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ABSTRACT

Educators, dance professionals, and parents express their opinions about the role of dance in the educational curriculum for children and adults. Chapter I discusses the personal, social, and cultural aspects of dance, as well as a justification for including it in the curriculum. Educators are urged to eliminate stereotypic attitudes toward dance as being for females only and as much less important than athletics. Chapter II reviews aspects of dance in the curriculum: quality in program design and teacher selection, emphasis on self-expression, working with others, and understanding of cultural styles, and the role of performances for audiences. Chapter III outlines necessary qualifications of dance teachers as opposed to professional dancers, identifies the contacts a dance resource specialist should make, describes possible contributions to dance education from physical education and art teachers, and suggests community resources for teaching dance. Chapter IV presents a resolution urging arts, civics, and educational groups to develop and support dance programs. (AV)

Dance as Education

Project Director: Aramanta Little
Writer: Charles B. Fowler

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Consultants, NDA Projections Unit.
Wilson Barrilleaux
Mary Alice Brennan
Mary Ella Montague
Araminta Little, Unit Director
Special Consultant. Miriam Gray
Design. Kenneth B. Dresser
Photographs.
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Page 48—Terry Boyd, St. Louis Public Schools

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PREFACE

Currently, statements on the value of dance and how it may best be experienced are to be found only in a few books and isolated articles, each reflective of a single author's view. Participants at an Alliance for Arts Education (AAE) Conference in Washington, D.C. decried this lack of universality on issues of concern in dance and stressed a need for credible and readily accessible information deemed essential for creating, guiding, evaluating, and defending dance experiences in the schools. With this need in mind, the NDA Projections Unit developed a proposal for a two-phase project on issues and concerns in dance education. The proposal was approved by the AAE Board of Directors and the NDA was awarded a grant from AAE for implementing the Project.

Phase I of the Project was the writing of a publication which would represent a strong, reasoned, and comprehensive view of the issues and concerns of dance in education. To attain that view, a nationwide survey was made to aid in defining the issues. Respondents included music, art, and theatre consultants, arts directors, arts council personnel, athletic directors, supervisors, physical education teachers, elementary classroom teachers, dance resource teachers, dance teachers at all levels of education, undergraduate and graduate students, dance

company managers, and artistic directors of professional companies, including ballet, ethnic, and modern dance.

A conference was later organized to bring together knowledgeable and respected leaders in dance to discuss and determine pertinent issues. The leaders represented different dance organizations, dance studios, minority groups, and all educational levels. To further ensure that all aspects were considered, the Project Director invited top resource personnel to the conference to present national, state, and city perspectives. Views of parents and of the AAE were also heard.

The participants representing dance then assumed the responsibility for clarifying the issues and setting forth concerted ideas, positions, and statements on the issues. This material was then given to Charles B. Fowler, who served as compiler-writer. *Dance As Education*, the publication in hand, is a result of that work.

Phase II of the Project was the making of a media package to supplement and illustrate the philosophy presented in the written document. This took the form of a ten-minute slide-tape entitled, "Dance Is..." For prices and order information, write: AAHPER Promotion Unit, 1201 Sixteenth Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

ARAMINTA LITTLE

CONTENTS

1. DANCE IS

WHAT DANCE IS

Beginning with the first breath and ending with the last, humans move, and from the expressive urges of that movement, dance is born. If life is movement, then the art of that movement is dance. To know dance is to do it: to step, glide, turn, dip, reach, shake, bend, and leap to the rhythmic flow of one's inner impulses, for it is in feeling one's energy bristle with life that the nature of this expressive art is revealed.

To say what dance is in words is impossible, but it is apparently a human necessity. Throughout the span of human existence, dance has been a part of the life of every tribe, society, and culture. It is one way humans have invented to express their essence. In primitive societies, people danced to eliminate evil spirits, to bring in the crops, and to ask for rain. In modern societies, people still dance to express their joy and exuberance and to banish their cares.

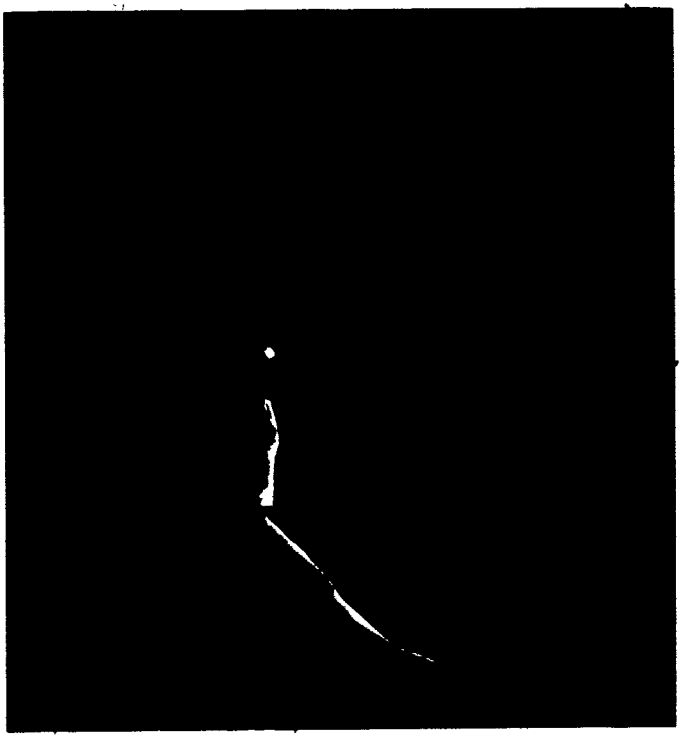
More than mere physical movement, dance is aesthetic. It may be the most humanistic and humanizing of the arts, because it uses the body itself as its expressive instrument. In so doing, dance first acknowledges, then elevates, the human form, converting it from weak and fear-wracked to noble and authoritative. In the act of affirming and uplifting the self, dance reminds us that the mind *is* the body, that, indeed, the body is the primal instrument of life.

Dance is a way to feel what it is to be human and to be alive. In that sense it is celebration. It makes something special out of life. It is revelation; some would say, "illumination." Because it involves the self, it *reveals* self. It communicates what one knows of one's own body feeling.

Like all the other arts, dance is a code—in this case a structuring of gestures and motions that captures and conveys subjective inner experience. The elements that make up this code are sound, movement,

line, pattern, form, space, shape, rhythm, time, and energy. Just as meaning in prose language involves building forms from letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs, meaning in dance depends upon combining the elements of its code to fashion forms that express.

The code in dance can assume many forms from ballroom, tap, ethnic, and folk dance, to ballet and modern dance. There are no dictionaries that tell what these forms mean, which poses difficulties for those who lack an affinity with the dance medium. But the problem is no different from asking, "What does a flower mean?" Dance is what dance is. It can be an art; it can be magic; but, most of all, it is an experience to be prized for itself.



WHY DANCE IS

If dance seems frivolous by comparison with other subjects more established in the educational curriculum, it is because the understanding requisite to granting it higher status is generally lacking among educators and the public at large. Few who design curricula have had sufficient experience with dance to know its educational value. Where dance has been slighted or left out of the educational framework, it is inevitably underestimated. This is often the case with all the arts, but is particularly so with dance.

The first step in coming to terms with any accommodation of dance to education is to assess the value of dance in general. Inevitably, clues to the educational value of an art (or any other subject), emerge from its innate worth as it functions in the greater society. Why do people dance? What do they get out of it? The answers lie in the inherent values of dance to the individual, to society, and to culture as a whole.

Personal

Dancers give many reasons why they dance, and among them are joy and exhilaration. While schools acknowledge the need for more of these attributes, the lack of them has not constituted sufficient cause to seek them through dance. Fortunately, there are other personal values to be derived from dance that, while not necessarily any more important, do relate directly to the growth and development of the individual.

Because dance involves the entire body mechanism with its attendant intellectual, emotional, and physical functions, it provides an ideal means to attain self-awareness, self-development, and self-fulfillment. One begins to sense, to explore, and to exploit

one's own inner vitality through dance. The physical stamina and control demanded by dance also challenge the individual to develop self-discipline. Dance helps people to handle their own weight, energy, and coordination.

Perceptions are sharpened as one begins to master various movements and movement patterns and shape them into a code of expression. Improvisational movement provides a means to exercise imagination and to keep alive the spark of creativity. Dance is one of the few means people have at their command to gain access to their self-feelings, or what might be called their subjective reality. As such it serves as a medium for the personal expression and communication of that reality.

Perhaps even more important and basic than all of these personal values of dance is the outlet

and satisfaction dance provides for the individual's inborn need to move. Clearly, dance is related to well-being and even to health, although the exact nature of that relation has yet to be made explicit.

Because it is basically a creative art, dance is a medium that commands aesthetic discrimination. The dancer is forced to make decisions about the *appropriateness* of particular gestures, movements, and patterns of movement that are chosen to project what Walt Whitman called, "The Song of Myself." Technique is mastered through persistence of discipline. One must develop body tone, balance, and agility; the ability to move with and counter to the tempo, pulse, and accent of the music; mastery of position, particular movements, and shifts of weight; the skill to follow through, to make transitions, to handle and coordinate upper and lower torsos, and to relate to one or more other dancers—these are some of the challenges. The dancer learns to order, to re-order, and to make distinctions, choices, and in the process to exercise continual self-evaluation and critical judgment. All this leads naturally to an appreciation of these abilities in others, which, in itself, offers rewards to the individual that can last a lifetime.

Social

People do not dance just for and by themselves. Those who know dance well say that the experience has helped them to make connections between themselves and others, between the inner and outer worlds. By externalizing the internal, dance gains a social dimension. Since it is often a cooperative endeavor, dance is necessarily an art of socialization—a social act engaging the individual in group dynamics.

The substance of those group dynamics is what gives dance its social import. Its social value

derives from its capacity to clarify and interpret many of life's most significant events—to commemorate, to lament, to worship, to transcend, to court, to heal, to celebrate. If it provides a way of knowing self, it also provides a means of [redacted] others and of making the necessary connections between self-space and social-space. By building a feeling of social identity and unity, such transactions with others promote a greater understanding of community. . .

All of the personal values to be derived from dance can also have social applications. If one's imagination is stirred beyond ordinary vision, that can benefit the greater community. If one derives a spirit of adventure and courage about risk-taking, these can have salient applications in other areas. If dance enhances one's self image, this can add stature to the group.

Cultural

As an art, dance can symbolize the great ecstasies and tragedies of mankind. In the rituals of life humans express their basic understandings. Dance reinforces life-style. The ethnic fiber of different peoples is captured in the styles of movement they invent. Those styles are symbols of not only the inner, but also the outer life of a people.

From the tribal dances in Africa to the contemporary American dances in the discotheques, people express in body language their feelings and attitudes about the way they choose to live. For example, with the assertion of women's rights of equality, the male no longer leads the female on the American dance floor. In Greece and Austria there are still traditions of male camaraderie in the dance. Tribal dancers in Ghana ritualize the daily hunt for food. The Mexican Hat Dance, the Irish Jig, the Italian Tarantella, or

the Polish Varsoviana evoke in folk style the special spirit of their cultures.

Dance also reflects and expresses its particular age. The Twist and the Hustle speak of the 1960's and 1970's as clearly as the Waltz and the Charleston speak of their times. The ballerina *en pointe*, taking flight from reality, defying earthly gravity in order to rise to unearthly heights, reflects the Romantic Nineteenth Century, gas lights, the Industrial Revolution, and the ideal of woman as an unattainable image, as surely as Modern Dance reflects the Twentieth Century, Freud, the Wright Brothers, the light bulb, and the freeing of the body to express one's personal experiences.

Through dance, one can gain an understanding of one's own and other cultures and of all the ages of mankind, yet acquire that understanding in an all-encompassing way that internalizes the reality. Such knowledge literally becomes part of the body and is not left to abstract verbalization. Dance is a catalog of culture, a reminder of the discontinuities and, perhaps more important, the continuities among various peoples.

DANCE IN EDUCATION

What dance is and why it is, as previously discussed, provide the foundation for dance as education. No comprehensive arts education program is complete without dance. Like the other arts, dance is more than a mere frill. But educators and parents have the right, even the duty, to ask what dance can contribute to make education better. What, then, constitutes a legitimate and convincing rationale for dance in education? On what bases can the inclusion of dance in the curriculum be justified?

(1) Dance is basic education

Because dance touches the fibers of life itself and expresses the substance of being, it can be a powerful medium for coming to terms with oneself and others. Dance intensifies and clarifies the human experience. It develops the physical, emotional, and intellectual capacities, integrating them so that they function harmoniously. Dance reveals connections between the inner self and outer reality. It sharpens perception, making people more aware of the significance of what they hear, feel, and see. Such consciousness raising is central to what any good education is all about.

(2) Dance reinforces all learning

As a special kind of perception, dance can relate to and enhance other academic areas—language arts, mathematics, and the social sciences. As a symbolic coding process that one can feel and experience personally, it provides a metaphor for other less personal symbolic processes. In conveying this process

by largely physical means, dance complements other academic areas. The elements of dance—sound, movement, line, pattern, form, space, shape, rhythm, time, and energy—are common to concepts underlying many subjects. Dance therefore contributes to a better all-around education.

(3) Dance provides an alternative to the usual modes of education

Dance engages students in a different and often compelling way to learn and to express themselves. It provides needed diversity within the school setting. Because dance involves the physical as well as the mental being, it can reach children who are not touched easily through verbal means alone. It can therefore engage children in learning who might not otherwise be inclined, and it can motivate all students to plan, to reason, to aspire, and to perfect.

(4) Dance stimulates creative potential

Dance induces students to conceive movements, patterns, and compositions and to exploit spontaneity and improvisation in order to solve particular expressive problems and needs. As students fashion their own repertoire of movements into dance forms, they invest themselves in the development of their own creative capacities, and in the process they discover the true art of dance, a worthy endeavor in its own right.

(5) Dance promotes self and social awareness in an all-involving way

Dance can ease the difficulty in reaching every student. It is one more means for a student to express individuality. Through the emotional, mental, and physical demands of dance, students necessarily confront their total selves, evolve their own integrated self-concept, and learn to relate openly and coopera-

tively with others. Dance can make people more aware of their environment at the same time that it helps them develop greater confidence in their own abilities.

(6) Dance serves the interests of good health

In the formative years, dance can serve as a noncompetitive means of developing the child physically, emotionally, and aesthetically. It can be a useful therapeutic tool in educating students with

physical and mental disabilities and in helping people overcome or cope more effectively with their handicaps. But more important, an understanding and appreciation of dance can provide all people with a broader range of choices about how they spend their leisure time. Dance can add a considerable measure of release and joy to a person's life, and it can provide a demanding type of exercise that encourages people to be physically active and fit.

(7) Dance internalizes an understanding of and an appreciation for one's own culture and the cultures of other peoples

Dance defines, clarifies, and gives personal identity to one's ethnic heritage, and it provides the basis for developing broader and more tolerant attitudes and tastes. Dance promotes a deeper understanding and acceptance of the similarities and differences among races, religions, and cultural traditions.

If dance functions in these seven ways, its place in education is justified. Of course, dance can be taught as perfunctorily and dully as any subject. In its beginning stages, dance should evolve creatively from the student's own interests and physical capabilities. It is not merely a repertory of dances taught step by step and handed from adult to child. It is, above all, a process of development that engages the student in inquiring, thinking, sensing, observing, feeling, in-

venting, responding, and evaluating. In this process the teacher is a facilitator, not a dictator imposing set movements or specific tastes upon the student. As skills evolve through the creative process, they can be applied to traditional patterns and compositions that are introduced by the teacher, but the rote experience should always be supplemented by the creative.

For a subject to be recognized as a legitimate, individual area of study in the educational curriculum, two basic requirements must be met: (1) its contents must be distinct enough to differentiate it from other subject matters; and (2) it must be a discipline with sufficient breadth and depth to require concentrated study. Dance meets both these criteria. It has an identifiable and unique content and requires extensive and intensive study to achieve mastery.

Dance has advantages to offer educationally. It is self-contained; its practice requires only an individual and some space. It is an activity open to everyone—young children, teen-agers, young adults, the middle-aged, and the elderly, the gifted and deprived, rich and poor, well and ill, and people with special problems. It can offer satisfaction regardless of the level of skill or sophistication. It can be done in numerous places—classrooms, gymnasiums, playgrounds, parking lots, nursing homes, hospitals, parks, and discotheques.

When the arts are conceived as one field of study, equivalent to the sciences, dance assumes a natural place in the curriculum. Students should have access to studying all the arts. Too often a limited access to just music and the visual arts does not permit all students to find a suitable expressive medium. It is the same in the sciences, where some students excel in biology, while others prefer chemistry or physics. The students are richer when the school can provide them with the knowledge of all of these.

THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO DANCE

Dance has not been accorded the educational respectability it deserves because it has been subjected to discriminatory attitudes and practices. Elements of sexism and ethnic and class prejudice have characterized the history of dance in American society and made the full and responsible use of dance as an educational vehicle difficult.

• While society generally encourages girls to develop their interests and abilities in dance, the schools have for the most part not provided programs or recognized the validity or worth of dance in the curriculum. In contrast, sport —a male dominated activity—has ample programs and recognition.

• In effect, boys have been discouraged from participating in dance. Even where programs exist, boys have often been restricted from them, or

given greatly reduced experiences. The benefits of dance are generally unavailable to them.

• Dance, which has been an important mode of expression and education in black cultures, has been given little place in school programs for blacks. The validity of the cultural achievement represented by the dances of African peoples has generally not been recognized, studied, or celebrated.

• Because dance programs have for the most part been available only outside the school or in affluent schools, they are not available to the poor. Too often dance programs are limited to those who can afford to pay.

Unfortunately, dance has been viewed as an activity only for girls or as an exclusive plaything of the rich. Classical ballet, in particular, has often been thought of as an elitist upper-class symbol. In truth, dance is as much for boys and men as it is for girls and women. In many tribal societies and in ethnic cultures, dancing is primarily a male activity. The American Indian and Alaskan Eskimos have strong traditions of males dancing. In Greece and other countries, males naturally take their own turn on the dance floor. The muscularity and vigor associated with these dances dispel any sense of effeminacy. As for classical ballet, all people can learn to appreciate it, regardless of class or status.

The stigmas and stereotyping associated with dance must be eliminated. Dance traditions and achievements must be respected in the schools regardless of sex, race, or cultural origin. The policies of the schools should reflect a strong commitment of affirmative action with respect to who dances and what opportunities are made available. Children should be freed to make their own choices and develop their own artistic interests and values. Schools have the responsibility to provide every student with access to dance.

2. CURRICULA IN DANCE

QUALITY OF DANCE CURRICULA

Curricula of high quality rarely occur by chance. To obtain excellence in any dance program efforts must be directed toward:

(1) *Constructing a program design* which encompasses the personal, social, and cultural aspects of the art in order to assure a broad base that includes the development of body awareness and dance skills, the acquisition of a vocabulary of movement through creative experiences, folk and ethnic materials, special attention to the development of aesthetic awareness, interdisciplinary approaches, and the introduction to various dance styles and performing experiences appropriate to the students, community, and educational setting.

(2) *Selecting qualified teachers;* that is, certified dance teachers; dance majors or minors; physical educators with a concentrate, minor, or a specialization in dance; or persons who are competent dancers and have an affinity with education.

In addition, attention must be directed toward designating and obtaining facilities appropriate to meet the requirements of the program design. Indoors this includes an open, well-ventilated area that has a wooden floor and adjoining rooms for the chang-

ing of apparel. Outdoors this means care for the surface area, whether it be clay, wood, or grass. The surface should be compatible with bare feet, whenever possible. Other considerations include size of the space in relation to the numbers of students to be accommodated, the need for both rehearsal and performance spaces, and adequate auxiliary equipment and storage facilities.

Scheduling, too, demands careful planning. Classes should be held on a regular basis so that all students have access to the program starting at the preschool level and continuing in the elementary, middle, and secondary schools and onward through the college and university. Class periods and courses should provide sufficient time to achieve the goals of the program. Where regular time blocks are too restrictive, double periods can make for more efficient and effective teaching. Courses should be sequential and progressive. At any level there should be opportunities for beginning, intermediate, and advanced level students to improve their skills and achieve a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

BUILDING CURRICULA IN DANCE

In the educational environment, dance as an art form is translated into process. Students inquire, respond, create, perfect, perceive, and evaluate. These processes permit students to explore themselves in relation to the art in order to acquire a greater understanding of both. In selecting experiences that will provoke the learning process, teachers should give consideration to sequence and range. Sequence, which implies the most effective ordering of experiences, is dependent upon the circumstances at hand, variables such as the interest and talent of a particular group of students. In general, dance education should develop along a continuum from early exploratory experiences to the focus upon dance as an art form, but the teacher's own judgment is necessary in determining and detailing sequence.

Range, too, requires careful thought and planning. Dance experiences should reflect the personal, social, and cultural aspects of the art. These orientations provide a framework by which the teacher can be certain of knowing what is important, of covering the full range of the subject, and of maintaining a curriculum of quality. Again, the teacher's judgment, based upon local considerations, will determine the most effective mixture of experiences representing these areas.

Personal

Emphasis is upon the development of perception, creativity, and self-expression, as well as physical coordination and control. The individual should be provided with opportunities to acquire a repertoire of movements, from those that occur in place to those that occur through space. The student should explore how the various parts of the body move both independently and together and how these various movements relate to their expressive potential. Shape, line, and pattern must be understood before dance forms can be invented or replicated. Rhythm and energy are dynamic, expressive dimensions that require deliberate concentration and long-term study. The compatibility of movement and music and the expressive reinforcement of each through the other must also be felt and understood. Through all this, students learn to make choices that require judgment and evaluation. They gradually acquire the ability to function as artists. In the case of dance education, product should never be more important than the process of achieving it.

Social

Emphasis is upon working with others, building ensemble, and in sharing dance experiences. Students learn how to move together and to participate actively or as spectators in group dance expressions. They acquire the ability to participate fully and cooperatively, yet take satisfaction from being a *part* of the whole. Movement with others requires students to concentrate upon coordination and synchronization. Many dance skills can be learned in class or group activities, where several or many students dance at the same time.

Cultural

Emphasis is upon learning various forms and styles of dance as they reflect particular periods or cultures. Ethnic origins are investigated and their aesthetic principles are articulated. Varying concepts of value and beauty and ways of perceiving and experiencing the world are understood and appreciated in dance terms. The personal (individual) and social (mutual) modes of dance expression are crystalized in the discipline that is required of the cultural-historical aspect. Modern dance styles, ballet, and ethnic forms are approached on their own terms, in light of their own techniques, contexts, and associations. To understand and appreciate the traditions of dance as a performing art requires study and practice over a long period of time.

Building curricula in dance cannot be done in isolation. Dance, like any subject, must relate to the needs and interests of students and to the ethnic and social makeup of the community. It should be an integral part of the total curriculum. One way to accomplish this is to make certain that dance is viewed as one part—an important component—of the arts program. There should be provision for inter-arts study, as well as opportunities for dance and the other arts to relate to other subject matters.

Curricula in dance should not be conceived too narrowly. Even the dancer should not be thought of simply as a mover, for there are many other aspects to the professional world of dance, including administration, criticism, teaching, history, therapy, and choreography. Like many subjects studied, dance is learned not so that people can become professional dancers, but so they can live better as human beings.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN DANCE

Performance is one facet of the teaching and learning process in dance. Like music and theatre, dance is a performing art. In order to know it as such, students must both participate in and observe performance. Yet performance alone should not dominate the goals of the dance classroom so that teachers teach primarily for it. Instead, it should be an outgrowth of developing the students' capacity to move expressively.

The emphasis in early performing experiences should be upon *sharing* rather than *showing*. This approach guarantees that children are not exploited, nor the educational program distorted. Children perform in the classroom or studio in order to evaluate a particular experience, to share a newly acquired skill, or to demonstrate their solution to a prob-

lem. One class observes another present a culminating experience which has grown out of a unit of work. Two classes evolve a joint project and terminate it in a performance for other students in the school. Parents are invited to attend open classes or to observe presentations of class work at the end of the semester.

The experience of performance, like the other components of the learning process in dance, must be planned to assure appropriateness to the level of sophistication, skill, knowledge, and understanding of both the participants and the audience. The audience or spectators, as well as the performers, can find dance performance an educational experience. Student presentations of work should be designed to suit a particular situation, to allow for informality, and to extend and clarify educational outcomes and rewards. To assure that audiences are empathetic to the participants, the educational objectives being addressed should be made explicit. As children become more skilled and audiences more attuned, performances can become somewhat more formal.

To bring dance experiences to a level of excellence compatible with a student's age and potential and to present them to a warm and receptive audience is exhilarating. However, the tendency to select only the talented children, to spend many hours drilling routines, and to expend energies and resources on overly elaborate costumes and stage effects in order to produce high-powered performances should be avoided. Performance in dance education is a means of conveying the art as a nonverbal discipline that involves creating, learning, practicing, and performing. It can be a significant culminating learning experience. Both the foibles and the feats of the young dancer give testimony to that ultimate triumph, when the human form attains the perfection of grace, control, and expression that signify mastery of the art.

3. TEACHERS AND SPECIALISTS IN DANCE

QUALIFICATIONS OF DANCE TEACHERS

Sound dance programs depend upon qualified teachers. No curriculum, no matter how well conceived, can be implemented successfully with an ill-prepared faculty.

The Dance Education Specialist

A well-prepared dance teacher should possess the following attributes:

(1) A thorough knowledge of all aspects of the art of dance and an in-depth, practicing specialization in at least one area;

(2) The ability to communicate with students, understand their individual potential, and inspire and guide their growth;

(3) The capacity to build curricula in dance, plan sequential experiences, and otherwise meet student interests and needs;

(4) The willingness to cooperate with colleagues in other academic disciplines, and interest in

contributing to a better general education for all students;

(5) A broad cultural and humanistic understanding that is grounded in respect for the life style of other peoples and times as represented by the art of dance;

(6) An eagerness to cooperate with community arts programs and utilize these resources educationally;

(7) A sensitivity and commitment to the arts process and the ability to sublimate the art product to it; and

(8) Enough knowledge of the other arts to understand how dance interrelates and to assure cooperative development of a comprehensive arts program.

These qualifications suggest a strong academic background as a dance major and a degree commensurate with that study.

PREPARATION OF DANCE TEACHERS

The curriculum to prepare teachers of dance is not identical to the curriculum to train professional dancers, but neither are they mutually exclusive. A common core of knowledges and skills should be developed in both courses of study that contains similar components, and, in addition, each must include other elements relevant to the purpose of the specific curriculum. Again, these curricula should include personal, social, and cultural dimensions.

The Mutual Core for Both Curricula:

Knowledge about—

- as many types of dance as possible, including ballroom, folk, ethnic, and modern;
- dance history and philosophy incorporating geographic and cultural influences;
- minimum essentials of stagecraft, dance accompaniment, and music;
- concepts and principles common to all arts; and
- basic dance writing and notation.

Skill and experience in—

- dancing as many kinds of dance as feasible;
- performing at least one style of dance for an audience;
- improvisation and choreography; and
- stage production.

Additional Elements Exclusive to the Curriculum for Future Dance Teachers:

Preparation for student teaching—

- pre-student-teaching observations and assistance under several instructors with a variety of educational levels, types of dance, and selections of participants,

from classes to clubs, in and out of school, including experience in the direction of performing and recreational groups;

- knowledge of teaching principles and methods;
- study of child and adolescent psychology; and
- understanding of the structure and function of the human body.

Student teaching—

- planned, supervised, and expertly evaluated in as normal and realistic a school situation as possible, preferably with a population parallel to that which the student teacher is preparing to teach.

A curriculum to prepare the professional dancer requires provision for more concentrated study of technique to acquire in-depth mastery of at least one style, as well as more experience in performing and staging. The future dance teacher needs some of this experience, too, but must be able to demonstrate ability in many dance styles without necessarily attaining the caliber of a professional dancer.

THE DANCE RESOURCE SPECIALIST

The dance resource specialist or consultant cannot function effectively in isolation. Close relationships must be established with the entire school community. Through such relationships dance and the other arts can evolve as an integral part of the school curriculum for all students, rather than a dispensable extracurricular subject for the few. When viewed as part of the total educational program, dance can have a significant influence on the general philosophy of teaching.

To be effective the specialist must:

- be competent in the field of dance;
- understand the learning patterns and the physical capabilities of the particular students to be taught;
- become part of the school family by expanding concerns beyond the limits of the dance program;
- establish a working relationship with all the other arts consultants and arts teachers;
- schedule regular periods of work with classroom teachers to further their understanding of the intent and value of dance, the relation of dance to the other arts, and the ways in which dance can be integrated into the general curriculum;
- present the techniques of dance in such a way that the nondancer may intelligently and comfortably use the medium of dance in the classroom; and
- encourage classroom teachers to work within the realm of their own style and personality, be able to cope with realities of their situation, i.e., available space, accompaniment, time, temperament and size of the class, and learn to evaluate the work of their students.

CERTIFICATION IN DANCE

Appropriate credentials have long been a requirement for practitioners in other professions—law, medicine, theology, and education. Employment opportunities for dance specialists in public schools as consultants and teachers indicate an increasing need for certification of dance as a teaching area. Dance must achieve parity with the other arts and academic disciplines, if its educational potential is to be realized. Few states give such recognition at present. Without it, teaching standards cannot be controlled or guaranteed.

The opportunity to major or minor in dance with the option of selecting a second teaching field from English, music, visual arts, drama, physical education, or other subject areas helps to increase the number of dance teachers available. There is a need for certification of dance as a teaching area, and state boards of education are urged to adopt dance certification programs.

NON-CERTIFIED TEACHERS OF DANCE

While dance educators who ply their profession in schools should possess the necessary background and competencies that certification requires, there are other personnel who play an important, even central, role in dance education.

The Dancer

Schools, colleges, and universities should be able to hire dance experts who do not possess degrees. Often the unusual talents and professional experiences of such dancers bring an important in-depth dimension to the dance classroom. Professional dancers can augment the work of the academic dance faculty. Those who enter the classroom should demonstrate an interest in teaching, an ability to communicate with

students and understand their needs, and a willingness to cooperate with other teachers and programs.

The Physical Educator

At the elementary level, physical educators are expected to be able to conduct creative dance and movement experiences, to teach movement skills, to guide the making of simple dances, and to present dances used in recreational contexts. It stands to reason, then, that, as prospective teachers, they be adequately prepared to handle such activities. In the same manner, some dance expertise is useful to physical education teachers operating at the secondary level.

The Arts Teacher

All arts teachers, regardless of focus, should know something about dance, just as dance teachers should know something about the other arts. They should be able to conduct experiences that involve movement as a medium of expression and relate their own art form to the kinesthetic experience. They should also be aware of dance resources in the community, so that they can offer guidance to students who may seek special lessons or experiences beyond those provided by the school.

The Classroom Teacher

Classroom teachers can enhance their teaching and the educational program they offer by incorporating movement and dance experiences. If preservice education has not prepared them to lead such experiences, inservice education can. The nondancer requires training in dance skills in order to teach them adequately. Knowledge of the arts process, acquaintance with dance literature, and familiarity with community resources and career opportunities in dance are also beneficial.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR TEACHING

Instructional programs in dance can be significantly improved through the assistance of dance experts who work in the vicinity. Many communities have schools of dance with personnel who would be able and willing to give the school dance program a helping hand.

Educators seeking qualified dance specialists are urged to contact professional dance associations, community and state arts councils, as well as nearby colleges and universities. Many colleges, for example, have strong programs in dance and may have senior or graduate students available to work in internship programs under the supervision of faculty advisors.

Community dance companies or schools of dance can be excellent sources of dance instructors. Administrators who seek dance specialists from these community institutions are advised to observe their dance classes so that they will be informed directly about the personalities, methodologies, and skills of candidates under consideration. A thorough discussion of the philosophy of the specialist in juxtaposition with the objectives of the public school should precede the development of a dance program, since the dancer, to be effective, must become part of the school family.

A dance company or troupe can be a valuable educational resource. Performances of dance in schools bring students into personal contact with the art and its artists in a more dynamic way than television. Performances and demonstrations of dance outside the school can provide students with first-hand acquaintance with the art in its most professional form. Schools should encourage and assist all students in acquiring such experiences for they can initiate interest in the medium, bring new levels of understanding and enjoyment, and generally broaden cultural perspectives.

The following resolution was adopted by the Board of Directors of the National Dance Association in October of 1976. Subsequently, it has been endorsed by the following organizations:

American College Dance Festival Association
American Dance Guild, Inc.
Association of American Dance Companies
Committee on Research in Dance
Country Dance and Song Society of America
Sacred Dance Guild

Members of the conference on Issues and Concerns in Dance Education gave their approval and support.

Resolution

Dance education is a medium for enhancing the quality of life for children, youth, and adults. Every human being has the right to move in ways that are primal, expressive, imaginative, and transformational.

Therefore, we urge arts, civics, and educational groups to support dance programs where they exist and to develop programs where they do not exist that:

- foster aesthetic-kinesthetic education;
- integrate the human capacity to form and transform in and through movement;
- celebrate the human ability to move with power and expressiveness;
- promote movement skills that explore and extend the artistic, cognitive, and psychomotor potentials of the human being;
- articulate and verify a commitment to man's heritage of dance forms from all cultures and all races; and
- include sequential dance experiences appropriate to the developmental stages of the human beings for whom they are designed.

APPENDIX

ROSTER OF PARTICIPANTS
NDA Conference on Issues and Concerns in Dance Education, October 23-25, 1976 Washington, D.C.

Araminta Little
NDA Project Director
Director of Dance
California State University
School of the Arts
Fullerton, CA 92634

Don Byrum
Photographer
National Art Education Association
1916 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

Shirley Trusty Corey
National Committee,
Alliance for Arts Education
4100 Touro Street
New Orleans, LA 70122

Edrie Ferdun
Associate Professor of Dance
Temple University
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Charles B. Fowler
Journalist and Consultant in the Arts
320 Second Street S.E.
Washington, DC 20003

Madeleine Gutman
Past President, American Dance Guild
2 Riverview Place
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

Margie R Hanson
Executive Secretary, NDA
1201 Sixteenth Street N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Charlotte Irey
Past President, NDA
Director of Dance
University of Colorado
970 Aurora Street
Boulder, CO 80303

Sandy McPhee
Representative, Montgomery County PTA
4850 Crescent Street
Bethesda, MD

Clyde McGeary
Senior Program Adviser
Fine Arts & Humanities
State Department of Education
Box 911
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Mary Ella Montague
Director of Dance
Sam Houston State University
Department HPE for Women
Huntsville, TX 77340

Forbes Rogers
Executive Director
Alliance for Arts Education
John F. Kennedy Center
Washington, DC 20566

Nancy Schuman
Director of Dance
North Plainfield High School
North Plainfield, NJ 07060

Margaret Skrmar
Chair, American College Dance Festival Association
Director of Dance
University of Pittsburgh
Suite 104, Trees Hall
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Carolyn Tate
Director, Carolyn Tate School of Dance
5204-B River Road
Washington, DC 20016

Heidi Von Obenauer
Education Editor
Dance Magazine
10 Columbus Circle
New York City, NY 10019