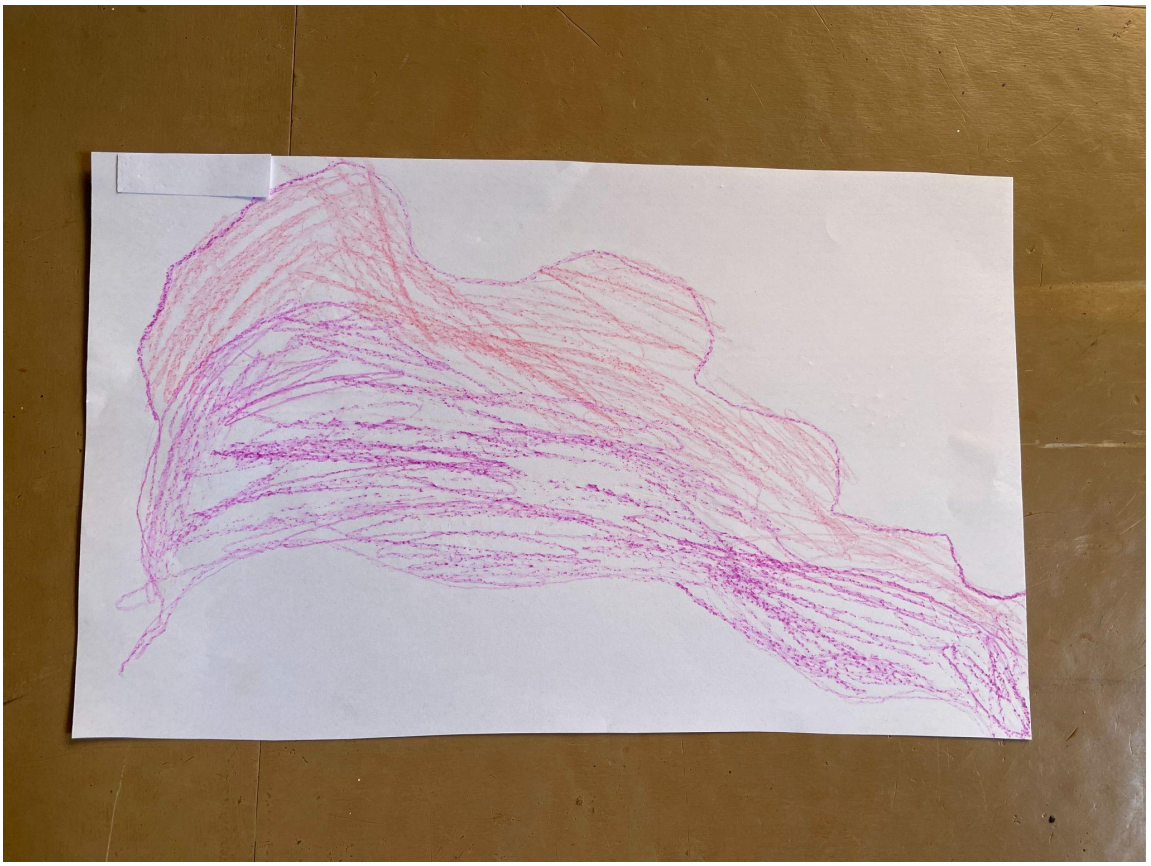

Figure 6. One student's drawing regarding her experiences in the mirror dance

The drawing above exemplifies how children's drawings might express experiences they had when engaging in dance tasks that informed their embodied dialogue. Svendler Nielsen (2009) points out how children and adults do not necessarily easily express embodied experiences through immediate verbal dialogue, however, in multi-modal exercises and interviews it might be possible to practice our expression of the embodied experiences. She also argues that: "experiential and creative bodily activities can contribute to further development of a child's 'somatic thinking' and ways of learning" (p.90). Noticing how children might experience meaningful learning through embodied activities they experience as 'fun', this multi-modal exercise guided them towards an expression of their experience. It

is important to also notice how ‘fun’ experiences often rely on the interactions that happen in the dance class. Therefore, the next narrative draws out the children's experiences of fun and emphasizes the meaning they find in creating together.

Freedom in creating together

> I ended the class by asking if there was something that we’d done throughout these three weeks (six workshops) that they especially enjoyed, and one girl immediately announced the exercise we had just finished (creating a piece of art), several joined in agreeing that this was an enjoyable task. One boy was eager to highlight the first game we had as a class, “the wave and the fish”, and another boy commented on how he mostly enjoyed the ice sculptures. All examples that the students gave have things in common. They are collaborative tasks. Something that can also connect these examples is how the frame of the task allows the individual to have freedom in how to move, there is a personal expressiveness that is encouraged in the creating and explorative way of doing these tasks. There are also some clear instructions that set the scene in what to do, but it's all painted in imagery like ice sculptures, waves and fishes, and arts.

It is noted in the literature that relationships that are fostered through creative dance tasks can contribute to the fun experience that a student might have (Gilbert, 2015; Sansom, 2016). The narrative above summarizes what the children express they enjoyed the most during the dance workshop series. As my students were given a variety of opportunities to work creatively together in pairs and small groups where the aim was to collaborate and focus on a specific purpose, they had to rely on their peers. Sansom (2016) draws out a significant point: “Play is at the heart of what children do with great intensity and integrity as they commit themselves to a process of experimentation, investigation, make-believe and

developing relationships with others" (p.31). The social aspect of not just being together but engaging together, as highlighted in Buber's thinking (Baniwal, 2014; Buber, 2012), suggests that creative dance fosters a way for children to relate to others and to the world. Other scholars suggest how children are informed by social interactions when they experience a learning environment that is connected to 'play' or 'fun' (Anttila, 2007; Sansom, 2016; Stinson, 1997). These thoughts suggest how critical relationships might be in students' experiences of fun. The expressiveness and freedom my students had to explore movements and create something together with their peers, affirms the impact it gives when students can express their voices, bodily and verbally, for them to find meaning and enjoy the creative dancing.

Another significant aspect of how creative dance fosters 'fun' in the dance classes is noticed in the above narrative, and it points out the impact of using imagery in relation to how we can move and how we can understand movement. The concept of using the oceans as the main theme offered many possibilities in how I wished to present and convey various tasks in each dance class. The fun I experienced in unraveling my explanations in a world of imagery suggests that I stirred in my students what Dearybury and Jones (2020) also connect to fun, the emotion of wonder. I was reminded throughout this workshop series to use my voice and my expressions playfully to relate to the imagery that was offered. In a way, using my imagination, and being inspired by my students' responses to imagery and their expression of wonder to foster 'fun', kept my curiosity and wonder alive, and supported my experience of enjoying the teaching moment. Dearybury and Jones (2020) argue that most people know what playing feels like: "It's those moments where our spirit lets go of time constraints, our minds get lost in the moment, and we seemingly lose ourselves in the experience" (p.4). My experience of 'fun' as a teacher who used imagery as a way of connecting with my students allowed me to become immersed in the embodied experiences

in the class. By exploring an imaginary world, I found myself more present in the teaching moment and responded to the students with more ease and playfulness.

To highlight the impact of the imagery, the narrative that follows gives additional insight into how imagery was used within the class. This section focuses in more depth on how imagery fosters a mindset of playfulness for me as a teacher and also perhaps for the students too.

Imaginary adventures

> We had arrived in America. I asked the students, "What do you think there is to see in America, and what can you do in America?" There weren't too many responses, except for a student that said, "America is fun!" I said: "Yes, America is fun, and do you know what? They have just discovered a really big octopus in America! How many legs does an octopus have?" They all eagerly said: "8"! I said, "Yes, they do! But hey, did you know the one they have discovered in America has 6 legs only?!" They all showed an expression of awe, someone said, "Wow", and others said "Ooh", and they got all excited. I shared this information with a lot of enthusiasm, a glint in my eye, and some pauses to build up the climax of the news. Soon after they had received this fictive news (we were on an imaginary adventure after all), I started dividing them into groups. I pulled the ones closest to me aside as I counted them, by touching them lightly on the head, 1 through 6. This first group of six students I used as an example. I said, "now the octopus has only 6 legs, you need to stay on one leg only". I repeated, "you are one octopus, you must be connected to each other. Use one hand/arm or both to hold onto another person". When they were all on one leg and touched each other with a hand, I said, "now the octopus is doing one movement, and it's the same movement for everyone. How will it move?" They came with examples

and landed on a wavy arm-movement, and then they were off, jumping up and down on one leg, moving across the tennis court.

I put the music on, and they wandered off, trying to keep their balance, stay connected and move a certain way. One of the groups had a couple of students that kept losing their balance, so they put their feet on the ground for support. One group formed as a long line had students who pulled the other ones ahead in certain directions. It felt like they were having a fun time. I let them explore some more, then I stopped the music. I said something like, "I see this octopus keeps growing new legs, it has only six legs, so in order for us to get to our next destination we need to stand on one leg only, should we try again?" I put the music on again, and they kept moving around, smiling, laughing, trying to stay together and keep their balance. This task is extremely difficult as it requires a lot from the students, they need to be aware of their balance, how to stay physically in touch with other students while moving and be alert and aware of the other students' choices in what direction they move towards in order to stay together. It requires a dialogue with oneself, and five other peers at the same time. They solved this task extremely well, and the way this task was put into a story and imagery seemed to capture the interest and fascination of these kids. They were going to be this special octopus that people had discovered in America. The way this task also captures the inclusion of peers in a collaborative task seemed to really work out well for this group.

Playfulness has been featured in literature with characteristics such as 'spirit' 'intensity' 'letting go' and 'losing ourselves' (Dearybury & Jones 2020; Sansom, 2016). In the narrative above, I find playfulness intertwined in the way my dialogue plays out with my students which leads me to emphasize what Dearybury and Jones (2020) call a 'playful

mindset'. According to Dearybury and Jones (2020), a playful mindset is an intentional approach to situations one engages in that fosters 'fun', but it also goes beyond this – it includes "having an awareness of our world, being intentional about our choices, honoring the process until it becomes a habit, and using results as a catalyst for more creativity" (p.6). In my interactions with the students, I was aware that creating moments of wonder, anticipation, and fun were connected to how I used my voice, body, and expressions in the way I was conveying the dance task. Being inspired by Gilbert (2015) and planning my dance class from the concept of choreographic forms, where 'imaginary adventures' emerged, my students and I were constantly creating and moving through storytelling. I used the theme of the oceans as inspiration to bring my students on a journey where we traveled to various places in the world and added imagery and pretend imagery to encourage the embodied dialogue in the class.

Scholars focus on imagination as a vital part of the early years of education for various reasons (see for example Bresler 2004; Hong et al., 2017; Nilsson et al., 2017; Smith & Mathur, 2009). Imagination according to Dearybury and Jones (2020) could foster our capacity for empathy if practiced through deep play and daydreaming. Hong et al. (2017) point out how the idea of engaging children's imagination in social and academic contexts is not new. However, to make space for imaginative moments in, for example, educational settings, scholars point out how intentional efforts are required by the teacher so that imaginary experiences can fuel meaningful learning (Dearybury & Jones, 2020; Hong et al., 2017). Intentional approaches that make space for imaginary moments highlight educators' responsibility in incorporating visualization, daydreaming, and imagery to students and lead back to the idea that Dearybury and Jones (2020) introduce as a playful mindset. Anttila (2007) discovers how she connects more easily with the children and their experiences when

imagination was part of the class. Anttila (2007) also points out how imagination could be a bridge between play and art.

In the storytelling of my class, imagination is used to help students understand how they can move, and how they might work together as a team. The specific dance task conveyed in this narrative is risky in the way that my students could fall or pull each other through their movement. This suggests that moving with empathy is central to how students' experiences are identified as fun and enjoyable. My students, however, eagerly tried to be tentative to each other, and they managed in this exercise to grow empathy as a skill in their embodied dialogue. When I chose to stop the music, it was because I saw how much they were enjoying the playfulness of this task, but to keep it safe, I experienced they needed a reminder to focus on what they were supposed to achieve. Dearybury and Jones (2020) bring out an important aspect of teaching, noting that "the art of teaching includes the use of spontaneity when we teach at the moment when we use student questions to follow curiosities to their aha moments" (p. 16). I felt eager to respond to the dialogue that was playing out on the tennis court, and even though my students did not ask me direct questions, I observed how they tried to figure out how to hold their balance. The "felt" excitement that I breathed in from the room influenced my response, and I found myself at ease and in a state of playfulness. Therefore, I kept using imagery to grow their understanding of how to manage all these different skills in one creative dance task. Sansom (2008) emphasizes the teacher's role in facilitating a challenging learning environment that purposefully intends to nurture experiences that connect to the lives of young children. Sansom (2016) goes on to say how: "play, appropriated and sanitized by adults can be seen as acceptable 'curriculum' within early childhood settings" (p. 32). I find the 'fun' in using imagery as a central aspect of what engages the embodied dialogue in the class. I also find it important to acknowledge what

Sansom (2008, 2016) noticed that the teacher owns a responsibility in facilitating 'fun' through play that might challenge the students, but also connects to their life experiences.

This discussion has focused my attention on how embodied dialogue can allow 'fun' and play to emerge through creative dance tasks. 'Fun' experiences through creative dance can nurture inclusion, empathy, and collaboration when dancing together. I am now curious to investigate what tensions might be brought to the surface within the embodied dialogue, and how 'fun' experiences in class might potentially equip the students to find ways to resolve moments of tension. Also, I am curious to investigate how the embodied dialogue promotes trust between students, and how this might link to experiences of tension. I now turn to discuss the feeling of tension and how bodily and verbal expression is part of fostering empathetic relationships in the class. The question I ask is: How might tensions in the classroom appear within the embodied dialogue and how might trust play a part in resolving these tensions?

5.3 Developing trust and resolution of tension through embodied dialogue: My encounters as the teacher

Having established what embodied dialogue might contain through the discussions and literature so far, this section explores a different terrain that turns towards the moments of tension that occur in the dance workshop series, and how resolutions of tension, possible conflicts, and trust are also embodied experiences that shape the interactions in the dance classes. The first narrative focuses on the potential tensions that arise within the embodied dialogue, and the second narrative explores how trust is refined through the embodied dialogue.

Resolving conflicts through embodied and verbal expression

Part one:

The students have explored how to move in a big space, how to be aware of that space, and now they were going to explore how the movements they did previously in their first exercise might shift, as all the 17 students were going to share space on 4 red mats on the ground. They could pick the mat they wanted, as long as they found space on the red mat. On one of the red mats, a group of five girls tried to fit, which worked out in some way. I got the impression that they wanted to stay next to each other because they were close friends. When the music started, they were encouraged to move like the oceans, and these girls started with small movements. On other mats, there were maybe three students, and they had more space to move. I challenged them to reach up high, move low to the ground, turn around, and explore their space. When this seemed to be too easy, I challenged them to try to move on one foot. I knew they could easily lose their balance, and potentially people might need to step off the mat, but I wanted to see how they solved this. On the red mat with the five girls, this is exactly what happened. The tallest girl on the mat started moving bigger, and a smaller girl fell off the mat. She started arguing immediately about how she was shoved off the mat. I waited it out a little bit to see if this girl would get back on and try again but she kept being defensive and arguing with this other girl. From my observation, the push was entirely accidental.

Figure 7. Red mats used in the space

As noted earlier, literature shows how whole-body activities help children develop spatial awareness (Jeffrey, 2017; Temple et al., 2020; Stinson, 1988). Stephanie Hanrahan and Rachel Pedro (2017) focus on how team building activities in dance classes should be: "challenging, creative and fun" (p.65) because it allows students to get to know each other as they are faced with aspects like problem-solving and trust. This creative dance task seemed to be challenging for the students. The mats were the only place the students could be during the time of this task and while some mats held three students, this narrative describes how five close girlfriends were standing on the same mat. I found that the relationship between spatial awareness and somatic awareness stirred tension between these peers. Martha Eddy (2016) characterizes somatic awareness as the living body which involves paying attention to body sensations, perceptions, and related emotions. This creative dance task purposefully challenged my students to pay attention to how their bodies felt different when they were to

move in a small place while making sure they respected the space of their peers. Eddy (2016) also emphasizes that “practicing awareness while moving stimulates the kinesthetic sense” (p.105). This suggests how kinesthetic awareness grows an embodied consciousness that might be helpful in relating to other peers and their experiences as well. However, the tension in this situation was created through somatic awareness of discomfort and negotiating space. It is noted in the literature that conflict generally leads to stress that somehow is registered in the body (Eddy, 2016; Gibbons, 2010). Eddy (2016) points out how “triggers of stress can arise from the self or come from someone or some situation outside” (p.104). Research shows how young children can understand how their lives are interconnected with humans and non-beings (Buono, 2021), which in this example could relate to their peers and the red mat. Buono (2021) also emphasizes how children can communicate their lived experiences through multimodal communication. Through the multimodal interview I applied in some of my dance classes, I encouraged my students to express bodily how they felt when moving in a tight place. Part two of this narrative illustrates how I perceived the students encountering embodied and how they expressed tensions with their peers.

Part two:

> After the task on the red mats, I asked the students to sit with me in a circle. I asked the kids how they felt moving in such a tight place. The first girl who responded curled into a ball on the ground, head hidden close to knees. A boy shut his fist tightly. Another boy showed thumbs down, and a few other students also showed their thumbs down. One girl showed a heart with her hands that opened and broke apart. And then the girl that argued earlier showed me thumbs down and explained that it wasn't so fun moving on the mat, because they weren’t able to all stand and move at the same time without falling off their mats, which upset her. She talked about the

situation calmly and processed what had happened as she took us through the scenario. There wasn't any arguing, just an explanation of how she experienced this and how she felt about it. It seemed to open their reflection on what a big and small space does to their embodied dialogue with each other. This was a challenging exercise and they seemed to be aware that their movements could easily change because they didn't have enough space around them, and they seemed to be aware that they could easily bump into each other, something they expressed as not pleasant. As soon as the kids started talking about this experience, it seemed that there were no hard feelings but rather a clear shift in their moods.

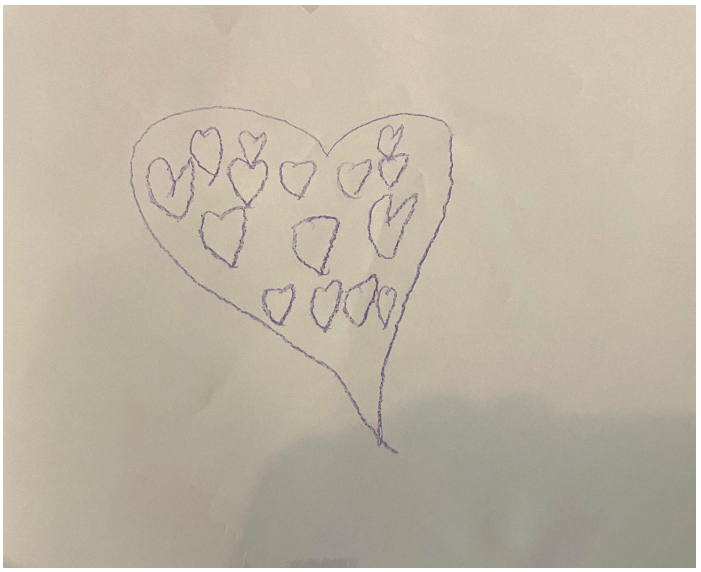

Figure 8. Student's drawing and expression of how it feels to move in a big space

Karen Gibbons (2010) points out that "conflict is inevitable in human relationships" (p.84) and carries on saying that global conflicts can be addressed by the same elements that are found in dealing with conflict situations in elementary school. Even conflict situations in the school might have students suppress their emotions and potentially lead to negative behaviors if they are not addressed properly (Gibbons, 2010). Children who feel like they can express their emotions harmlessly are important according to research (Cetin & Erwin, 2020) because it allows them to be able to understand their experiences and develop emotional and

social skills. Other scholars address the importance of teaching students creative ways to deal with tensions that arise (Gibbons, 2010; Jeffrey, 2017). The stress that emerged in this dance class was especially evident for one of my students. It looked to me like the stress that this girl felt was influenced by the situation, her peers, and her own reaction to the situation when she became tense and defensive. Within creative dance, expressing emotions through bodily expressions is encouraged, and literature points out how children often express their emotions and experiences nonverbally (Anttila, 2007; Cetin & Erwin; 2020; Svendler Nielsen, 2009). This conflict between peers in my class created an opportunity for me to facilitate a space where my students could express their experiences of moving in a small, and a big space, in a bodily way.

Research points out how teachers are in a unique position to both facilitate activities where students collaborate and are given the space to communicate (Hanrahan & Pedro 2017; Jeffrey, 2017; Kudlats & Brown, 2020). When I asked the students how it felt to move in a small space and if this feeling had a shape, my students responded by making movements that required them to tighten their muscles, close inwards, and express symbolic movements like a heart that breaks, or thumbs down. This suggests that perhaps the students felt uncomfortable, awkward, or possibly even claustrophobic. One of the strengths of dance according to Jeffrey (2017) is that it can use symbols to communicate through the body. Scholars also point out how somatic education and creative dance both allow for movement, vocalization, reflection, and discussion (Buono, 2019; Eddy, 2016; Gilbert, 2015). The opportunity I had to watch my students express their thoughts was important for me to fully understand their sensations and emotions. Movements made conscious through a verbal dialogue also affirm the importance of what Buber (2012) points out when saying how speech and reply offer confrontation and inclusion. Allowing my students to take their time in expressing their thoughts might have felt harmless and safe as they all responded so calmly in contrast to how they responded in

the middle of the tense situation. Jeffrey (2017) observes how: “dance is an embodied form of expression that develops new ways of knowing, increased awareness of internal responses to conflict, and opens possibilities to physically explore new ways of being” (p.26) Research also highlights how relationships impact children’s growth and school environment (Kudlats & Brown, 2020). Dance can allow creativity in how to approach and deal with the tension that occurs in the dance classes, for example in negotiating and conciliation between peers.

Finding ways to integrate the body when dealing with tension and possible conflicts suggests that peers could possibly find greater generosity in how to negotiate and share space within the dance classes, which might foster respect and inclusion of one another. Looking into what trust could add to the context of embodied dialogue and what it could mean in resolving tension, the following narrative illustrates how peers need to rely on each other during one of the dance classes.

Allowing trust to refine the embodied dialogue

Part one:

> I said: “the ones that have lost their sight are depending on you to lead them”. I stood next to my students and asked if I could use one of them as an example. I said: “you hold one hand on the upper arm, one in their hand. The ones with eyes closed cannot peek, and the ones leading, hold a firm grip, but not too hard as it will hurt”. I went to put the music on so they could start walking. There was some excitement and squeals to begin with, but then it went quieter. I saw the students take off and walk around the whole tennis court, even beyond the lines we had drawn. I didn’t mind this as I saw they were gentle when they walked. A couple of them started walking really fast and even pulled their friends backward. I approached them and said gently that for them to feel safe they need to walk forward and not too fast. When I eventually stopped the

> music they froze, and I asked them to open their eyes. I heard some low murmur like: "Oh, wow", when they opened their eyes as if they were surprised to see where they were standing.

The narrative above draws out something I have experienced myself in several creative dance classes, namely being challenged in trusting and relying on my peers in the dance class. James Avis (2003) links teamwork in work-life to education and suggests that developing the skill of trust in relationships fosters creativity in problem-solving. Marelize Marx (2019) finds in research with elementary students in South Africa that students experienced respect, bonding, and social cohesion through creative dancing in the school. The peers in my class knew each other from being together every day at school, but it is not given that they had practiced trust within their relationships with one another, something that I thought this dance workshop series could offer. Catalano and Leonard (2016) highlight how movement-based activities foster a space of togetherness amongst students that allow for trust-building. I was trusting my students with an exercise that required them to take responsibility for leading their peers safely around the tennis court with their eyes closed. Because one of the senses was removed from them and they were to explore with their eyes closed, it seems clear from the narrative above that the students felt excitement. I experienced that once their eyes were closed, their awareness of their senses was heightened, which might be the reason for the squeals and sounds at the beginning of this task. As Anttila (2007) points out, one can connect the senses with silence and listening, to receive signals more easily from the body. Once they were settled and quiet, I could see how some of my students struggled to completely rely on their peers, by following their directions and pace as they walked on the tennis court. This applied especially to the pairs where the 'guides' were so eager that they didn't move with empathy and care, to begin with. In this situation, I found

how important my role as their dance teacher is, to make sure the students move within a safe space where they did not hurt themselves.

Part two:

> I approached a couple of students that showed gentleness towards each other in the exercise, and I asked the class to pay attention. I said: “some of you really were gentle with your friend and all of you did well, but we have to make sure that we hold our grip in a way where it does not create too much distance between the two of you. If that happens it's easy to pull or get too much speed, and this can feel unsafe. Some of you did this really well”. The girl who was helping show the example said: “like us!” As if she knew they had done well, and that I chose this pair specifically because they had solved this task really well. I thought, how awesome that you also felt that connection with your friend, and were able to trust him, she was very self-aware.
>
> They changed roles, so the 2’s were now the ones with their sight loss. Before I put the music on, I made sure to go around and check everyone's grip, I adjusted at least four of them, and acknowledged the ones that held their arm the right way. I reminded them not to peek and turned the music on. The kids were quiet, gentle, moving around the whole tennis court, and their teacher commented to me and said: “I saw the ones who were trusting each other”. I saw that most of them really tried to keep their eyes shut and let their peer lead them around. In this task when you are asked to not see, you really must depend on your friend, I reminded the ones that were leading the importance of their role in this task: “your friend is depending on you only”. The dialogue between them was remarkable, everyone was on board, they were trying to completely rely on each other, and they had to constantly be aware of how to respond in their moving directions with their partner leading them. I really enjoyed seeing how

> they jumped into this exercise because I know it requires a lot from them. At the same time, I thought, what an amazing opportunity to get to know your peers in a way that requires trust! That is something so important in relationships and a very hands-on practical task.

The educational relationship between teacher and students in Buber's view gives the teacher an advantage in steering the class so the students are better positioned to learn (2012). Hanrahan and Pedro (2017) go on to say that dance teachers "may help dancers enhance their social wellness" (p.54). Part of facilitating a safe space was to make sure my students knew how to guide their peers without talking to them, but by holding a safe grip, and being very gentle in their bodily moving. Gose and Siemietkowski (2018) discuss views on care in a teacher's encounter with students and highlight the importance of weighing both reasons and feeling to foster sensitivity within the dialogue. I found myself approaching the students in action who were moving unsafely with their partners to explain the reason why we need to move with care. It was important to me that the 'guides' realized how big an impact they had in fostering their peers' trust in them. I also made sure to repeat the importance of the 'guides' bodily moving once we were changing partners, and I readjusted or affirmed the grip they held on their peer's arm before they could start moving. Research points out how "trust between teachers and students are the affective glue binding educational relationships together" (Radhakrishnan, 2015, p.17). This statement suggests that it is vital that I have gained the students' trust when I correct them, for them to be willing to listen to my corrections in dance tasks.

Antilla (2007) notices the importance of facilitating an atmosphere of trust when students engage in creative dance because it is the starting point of individuals' expressions and ideas. Sukapurath Remmia Radhakrishnan (2015) also highlights that the foundation for

significant learning relies on the element of trust. As important as I felt my role was in facilitating a safe space, it was essential that both the 'guide' and the follower played out both roles so they in practice could experience what Buber (2012) means by experiencing from the other side. The 'follower' had already lived through what Payne and Costas (2020) call an 'in action' experience of how it felt to move in the space with their eyes closed. The 'followers' had been engaged with sensory experiences and learned how this felt. This suggests that one might need to facilitate creative dance tasks where the students are able to experience from both sides to foster their understanding of what their peer goes through and encourage the element of trust. In Anttila's (2007) words: "Moving with a listening attitude may also lead to a respectful attitude toward other movers in the same space" (p. 51-52).

A study on inclusive classrooms and refugees points out: "compassionate listening conveys trust, because we cannot listen to others unless we have from the start assumed that their words are honest and worthy of attention" (Veck & Wharton, 2019, p. 219). This perspective brings in the diversity amongst students and how they perceive trust. Jui-Chih Chin (2014) writes in *Early Education and Development* on a study with Taiwanese young children and their trust beliefs in peers how developing trust in early childhood could gain childrens' engagement in social activities with peers and encourage reliable actions. Chin (2014) emphasizes how children have different capacities in establishing trusting relationships, and that it could be traced through cultural lenses. As the group of my students was coming from various places in the world they also came with their own capacity in developing trust towards their peers. As Svendler Nielsen et al. (2020) suggest (in section 2.2.2, p. 38, in the literature review chapter), cultural dimensions of children's diverse, embodied, and lived experiences should be considered. From my lived experience in this dance class where I sought to guide my students towards an understanding of what trust could mean for them when interacting with their peers, I observed that they seemed to respond with

focus, laughter, and attentiveness. In order to pursue the aim of cultural sensitivity, it was therefore even more vital for me that all the pairs were given the opportunity to experience 'from the other side' which the role switch allowed for when they both were 'guides' and 'followers'. To develop and maintain social relationships trust is vital, if not, acceptance of each other will be less possible (Chin, 2014).

Marx (2019) quotes one of her dance students who expressed, "because you respect yourself – you're not gonna want to make anybody else feel uncomfortable" (p.394). Respect needs to be present to show empathy, and Catalano and Leonard (2016) go on to say that true dialogue cannot occur without being able to identify another person's point of view. These scholars align with Buber's perception of a child's desire for fellowship: "The development of the child's soul is connected indissolubly with his craving for the You, with the fulfillments and disappointments of this craving, with the play of his experience and his tragic seriousness when he feels at a total loss" (Buber, 2012, p.108). These words relate to my experience in how easily my students received my critique in the narrative above to practice empathy and trust in their collaboration with each other when working in pairs. It can be suggested that humans are relational and that children naturally respond to the inner drive towards relationships with others.

Finding how close of a connection between how moving with care, empathy and respect might foster trust in peer relationships suggests the unique potential creative dance has in educational settings. The impact embodied dialogue has in creating inclusion between peers, relates to educational settings, like the dance classes my students participated in.

The discussion that has emerged in this chapter reveals how embodied dialogue can lead to interactions in the dance classes that are identified by experiences of sensitivity towards each other. By looking closely into eight auto-narratives in this chapter, along with

additional excerpts from my journal and the multimodal interviews, as well as being informed by video documentation from the dance workshop series, it emerged that fostering sensitivity and awareness towards one's body and other bodies could come forth when dancing, improvising, and working collaboratively together. ‘Fun’ and playful experiences in the dance classes also show the potential of strengthening an environment where students feel safe to express their feelings, which could be moments that signal enjoyment or tension. In moments of tension, creative dance also allows creative expressions through somatic expressions, multimodality, and reflections. In considering trust to be another aspect of embodied dialogue, it could be suggested that embodied dialogue might equip students with tools that could be helpful when experiencing moments of tension. An empathetic embodied dialogue encourages the feeling of empathy and inclusion. Being respectful with each other, and practicing the skill of experiencing from ‘the other side’ or what ‘the other’ might encounter encourages generosity within the embodied dialogue.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis has sought to investigate the research question:

How might I, as a dance educator, facilitate a creative dance workshop series for 1st graders that focus on sensitivity and awareness towards self and others through an empathetic embodied dialogical approach?

The contextual and conceptual literature relevant to this study was reviewed in chapter 2. Dialogical pedagogy was explored in relation to educational settings and more specifically dance education and creative dance. The embodied approach to dialogue was also explored in relation to creative dance for 1st graders in an international school context and insight was given to embodied theory.

The methodology chapter situated this research in the framework of qualitative research, phenomenology, and hermeneutic phenomenology. Various methods were used to collect the data. The dance workshop series was the key location for this research, where I guided my students through six dance classes over three weeks. Journaling and auto-narratives have been applied as a process of gathering data, as well as multi-modal interviews and video documentation as supplementary modes of gathering data. A thematic approach was used to analyze the data.

Chapter 4 offered the first part of the results, analysis, and discussion that emerged from this research. This chapter offered reflections related to my embodied experiences, strategies, and approaches as a dance teacher. The auto-narratives that are a core part of this discussion reveal how the embodied dialogue is shaped by emotions, empathy, inclusion, and pedagogical tact.

Chapter 5 built on the results, analysis, and discussion offered in chapter 4 and went in-depth with examples from the six dance classes through auto-narratives, and excerpts from my journal, the multimodal interview, and video documentation, which further explored the embodied experiences and encounters. This chapter offered a discussion on the awareness and sensitivity to self and others, and how tension and trust have the potential to impact and emerge from the embodied dialogue, especially when encounters in playful educational settings have been made.

This concluding chapter provides a final summary of this thesis with key findings from discussion chapters 4 and 5. Furthermore, I offer recommendations and directions for future research.

6.1 Key findings

By applying dialogical pedagogy and theories of embodiment to the context of creative dance in early elementary education with participants with diverse backgrounds, this research has focused on how embodied dialogue emerges when allowing emotional and bodily connections in the dance classes. The research has examined data collections from the six dance classes, journaling, and auto-narratives, multimodal interviews, and video to try to capture the lived experience I have had in my teaching practice when interacting with my students in the dance classes. The main finding emerging from this research shows that embodied dialogue between me as the teacher and my students, and among the peers in the class, holds many layers of emotional and bodily connections. However, awareness and sensitivity within my embodied experiences as the teacher can create empathy towards my students and their embodied dialogue and bring potential towards an expanded dialogue that foster empathy and inclusion. By tuning in to my inner dialogue I could create awareness of my feelings and experiences, even though they are not always comfortable to recognize, they

allow me to expand my horizon in how to approach and connect with my students in my teaching practice and embodied dialogue.

The following section summarizes key findings that appeared in chapter 4: "Reflections on my embodied experiences, strategies, and approaches as a teacher", and the reflective process that brought some of my uncomfortable feelings to the surface, as well as the awareness towards my teaching practice. Key findings from chapter 5: "The embodied dialogue" offers a summary of how awareness of self and others emerge by engaging in creative dance tasks and how experiences of tension, trust, and fun can allow connections with others in a bodily way.

Reflections on my embodied experiences within my teacher practice

The key finding to emerge from sections 4.1, 4.1.1, and 4.1.2, is that intuitive bodily sensations often are felt before we are conscious of how they affect us, therefore journaling and shaping auto-narratives are reflective tools that helped me recognize my embodied responses and emotions that arise from the embodied dialogue in the dance classes.

On one hand, pursuing the ideas that I had in the moment, expressed my bodily intuition that was impacted by the embodied dialogue with my students and my surroundings. On the other hand, bodily awareness created through interacting with my students in the creative dance classes offered me chances to confront various feelings.

My bodily intuition that emerged from somatic experiences and bodily listening seemed to develop as I engaged in creative dance tasks with my students. Therefore, embodied connections emphasize possibilities of physical and creative expression and the potential of expanding the dialogue beyond just myself, towards those I interact with through moving in the space.

The embodied dialogue allowed me also to confront various feelings. Feelings of disconnection, regret and worry that emerged from situations that occurred in the dance classes were necessary to understand to make way for an empathetic embodied approach that could offer an inclusive pedagogical practice. Recognizing my emotions with the help of reflective journaling and auto-narratives brought awareness of my students' experiences in the dance classes and gave me perspectives on how to improve my pedagogical practice.

Key findings from sections 4.2, 4.2.1, and 4.2.2 highlight how moving with empathy can pave a way for an inclusive embodied dialogue that strives to acknowledge everyone that participates in the dance classes. Even though I sought to practice inclusion with my students through empathy and pedagogical tact, students responded differently to dance tasks that allowed them to practice inclusion in diverse ways. This finding emphasizes the individual choice each student has in practicing an "I-Thou" relationship, and that there is always potential to create awareness in the practice of empathy and inclusion within embodied interactions in the dance classes. My responsibility as the dance teacher to model empathy and inclusion in my embodied approaches toward my students has value in relation to the experience of moving with empathy.

Key findings to emerge from sections 4.3, 4.3.1, and 4.3.2 bring attention to how pedagogical embodied practices are lived experiences that are impacted directly by the embodied encounters in the dance classes through the engagement of different modalities, modes, and somatic experiences.

Adding multimodality to my teaching practice allowed me to find various possibilities in how to convey dance ideas and dance concepts to guide the class and my students' understanding. Pictures and artifacts that the students could engage with in the dance class served as a reminder to me of how to be present in the embodied responses that emerged

from these encounters. Even though my embodied experiences in engaging with these modes sometimes steered me in a direction I felt I could not always apply to the dance class at the moment, it served as inspiration to build on more ideas for the next dance classes. Through observing how the students reacted with excitement when engaging with multimodality and artifacts, I found inspiration to further develop ideas that served my teaching practice.

The embodied dialogue

The key findings to emerge from section 5.1 of this thesis is that the embodied dialogue connects bodily awareness and sensitivity to self and others in the space. Through heightening my senses of how the body feels, I felt attuned to connect and sense others in the space and experiencing aesthetic moments.

Somatic education and kinesthetic awareness fostered through creative dancing offer opportunities for teacher and students to feel what is happening in the body. While I as a dance educator is positioned to guide my students' understanding of bodily awareness, I am also positioned to take the responsibility in letting them have time to reflect and discuss how they feel and why they might feel comfort or discomfort. From my work with the 1st graders I experienced that time for reflections in each dance class could help students find ways to be conscious of their bodies and what their bodies are capable of. At the same time, once there is awareness of how my body feels as the teacher, the discussion in section 5.1 shows how I felt it was easier to relate to others that move in the space through empathetic embodied approaches. Looking towards the others in the space might bring a broader expanded dialogue to the class where collaboration is seen in how we move together, respecting the space of the other, and helping each other see everyone in the class. This section of the thesis also highlights how dance education has educated my ability as a dancer and dance educator to pay attention to aesthetic moments that occur in the creative dance class. The relation

between my perception of aesthetic moments is somewhat ingrained in how my body is sensing, feeling, and acknowledging moments in the embodied dialogue, which affirms how my bodily involvement with other bodies in class brings emotions to the surface.

Key findings to emerge from section 5.2 of the thesis illustrate how 'fun' and playful experiences can be felt through experiences of comfort, delight, playfulness, imagery, and ease. 'Fun' experiences in this discussion point clearly to experiences where my students worked creatively together in pairs, small groups, or as the whole class.

While the creative dance tasks conveyed in the dance classes offered clear instructions and frames, they also allowed my students to find freedom in personal movement expressions. The responsibility they had in improvising, creating, and working together gave them freedom in choices and a sense of control. I was initiating ideas in the dance classes that promoted certain suggestions within the creative dance tasks, but the students themselves had to solve these tasks. It was found through the workshop series that when the students were having 'fun' experiences through creativity and collaboration, it seemed that they easily got lost in the moment and the embodied dialogue they engaged in, in the class. I see that the playful mindset – for myself and the class – was often found when I, as the educator, responded with the same engagement I saw in my students and that this engagement was encouraged using the imagery in the class.

At the same time, my analysis and discussion highlight that the pedagogical approaches that creative dance allows for can encourage holistic learning through a child-centered approach to learning. My observations on how the children were at the center of discovering how their bodies could move and express themselves were linked to their deep engagement in present moments. The social aspect of working creatively together in the

dance classes, driven by the teacher and students' engagement, offers further understanding of how we might find meaning in relating to each other.

Key findings to emerge from section 5.3 is that moments of tension are created through somatic awareness and negotiating space in the dance class. It is also found that the embodied dialogue has the potential for students to practice trust which can be helpful when dealing with moments of tension.

Working with this group of students has allowed me to discover how moments of tension clearly can arise when students feel discomfort from lack of space, and stressful moments can easily be felt in the body and lead to disagreement. The dance tasks I offered on spatial awareness required my students to engage in various embodied dance tasks, to learn how to negotiate space. Creative dance in this context allowed my students to express emotions through bodily expressions, and reflections and discussions in a nonverbal and verbal matter. This study shows that there are ways to integrate the body when dealing with moments of tension, which proposes an embodied dialogue that could foster generosity, inclusion, and respect in our approaches to one another.

Another finding from this section reveals how creative dance allowed my students to practice the ability to rely on and trust their peers. From my learning on the creative dance task where my students practiced the roles of the 'guide' and the 'follower', they explored encounters on what it means to experience from 'the other side'. Practicing the skill of experiencing from 'the other side' could involve learning to feel empathy and being generous and respectful with each other in the dance classes. The finding that trust is another aspect of the embodied dialogue, is also seen in how students are given tools that could be helpful when experiencing moments of tension, like expression and reflection through a variety of modes. However, the educational relationship between me as the teacher and my students

made me aware of my responsibility in guiding the students towards learning that promotes the ideas of empathy and respect as it fosters trust within relationships. This research reveals the unique position creative dance has in educational settings as it finds embodied solutions in how to negotiate and respond to one another when moments of tension arise.

6.2 Recommendations

There are several recommendations that can be made from the key findings in this study. The study might appeal and have resonance to those involved in dance education, embodied teaching practices, and other educational settings, such as teachers, students, even school leaders and policy writers.

Firstly, as this study has a phenomenological lens and explores my embodied experiences in the creative dance class when interacting with my students, it could be meaningful for dance educators to pay additional attention to their own embodied experiences when engaging creatively in dance with their students. The embodied experiences often emerge from bodily intuition, and it has value for teaching practices to notice how our teaching body absorbs and responds to the embodied dialogue in dance classes. Paying attention to the embodied dialogue with our students might be easier to do when keeping a reflective journal on the side, as it might be difficult to notice all our emotional and bodily connections in action. This recommendation could contribute to further awareness and sensitivity to our students' embodied experiences in class and improve an empathetic teaching practice that values the embodied dialogue.

Paying attention to teachers' embodied experiences is connected to the embodied dialogue that is ongoing between teacher and students, and value students' engagement in class. In early years education, it could be especially meaningful for students to express

themselves creatively through movement and somatic expressions. It could be said that students who learn to pay attention to their inner dialogue receive tools on how to approach other peers with awareness and sensitivity. Even though not all students choose to act upon these tools when they experience tensions, their bodily listening and experiencing will arguably quip them to better understand the feelings of their peers, which could be helpful in creating an inclusive environment where all students could experience giving and receiving empathy.

It could also be recommended that educational settings such as formal school systems could pay further attention to the impact embodied dialogue has on teachers and students in the school. It could serve the classroom environment well to engage students in embodied practices where they interact with each other creatively through non-verbal and verbal tasks. Seeing how fun experiences through creative dance fosters an environment of empathy and inclusion, this recommendation could have an impact when tension also occurs in the classrooms.

Perhaps, most significantly, the embodied dialogue that could be applied to educational settings such as dance schools, public and private schools, community groups and other social activities could shape an inclusive environment where empathy is offered to the diversity of those engaged in creative and collaborative tasks. This recommendation goes beyond the field of dance education and encourages society to value the impact of embodied dialogue. Encouraging embodied practices where awareness and sensitivity are at the center of the dialogue supports those interested in bringing an empathetic culture into our society, which can be most meaningful when tensions arise.

6.3 Future research directions

This study has opened possibilities for further research within three central areas:

1: Creating awareness of how creative dance exposes and nurtures an embodied dialogue.
2: Informing educators of the benefits of applying embodied dialogue to the context of early primary education.

3: Contributing to ideas which might inform and develop curricula in dance education and educational settings.

This research has been situated in an international school context for 1st graders in Nairobi, Kenya. Future research could situate this research in other contexts and reach a variety of people of all ages, such as in the local and international schools, private dance schools, cultural schools, and community groups, around the world.

This research has investigated the embodied dialogue in a creative dance workshop series from a phenomenological view and through my lived experiences as a dance educator. Future research could direct the focus on embodied dialogue with other methodological approaches, or from the view of several teachers' perspectives and experiences of embodied dialogue. While this research considers the children's experiences in the dance classes through my own auto-narrative experiences, future research could center around the investigation of students' embodied experiences more directly. The embodied dialogue could also be investigated through other dance genres for example ballet, jazz, modern, or other embodied activities and somatic practices.

Further research could also consider a comparison by situating this research in different countries, with a range of diversities in the groups of participants, to further explore

the embodied dialogue between children, youth, and adults in educational settings or social activities.

Some research questions that can further direct studies in the future are:

- How might the embodied dialogue be explored by several dance educators in a dance-after school program?
- How might educators investigate empathetic embodied approaches in their teaching practices?
- How might children's experiences of dancing together connect with ideas of embodied dialogue?
- How might diversity amongst students reveal the various characteristics of embodied dialogue when dancing together?

- How might the embodied dialogue be applied in the classroom by teachers in the school?

6.4 A 'world' to expand

This research journey, which engaged me as both teacher and researcher, has allowed me to investigate things close to my heart: dance, creativity, relationships, and embodied encounters. My experiences in this research journey have expanded my world. I can now, not only feel, but reflect on, articulate, and understand the potentials of what 'worlds' might open when I teach creative dance. I allow myself to ponder the query: What could the world look like if more people dare to expand their horizons and explore the potential of what 'worlds' could open when allowing themselves to engage in an empathetic embodied dialogue? In a world with so many unique people of different heritages, backgrounds, cultures, complexities, experiences, and stories, how could we share, with empathy, traces of who we

are through embodied encounters and responses? While this thesis has offered a beginning of such explorations, it is a curiosity I seek to continue to explore in a multitude of ways in the years to come.

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Appendices

NSD (meldeskjema for behandling av personopplysninger)

Vurdering

Referansenummer

763448

Prosjekttittel

Creative dance in the classroom: A phenomenological perspective within an international school in Nairobi

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon

Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for lærerutdanning

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)

Rose Martin, rosemary.k.martin@ntnu.no, tlf: 41392941

Type prosjekt

Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student

Linnea Marielle Norton, linneamariellenorton@gmail.com, tlf: 45468151

Prosjektperiode

01.07.2021 - 30.06.2022

Vurdering (1)

29.06.2021 - Vurdert

Our assessment is that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 29.06.2021 , as well as in correspondence with NSD. Everything is in place for the processing to begin.

TYPE OF DATA AND DURATION

The project will be processing general categories of personal data until 30.06.2022.

LEGAL BASIS

The project will gain consent from the parents of the data subjects to process their personal data. We find that consent will meet the necessary requirements under art. 4 (11) and 7, in that it will be a freely given, specific, informed and unambiguous statement or action, which will be documented and can be withdrawn.

The legal basis for processing general categories of personal data is therefore consent given by the data subject, cf. the General Data Protection Regulation art. 6.1 a).

PRINCIPLES RELATING TO PROCESSING PERSONAL DATA

NSD finds that the planned processing of personal data will be in accordance with the principles under the General Data Protection Regulation regarding:

- lawfulness, fairness and transparency (art. 5.1 a), in that data subjects will receive sufficient information about the processing and will give their consent purpose limitation (art. 5.1 b), in that personal data will be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes, and will not be processed for new, incompatible purposes
- data minimisation (art. 5.1 c), in that only personal data which are adequate, relevant and necessary for the purpose of the project will be processed
- storage limitation (art. 5.1 e), in that personal data will not be stored for longer than is necessary to fulfil the project's purpose

THE RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECTS

As long as the data subjects can be identified in the data material, they will have the following rights: access (art. 15), rectification (art. 16), erasure (art. 17), restriction of processing (art. 18) and data portability (art. 20).

NSD finds that the information that will be given to data subjects about the processing of their personal data will meet the legal requirements for form and content, cf. art. 12.1 and art. 13.

We remind you that if a data subject contacts you about their rights, the data controller has a duty to reply within a month.

FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES

NSD presupposes that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

To ensure that these requirements are met you must follow your institution's internal guidelines and/or consult with your institution (i.e. the institution responsible for the project).

NOTIFY CHANGES

If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify NSD. This is done by updating the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified: https://www.nsd.no/en/data-protection-services/notification-form-for-personal-data/notify-changes-in-the-notification-form

Wait until you receive an answer from us before you carry out the changes.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT

NSD will follow up the progress of the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!

Lesson plans

Lesson plan 1:

Music	Task	How / what
“Logo te pate” Olivia Foa’i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	Go through 3 main movements in the warm up- follow the rest
Instrumental	Show something that leads up to the theme- a globe, a map, a blue scarf, ask questions- like what do you hear? What do you know about the oceans? what color has it, what lives in it, where is it?	Pretend imagery - introduce the theme
“Ticking clocks” Graig Wingrove	Find a space far from each other, but also far from the edge of the tennis court	When the music starts the kids have the opportunity to go find a spot far from each other and far from the edge of the tennis court and stand still.
“How to find the good ones” Dan Romer	Explore the theme - size/ levels / directions	

“Telescope” Dan Romer ?	Explore small movements in a tight place	
“Under the sea” London music works	Playful exersize	
“Row row row your boat” Super simple songs	Stretch/ cool down	
“Nemo Egg” Thomas Newman	Relax/cool down	

Notes and exploration of how the class can unfold:

- Gather the students in a circle - greeting and warm-up dance
- Demonstrate the theme (oceans) and its place by bringing a globe/map/drawing/ scarf.
- To teach the children about self-and general space I will explain and use pretend imagery about how we can cover as much of the tennis court with our bodies (*Convey the idea that the ocean surface covers over 70% of the earth's surface)* Possibly use mats for this exercise. This is to create awareness of the body and its place in space.
- Once the children are spread out, they will be asked to come back to the circle. They now know what it feels like to be spread out and have space to move. Now we can add another task.
- Now how can oceans move? They will be asked how the ocean looks when it has huge waves, what it looks like, and how it will move.
- From the circle,/ or spread out again?
- Try this with music. When the music stops I’ll ask them to ….. (transition here) …. Do it once more, the next time the music stops I’ll ask them to come to stand on five different mats, can they all fit? How does this feel different?
- On their mats, they will be asked if they can move with small movements, like a ….. how can they move small and not hurt anyone in a tight place..

- From their mats, they will spread out once more with movements that take up a lot of space- they are a big ocean- then return with small movements. (eric Chapelle- leading music)
- Apply levels too. In their spot ask them to try and move on a low level (river/baby pool)- a middle level (in between the river and deep ocean) - and a high level (deep ocean), and levels they can move within.
- Group exercise: divide kids into groups and ask them to stay in specific places. The groups will be named different oceans (maybe just numbers; ocean 1, ocean 2, ocean 3) they get different tasks that help them explore directions and levels. Example: One group will be the wave, they will stand in one line, and make a wave that keeps going back and forth (forwards/backward) as they run forward and jog backward while their arm makes a wave → at the same time one ocean group will try to move in one level across the court without coming near the other ones (the wave), are they too close they will become part of the wave. The next ocean tries on a different level.. the last group of the ocean (four groups in total).

Lesson plan 2:

2nd lesson (Body) (Wednesday 17th: 1.05-1.45)

Music	Task	How / what
"Logo te pate" Olivia Foa'i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	Go through 3 main movements in the warm up- follow the rest
Without music or quiet instrumental music	Show a picture of fluid water, frozen ice, and gas - stir questions that helps the children articulate what the oceans can look like in different shapes	Pretend imagery, what does the children connect with oceans and shape, bring this into the next task

“How to find the good ones” Dan Romer	Explore movements of the oceans (size/directions- and this time **add shapes**) Also - bring awareness to how the scarves move - like (this girl mentioned last time…) and try out holding the scarves different ways.	Give them scareves right away, When music comes on the children can move around, when it stops the children freeze in given positions that they have already mentioned in the task above, prepare them beforehand (Iceberg (tip of the iceberg - on one foot) sculptures of different kinds, melted water, river,
Without music OR with ticking clocks? (ticking clocks won’t play from the computer)	Draw the feeling	The kids get a paper and a pen, and are asked to write their names. Then ask them to draw how they feel when they move like the oceans, last time they mentioned hearts, thumbs up, but does it have a different shape, is it a big circle, is it a smiley face, is it sunshine, or wind?

		When they are done leaving the pen and paper on the side of the court, they will get another task later on.
“Rainmaker” Eric Chapelle?	Make a shape - two by two	Collaborative task where the class is divided into two groups. Half the group is spread out sitting down, eyes closed, the other half will be given instructions on when to approach the sitting peers. Bring in awareness of the other, how do we touch each other, move each other, and so on. One is the artist, and the other a block of ice the artist will shape into culture. - Once the artist is finished they find a different place where they themselves do the exact same shape they

		just made. The sculpture has its eyes closed until other instructions are given, then - find your friend!
	Repeat the same exercise, and also remind them they have to approach a new friend.	
	Extend the focus to not only be shapes of oceans, but also shapes of what exist in the oceans, animals, corals, submarines, and trash as well, this can be sculptures of many kind	
Without music	Very quickly, draw the shape that you liked the best. If time . Draw or ask: Draw the feeling of touch	How does it feel letting a peer shape your body while eyes are bing closed?

		Does this feeling have a sound?
(IF TIME) (latest 1.30) “Pizz.Ah!” Eric Chapelle	Sculptures/shapes of different animals in the sea (show pictures beforehand of different animals in the sea)	Må spilles av på Mac. Have the kids stand in two lines next to each other, two and two can then on the music move across the court as far as they can go until music stops, and they freeze. When music comes on, this is the cue for the next two kids to start, these two have to somehow connect themselves to the other kids. After everyone has frozen into a shape, look what we made, art! What does it look like?
“Row row row your boat” Super simple songs	Stretch/ cool down	Follow the teacher

Rounding off the class	Stand up in one line and follow the teacher back	Stretch + rhyme

Lesson plan 3: (Time)

Music	Task	How / what
“Logo te pate” Olivia Foa’i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	Go through 3 main movements in the warm up- follow the rest
Without music	Explore the theme: Have them shake their arms as fast as they can, and then slower, have the children go down and up really fast then slower. Build on the children's ideas Fast and slow Waterfall/silent river - or shark / starfish	What creatures in the oceans move really fast? How does it feel to move so fast? What creatures in the oceans move really slow? How does it feel to move so slow? Once children come up with ideas, imitate their movements, and have everyone do the same thing- do the same with slow movements. See if this ‘building on ideas1 can

		develop to movements that expand across the tennis court, with keywords, or a story that builds.
Without music	Divide in two groups 1 and 2	Find a place on the tennis court far from each other and far from the edges.
“Checkerboard” Eric Chapelle	Slow-fast	Two different groups, one is slow, and one is fast, music leading whom to dance and when to freeze
“Checkerboard” Eric Chapelle	Slow-fast	Same as above, but change groups
Without music	Have them sit in a half circle- settle down	Ask them how it felt moving fast and slow, what's the difference? After my example of mirroring, make sure to emphasize how slow movements make it easier for everyone to follow, we work together, and it's hard

		to create inclusion if the task is too hard(going too fast)
“Spellbound” Ballet L'ecole OR “Piano song” Eric Chapelle	Mirroring	First by me, in front of the whole group, then a couple of the kids, then in pairs Have the one’s spread out- choose where the two’s will go - to which friend?
During music	Film mirroring	Capture on video, maybe ask Beth to film them in pairs?
(IF TIME) “Pizz.Ah!” Eric Chapelle	Sculptures/shapes of different animals, or motions of the oceans	Connect this with time, they have their time to move, and their time to be still. Film/ take pictures
Without music	Spend some time talking about how it feels to work in a group making this collaborative art / can they make a drawing together on	

	a big piece of paper, what does it look like, they can only do one thing- or draw for a minute or so?	
“Row row row your boat” Super simple songs	Stretch/ cool down	Follow the teacher

If we don’t have time for Pizz.Ah, try to go in-depth of mirroring, and have a drawing task ready for this one: How does it feel to follow someone else's movements in the mirror?

Which movement did you like the best? Can you draw the shape of this movement or the body part that did the movement? It is head/shoulders/arms.

Lesson plan 4: (force)

Music	Task	How / what
“Logo te pate” Olivia Foa’i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	Start straight away
Without music	Contrasts- explore the theme: strong- light / sharp- smooth	**Do the plank**, do a balance to experiment with force or heavy. What's opposite, **laying flat on the ground relaxing** (start with this one, then plank) or walking

		normally with both legs relaxed?
“Norton Island” Eric Chapelle	Balloons- don't hit the ground!	Collaborative task to illustrate fluid and flow
“The boat beat” Ricky desktop	Choreography based on sharp and light, room for exploration (improvisation) in the choreography and some set movements. It can be an isolation -type dance where the kids will come with proposals.. start with head, shoulders, torso, hips, legs, arms (one repetitive movement for every body part)	Illustrate and explore how sharp and smooth energy affects different movements Explore light/flowy movements , have some set steps on force
“Row row row your boat” Super simple songs	Stretch/ cool down	Follow the teacher

Lesson plan 5:

Music	Task	How / what
“Logo te pate” Olivia Foa’i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	Repeat concepts that we’ve been exploring, big movements VS small, High up, going low, force, body parts, how is this found in the warm up dance.
“Pizz.Ah!” Eric Chapelle	Collaborative task: Creating coral reef , creating arts	

chance dance	Movements and four items, it can be a balloon, stick, picture of the ocean, something they have done earlier in the class. create a dance in smaller groups.

The oceans are also connecting continents and countries. The oceans keep stories of life in the ocean, ancient cultures, and life on earth through all times. This perspective gives way for ideas that may impact creative movement activities, like storytelling, an underwater theme that might help understand how life under the sea looks like, knowledge about coastal areas and their connection to the oceans, and indigenous and cultural use of water.

Structure the class in a way where it's obvious I form a story, for example a travelling to different continents , integrating unrelated ideas to stimulate humor and expectations.

Use mats as a help - put them out (5 of them)

Hang up pictures - pirates, fish (nemo), coral reef, Icebergs, penguins, surfing, fire hjørner

Lesson plan 5: (second edition):

Music	**Task**	**How / what**
"Logo te pate" Olivia Foa'i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	Repeat concepts that we've been exploring, big movements VS small, High up, going low, force, body parts, how is this found in the warm upwarmup dance.
Without music	Introducing the theme	The oceans connect all life, all countries and continents, and men and animals

		would not survive without the oceans. From long ago people would sail the oceans and discover new places. We are going to go on an adventure!
Without music	Make a map (dance-map)	Need: An A3 paper, one pen, Three students can come and draw one shape each on the same paper, another student will come and draw lines in between these shapes. The shape visualisesvisualizes where and in what area on the tennis court we will 'travel', the students can help me figure out HOW to travel. It being inspired by characters (pirates, penguin, birds, crabs, or qualities of movements - see what ideas the students have and play on these)
"Beyond the sea' Robbie Williams OR "Deep waves"	Groups of 6 or 8, how to stay connected when losing balance	After we've traveled the shape, we will encounter a place/country that one student picks out. This is where the broken form also inspires this task. If

Ocean sounds FX		we arrive in Korea, I'll say something like, oh in this beautiful grand land, there have been some really greatgreat octopuses. They have (howhow many arms? Aand they look like..…? Divide them 8 and 8 - or 6 and 6 (three groups) the groups decide one movement they must do while jumping on one foot only, andonly and holding on to each other with one arm.
Norton's Island (Eric chapelle)	Pairs, one leading the other	Then we travel like… students decide; Characters in the next shape … and end up in …. the students decide. There's been a terrible spell that has caused half the population to lose their sight, and they won't get it back until they have cleaned up all the trash from the oceans!. Pairs two and two, one leading the other. then switch.
"Pizz.Ah!" Eric Chapelle	Collaborative task: Creating a work of art	Then we travel to… Here they have the biggest reef in the world, so big you can see it from space, like we were told by one of you already.

		Make two lines, coming from each side and freeze when music stops.
Without music	Coming back	Having been on this big adventure, I think we ought to head back to some normalcy. Let's gather in a circle. To come back to ‘normal’ lifelife, we need to give the person next to us a high five and say thank you for the adventure.
Cool down	What tasks have they enjoyed so far, and why? (if time)	Let this inspire the next and last review class. This class I can have a bottle with notes inside of creative dance tasks they have requested or, even comments along the way that we can discuss or draw..
“Row row your boat”	Stretch and cool down	

Lesson plan 6: (review) 1st draft

Music	Task	How / what
“Logo te pate” Olivia Foa’i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	

Without music	Flaskepost	Bottle **(or suitcase)** with pictures/hints they have done throughout the five sessions, or notes, comments they have expressed. Let one student at a time either put their wish in the bottle, or let them pick up something from the bottle (**or the little suitcase I have….)**

Lesson plan 6: (review) second draft

Music	Task	How / what
“Logo te pate” Olivia Foa’i, Talaga Steve Sale	Warm up - follow the teacher	
Without music	A suitcase of treasure	S**uitcase** with pictures/hints they have done throughout the five sessions, or notes, comments they have

		expressed. Let one student at a time pick a note, this will determine what we will do. I will ask them what they remember, how we did this, what they enjoyed about this exercise.
All the music connected to the task is ready on the playlist		x2-3
“Row row your boat” (If the ground is not wet) If not standing stretch	Cool down	

Embodied dialogue in the classroom: Critical reflections as a teacher on creative dance practices for 1st graders

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