

In the following proposal, I discuss my experience testing out these exercises with faculty and students from St. Olaf. We occupied a wrestling room in the basement of St. Olaf's gym. There were two female students and an independent major advisor. We started by introducing each other and then took part in a series of exercises, dance and then chatted again at the end of the class. The class lasted about an hour and explored exercises from learning objective one and two.

From Learning Objective One:

As the dancers soak up the music and are asked to respond with certain body parts, they see who they are as a human being first. An alive body. And they also see themselves as a Self. They witness how their body- maybe once dormant to them- responds to a rhythm outside of them. They discover who they are by seeing what movement patterns come out and how these are unique from the dancers around them.

I witnessed this process taking place when I held a dance class in the wrestling room in my college's gym. After the socks were off and chatting a bit, I asked the dancers to stand up. We all stood awkwardly at each other for a few seconds. Then I posed the most daunting task of the class: "I want you all to share how you are feeling today with one movement." We went around in a circle, me sharing first. The lady right after me in the circle stuttered a bit and moved around a bit when it came to her turn. After a minute she finally said: "I don't know how to dance." I told her that it was okay and we went around the other way in the circle, repeating each other's movements after we shared.

I kept my eye on her as the other dancers or participants shared. I noticed that she was becoming a little less tense. Her arms and legs started to move farther away from her body. She was allowing them the ability to express themselves.

Feeling that she was more ready to see herself move and show this to others, we went around the circle again. This time she cautiously performed a move. She threw her hands in the air and moved her feet to the side.

Through dance, she was able to see her body as not separate from her. She was able to become embodied. She stepped away from the mind-body dualism paradigm. She was able to see her body as a source of self. She entered this bodily-self I believe when she spread her arms and legs apart. She felt embodied enough, comfortable as a human in this world to let the world know that she is alive. She saw how she was a human in this world, a human that can connect to their surroundings. One important part of humanity is connecting. She expressed her aliveness to the world by throwing up her hands to a note of

some funky jazz, she showed who she is in connection with the rhythms around her. As she let her moves come out into the circle of movements we dancers were creating she witnessed how her moves are connected to those around her. How she moves her legs to the side is different and similar to those around her.

The practice class did not go exactly the way I wrote it up, which I will include below and it did not go exactly the way it is listed in the appendix. I realized that the philosophy behind what I am asking dancers to do with their body is not necessary. All that is really needed in practice is another body to follow and willingness to be vulnerable, to connect. This demonstrates the self expression and connection piece of my learning objectives. When I became vulnerable during the practice class and expressed my bodily-self, this opened up the space for the other dancer's too as well. This shared vulnerability led to many laughs. Connection!

One thing that I did expect and this did occur was that dancers did not look at each other when dancing around the room. There wasn't as much one-on-one connection. I believe a second class is needed exploring dance more specifically as an intimacy builder. If I had more time during this project I would've held another class.

Because dance reawakens our body to our aliveness in the world. It awakens us to how we are alive with others and further, how others aliveness, their movements affect us. So, to be alive, we must dance with others, too.

From Learning Objective 2:

Toward the end of my experimental class, I started to notice that students were feeling more comfortable with each other. They were laughing and smiling. At the beginning of the class I asked them to express how they feel through a movement they like. They stood awkwardly for a few moments before they shared. At the end of the class they were excited to share themselves with others! Too, I noticed that all three of us were comfortable enough to look at each other dancing. Intimacy had formed between all of us as dance allowed us to share ourselves with each other.

In the second exercise of class I introduced the three of them to their bodily-self. They roamed around the wrestling room responding to the music with different parts of their body. After this, I brought us back into a circle at the center of the wrestling room. A holy circle it seemed by the end of class. Then, we did our final movement exercise. First, I put on some Latin Jazz, a rhythm that I loved. Listening to the rhythm, I shared with them a dance move, expressing who I am as a bodily-self in that moment in the world. off by I asked the person to my right to repeat that movement and then add on. This went around the circle until we were all embodying pieces of each other through dance.

In this circle, we were showing each other who we are as humans alive in this world together. The embodiment of the same rhythm of the world and shared movement facilitated this. The Latin rhythm that our bodies were all responding to as we shared and created a common movement created a shared experience that was momentless. What I call connection.

My Thoughts:

*I honestly did not know students would respond to each other. Whether we would form a connection or not. Essentially, I was worried, I was testing out my philosophy of dance. Is it really a world shaper?

*The smiles and laughter during the last exercise showed me there was intimacy. They felt excited to show their bodily-selves to each other. They felt loved and safe.

*A comment from a dancer at the end of the class showed me a deep connection was created. She said: "I'm going to see you all around campus and be so happy knowing that we shared this intimate time together." The once strangers that were sitting nervously in a room together had become people

*I learned that yes, like the authors I read propose, people are disembodied, their bodies are foreign and scary to them...but I also learned that people do want to reconnect with them and connect with those around them.

*I gained appreciation for my dance professors. It's so hard to teach a dance class. To balance using spontaneous kinetic energy and thinking about a lesson plan.

* I realized that the philosophy behind why we need to dance together is not as important to introduce to dancers, instead I need to embody this philosophy. I need to show excitement about dancing.