A case study: Review of an Indigenous digital resource as a potential medium for dance undergraduate teaching and learning: *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* (Wiradjuri for 'fix me')

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Abstract

The following article comprises a case study that considers the potential for an Indigenous digital resource to be used within a dance undergraduate context. In this manner, suggestions for dance pedagogy and practice are offered in relation to the Indigenous Education Strategy at Charles Sturt University, together with a university digital learning resource, *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal*, that seeks to develop cultural competence. Through exploration of one scene from this latter resource, the author expands on the ways in which it could become the stimulus and indeed provide a framework for dance composition teaching and learning at undergraduate level. Dance has long been viewed by dance anthropologists as a cultural manifestation and a vehicle through which culture might be understood (Kaeppler, 1981; Kealiinohomoku, 1983). The author has endeavored to underpin each element of her dance teaching and learning processes with an awareness of culture, whilst outlining creative, thematic and cross-curricular possibilities with *Cassie's Story.*

Keywords: *Cultural competence, culture, Indigenous, Laban, cross-curricular, tokenism.*

Introduction

When using case studies, there is an attempt to penetrate situations and promote understanding in new ways that are not always susceptible to statistical analysis. The following article constitutes an exploration and review of *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal*, which was developed as a digital learning resource at Charles Sturt University in Australia. It does not endeavor to provide steadfast answers vis-à-vis dance pedagogy and cultural awareness, it merely illuminates possibilities within creative practice. The aim of the digital learning resource was to help promote cultural competence, that is, "the ability to critically reflect on one's own culture and professional paradigms in order to understand its cultural limitations and effect positive change" (Charles Sturt University, 2014). A combined disciplinary project team worked closely with the Indigenous Australian Elders to construct *Cassie's*

Story, alongside the Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy Coordinator. Plans have since been made for academics to engage with *Cassie's Story* and include it in their subjects and courses with a view to broadening students' awareness of the general issues of cultural competence within Australia's past and contemporary educational practices. The ensuing reflection considers how this Indigenous-inspired resource might be used as a stimulus for dance teaching and learning in a university undergraduate education program with primary generalist teachers. Dance has long been viewed by dance anthropologists as a cultural manifestation and a vehicle through which culture might be understood (Kaeppler, 1981; Kealiinohomoku, 1983), thus the opportunity to investigate these notions further within an Australian institutional setting is somewhat appealing.

Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal – investigating the efficacy of the resource

Having contemplated *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* in its entirety, Scene 1 was selected as the main focus, due to its avid descriptions and emotive language (see the transcript of Scene 1 in Appendix A). Upon listening to this scene several times, a dance composition was visualized and a concept map related to this was subsequently developed, which helped to ground and enrich the author's ideas. Below in Figure 1 are some of the ideas that were developed (block capitals denote the author's own dance conceptualisations in relation to the previous words derived from the story per se). Four principal themes emerged, which are intimately connected to the original storyline:

1. Power struggles;
2. Emotional expression through the physical;
3. Conflict and resignation - physically removed, physically shut out;
4. Incessant travelling.

Each of these themes has the capacity to generate a wide range of movement vocabulary, that can be shaped and formed through Rudolf Laban's movement framework (Laban, 1948). Further details regarding this will be shared at a later point (see also Appendix B and Appendix C).
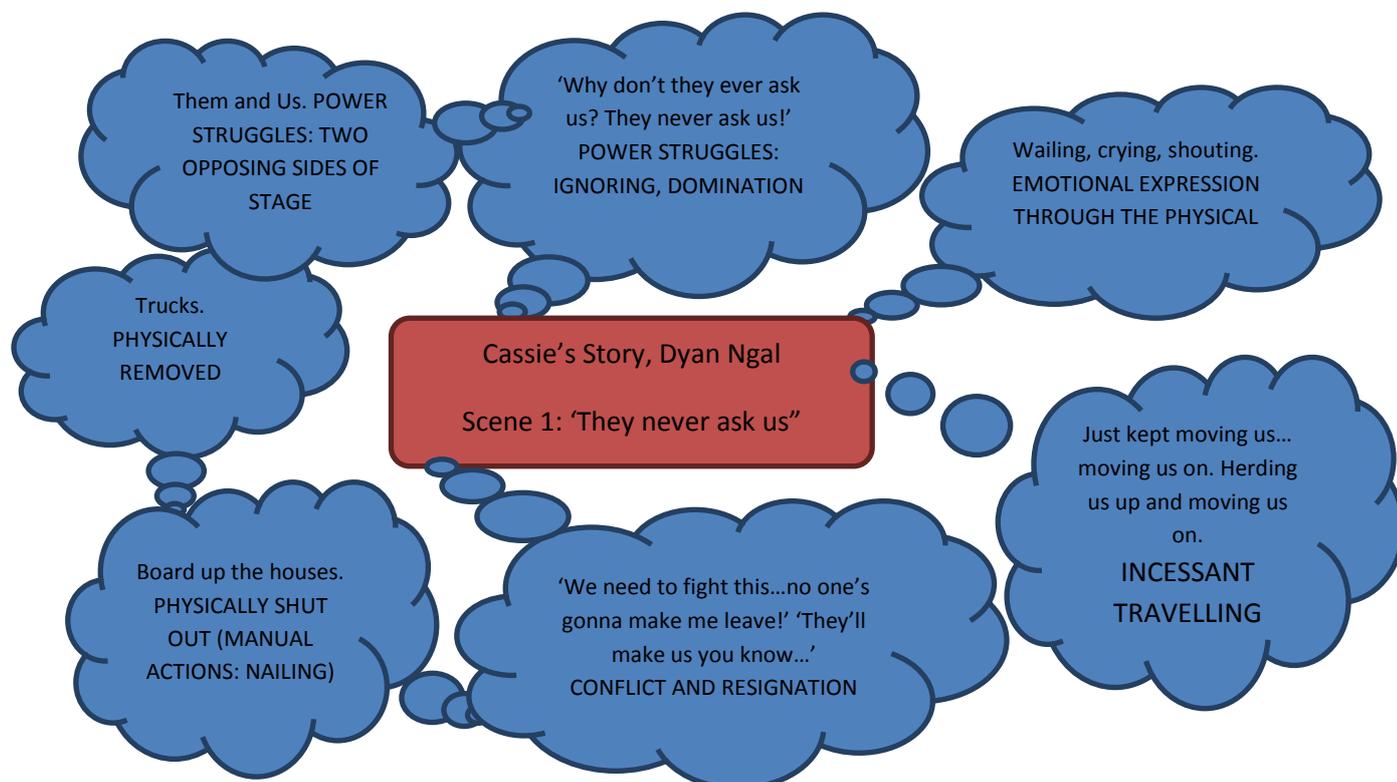
Figure 1: Concept map related to Scene 1 of *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal.*

During the process of designing the concept map, the author became conscious of her Westernized methods of dance-making, and began to wonder how she might challenge and modify these in any future face-to-face dance workshops that she led with students. Issues such as this are highlighted within the Indigenous Education Strategy (IES) at Charles Sturt University, and the Cultural Competence Pedagogical Framework that is referred to therein. Indeed, the IES confirms that "…the types of skills and depth of knowledge taught have been largely determined by dominant societal attitudes and expectations in relation to class, race, age and gender…" (IES, 2008, p. 3). This can result in a "one-way construction of knowledge" due to "whiteness behaviours" (Mlcek, 2009, p. 3) which lead a person to believe that *what* and *how* they teach is the norm; it is a dangerous standpoint to take, be it unconsciously only, since it effectively ignores the omnipresent diversity in our classrooms. The author's awareness of her own values, biases, and beliefs was deemed essential for 'cultural competence' (Sowers-Hoag & Sandau-Beckler, 1996), a concept that will subsequently be examined in more detail.

An important thing for the author to remember as a white, Western woman, is that although she has lived and worked in several international settings throughout Europe, and more recently in Australia, she has been educated within a Western education system. Born to white, middle class educators, the author trained in ballet, jazz and contemporary dance from an early age, and grew up in a house full of books with high academic expectations that were unconsciously absorbed. She slipped willingly and seamlessly into a dance and physical education teacher role at the age of 22. Indeed, it is only during the last few years of her 26 year career that the author has become increasingly aware of how she has been unconsciously perpetuating the dominant Western culture within which she has lived so comfortably through the very pedagogical methods that she employs in the classroom. In parallel with this, the author has begun to realise that she can begin to make a difference in a world of difference, as long as she values diversity, is deeply committed to education for all, and can develop herself to attain "cultural proficiency… within [her] practice, teaching and research" (Wells, 2000, p. 193).

Unravelling the complex interplay between culture, values, policies, and pedagogy is an essential process as an educator, but particularly so, when working in an institution such as Charles Sturt University with the Indigenous Education Strategy at its very core. Reflecting on the past can help to make a better future - the various dimensions of the IES serve to remind us of this, and it is to a selection of these that the discussion now turns.

Indigenizing the curriculum

The IES (2008, p. 22) states that "The inclusion of Indigenous content into all Charles Sturt University undergraduate programs offered by Charles Sturt University has the power to change the nature of Australian society and the quality of service provision provided to Indigenous Australians". In Section 5.1 of the IES, nine Key Objectives are evident, two of which are particularly relevant to the ensuing dance unit of work: Key Objective 2: "Make Indigenous people, culture and knowledge a valued and visible aspect of the life and culture of the University and its campuses", and Key Objective 5: "Incorporate Indigenous Australian content into all of the University's undergraduate course offerings, and embed related descriptors into the University's Graduate Attributes" (IES, 2008, p. 7).

A stimulus such as *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* could be used as an effective learning tool within a dance domain, thus addressing the need to Indigenize undergraduate program content. When utilized within a dance context, stories are considered to be ideational stimuli, as they have the capacity to generate "…a certain aura of concepts which provide frameworks for the creation of dances" (Smith-Autard, 1992, p. 28). The potential of a story to enrich dance is therefore only limited by the composer's imagination. For example, *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* might be transformed into a dance

that depicts the chosen character(s) and/or consists of an examination of the relationship between characters. It might investigate the listener's feelings or explore the mood and atmosphere created. Consideration of the historical, geographical and/or socio-cultural context of the story would also be an essential starting point in this particular case. Moreover, an investigation of the meaning, or layers of meaning, within the story might be an appropriate artistic route, or possibly a focus on the rhythm and repetition of certain words and concepts. These speculative points of departure for the composition process would be discussed and shared with undergraduate students, and they would subsequently be given kinesthetic opportunities to experience how to construct the dance form around the chosen story. This would be followed by their own improvization in small groups, selecting and developing movements with clear sequences, sections and final form. By experiencing an initial practical modelling of the craft of composition, these non-dance specialists and future primary educators would be given support moments during their dance learning in line with Vygotsky's scaffolding theory (1978). This might help to counteract any negative feelings that the primary generalist teachers could have in relation to their confidence and competence levels when teaching aspects of physical education, a phenomenon that has been well documented as an issue (Armour & Duncombe, 2004; Carney & Chedzoy, 1998; Faucette, Nugent, Sallis & McKenzie, 2002).

Crafting the dance: *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal*

Each of the four principal themes that were mapped earlier in this discussion will now be considered in order to ascertain the story's usefulness as a dance resource. Further detail regarding this can be found in Appendix B: *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* – a related Dance Unit of Work. Laban's movement framework (1948) will be drawn from throughout this discussion.

1. *SECTION A - Power struggles: ignoring, domination, two opposing sides of stage:* contrasting levels used to demonstrate power struggles between dancers, with the 'dominant' dancers exploring the following effort actions (Laban, 1948): punch, press, wring, slash. Dancers who are 'ignored' can portray contrasting effort actions of dab, glide, flick and float to show their relative lack of power. Spatial contrasts between the two power groups can be exaggerated to highlight their differences, for example, the more powerful group can take centre stage regularly, and dominate the downstage area, often moving on strong diagonals through centre. The group being ignored could remain in their own kinespheres (personal space) in the upstage area, far from the audience and yet ever-present to symbolise that this was their land and it has been forcibly stripped away from them. Exploration of space might be extended to short action-reaction sequences wherein one partner moves and the other responds. Contrasts in speed – quick against slow – and in space - straight against curved spatial floor pathways – could be added for further interest.

2. *SECTION B - Emotional expression through the physical: wailing, crying, shouting:* improvisation around meaning in movement could be made in this section of the dance. Whilst Smith-Autard maintains that "There is no *one* way of showing meaning in movement but there are accepted patterns" (1992, p. 20), again there needs to be care taken with regard to the culturally bound nature of movement and how it might be interpreted in many different ways due to each viewer's cultural memories and experiences. Notwithstanding this, movements that are lower in level, inward facing and more jagged and twisted in terms of body shape and effort could be explored to show sadness and pain, i.e. the 'wailing' and 'crying' that *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* describes. Reference to Western professional dance works such as 'Lamentation' by Martha Graham (1930) would be appropriate here, although the historical context of this piece would need to be outlined in order to appreciate the expressive dance epoch from whence it originated. 'Shouting' in dance could be researched through physical gestures upwards and outwards with the arms, and dancers could also perform explosive jumps and leaps across the stage to symbolize their anger.

3. *SECTION C - Conflict and resignation, physically removed, physically shut out:* in this section of the dance, asymmetrical body designs could be studied and performed to illuminate conflict. Humphrey (1987, p. 58) comments that "…oppositional design [where body lines are opposed in a right angle] strengthens and fortifies any mood or meaning which calls for aggressive energy and vitality. It is indispensable for any idea of conflict, either emotional and subjective or with some outside person or force". Conflict is a part of being human and something that young children and adults alike experience and learn to manage. Through the dance medium, a range of conflict-type movements could be explored, including holding and resisting with one partner trying to leave and the other holding them back, using different body parts, levels and timing. Still body shapes that explore conflict could also be designed in pairs, with strong, asymmetrical body lines and contrasting changes of level. Climatic moments of conflict could be punctuated by resignation, involving inward bodily contractions and sinking to the floor with soft, fluid dynamics as if all hope has gone and there is acceptance of the situation.

A Western professional dance work that demonstrates such human conflict, including despair and eventual acceptance of fate is 'Ghost Dances' (1981) by Christopher Bruce, which portrays the South American civilian murders, imprisonments and tragedies of the 1970s and 1980s. The dance has a cruel, relentless quality about it, with the peasant villagers trying to carry on with their everyday lives, but remaining constantly aware that death (the ghost dancers) could come at any time and carry them away. They are literally smashed to the ground or transported offstage by the masked, skeleton-like creatures. When Cassie describes the way in which her own people are physically removed from their homes, herded up like animals in trucks and moved to the other side of town time after time, the author is reminded of the same social injustice and can envisage how this might also be the catalyst for an artistic adventure in the dance studio.

4. *SECTION D - incessant travelling:* within this final section of the dance, students could explore walking, running and stopping movements in different rhythmic patterns and across circular floor pathways, thus creating the impression of the relentless nomadic existence that Cassie referred to in Scene 1: "Just kept moving us… moving us on.." Students could try travelling in different formations, holding hands very lightly or connected with bent elbows or holding each other's shoulders. Effort actions could add texture and colour to the travels, with emotions such as reluctance being shown through sustained, slow, heavy qualities and then fear and anxiety quickening the pace and sending the dancers into a fast, climatic sprint.

In Section 5.3.2 (Courses, Learning and Teaching) of the IES, Recommendation 15 is that "Academic Senate implement policy requiring the incorporation of Indigenous Australian content as an assessable component of all CSU [Charles Sturt University] undergraduate programs" (2008, p. 10). It is essential for us as teachers to examine our learning, teaching and assessment strategies in relation to the IES, as all three are inextricably linked. It would therefore be appropriate, and indeed timely, for a stimulus such as *Cassie's Story* to be made an integral part of dance content and pedagogy.

The cultural competence pedagogical framework

The IES refers to the cultural competence pedagogical framework (CCPF) "…which provides a systematic and systemic approach to the incorporation of Indigenous Australian content into Charles Sturt University undergraduate programs" (2008, p. 23). Whilst there is no one universally accepted definition of 'cultural competence', many definitions apparently share certain aspects such as "valuing diversity, having the capacity for cultural self-assessment, being conscious of the dynamics inherent in cross-cultural interactions, institutionalising the importance of cultural knowledge and making adaptations to service delivery that reflect cultural understanding" (Goode 1995 cited in Universities

Australia & Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (Australia) [IHEAC], 2011, p. 50). The term culture per se is also considered "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Williams, 1976, p. 76). In anthropological terms, culture is perceived as values, beliefs, ideas, institutions, relationship networks, behavioural patterns and artifacts. Institutional settings such as Charles Sturt University could also be described as a microculture, conveying its own messages whilst simultaneously acting as a cultural channel or interface. As a dance educator within the university microculture, the author negotiates between cultural values and dance traditions, local and global cultures, and what the university values. On a daily basis the author therefore faces a wide range of choices in relation to culture, choosing certain dance stimuli, theories, methods, techniques, styles, choreographies, materials, frameworks and pedagogical processes. These choices require sensitivity to students' lives, as well as the historical and cultural context in which the learning is located. Using an Indigenous resource such as *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* in some of the ways outlined in the subsequent dance unit of work would appear to satisfy at least two of the five broad groups of issues (numbers 1 and 4) that emerged from the initial CCPF research.

1. There continues to exist a significant lack of awareness amongst professionals of Indigenous Australian clients, cultures and contexts; 4. The failure of professions to engage in broader issues of justice and human rights, including advocacy and the development of strategies to challenge prejudice, ethnocentrism and racism.

Historical and contemporary perspectives

Evidently, dance needs to adopt progressive and pedagogically robust educational principles if Western and ethnocentric perspectives are to be challenged and it is to concurrently respond to the multiplicity of cultures that make up our world. However, it is also a physical art form that uses the body, a body where students' life narratives are housed and their culture is inscribed. Undoubtedly, the bodily scars of Indigenous mistreatment and marginalization are visible in current times. We only have to look back as far as the 1960s to see how Indigenous students were prevented access to education due to institutional racism embedded in government policies such as the Aborigines Protection Acts (operational in all Australian States and Territories from 1909). Such policies disregarded the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through segregation, removal of their children ('the stolen generations') and restriction of their access to mainstream employment, healthcare and education (IHEAC, 2011, p. 12). The extent of the socio-economic disadvantage experienced by Indigenous Australians is also illustrated in the 1991 Royal Commission of Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, in which it is argued that "professionals largely operated within a neo-colonial framework and were generally ignorant of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, worldview, histories and contemporary situations and lacked practical skills and strategies for working effectively in Indigenous contexts" (IES, 2008, p. 21).

Conclusion

The author's role as a teacher educator in this domain is thus an important one, since it is at this 'grass roots' level that awareness, sensitivity and positive change can be initiated. Once the phenomenon of teachers structuring their "…curriculum based upon little or no knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories or contemporary realities" (NBPF, p. 26) is recognized, this is where our educational journey as Australian academics can commence. *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* shows much promise as a resource in the dance context, not only due its cross-curricular potential (see Appendix C), but particularly in terms of its capacity to explore human, social justice and socio-cultural issues through visceral, embodied experiences. Notwithstanding this, the author is also aware of the issue of tokenism, which some believe it is impossible to avoid in dance education (McFee, 1994). However, academics have the potential to contribute to institutional Indigenous strategies, as long as there is

commitment to the on-going, long term process of developing and refining one's personal cultural competence.

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Appendix A: Transcript of *Cassie's Story; Dyan Ngal*

I need to talk to someone. Anyone. Anyone who'll listen.

I've just come from a community meeting and all hell broke loose. I can't stand what's happening. It feels like it's all happening again. In the end Auntie Ev had a real bad fit, she was so upset. Ambulance came and took her. Her diabetes is playin' up. But she wasn't the only one crying. Uncle Mervin was full on in tears and he just kept saying, "Why don't they ever ask us? They never ask us!"

That just started up the others then…the ones who had been moved before… on the trucks…way back. And everyone started wailing and crying and shouting until all the kids started and then in the end we was all crying just sitting in the hall, crying…

Thing is… we like our homes and now they want to move us to the other side of town… Funny thing is we were moved here from another part of town… then all the whitefellas came for work and they spread out and didn't want us in their backyards, so they moved us along… Uncle says that is what they did there three times on the mish too. Just kept moving us… moving us on. Herding us up and moving us on. One of the Aunts got feisty after a while stood up and said; "We need to fight this…no one's gonna make me leave!" She yelled, "I like living here". That's when someone ...don't know who that was yelled back, "They'll make us you know… they just give us two weeks' notice and board up the houses just like they did last time. What choice you got heh? Them council fellas and property developers don't care about what you want."

Cassie? Cassie!

Yeah? Coming!

Appendix B: Dance overview and reflection

Dance Section: Overview and Reflection	Key Focus	Additional Suggested Resources
SECTION A - Power struggles: ignoring, domination, two opposing sides of stage: • Contrasting levels used to demonstrate power struggles between dancers, with the 'dominant' dancers exploring the following effort actions (Laban, 1948) - punch, press, wring, slash. • Dancers who are 'ignored' can portray contrasting effort actions of dab, glide, flick and float to show their relative lack of power. • Spatial contrasts between the two power groups can be exaggerated to highlight their differences, for example, the more powerful group can take center stage regularly, and dominate the downstage area, often moving on strong diagonals through center. • The group being ignored could remain in their own kinespheres (personal space) in the upstage area, far from the audience and yet ever-present to symbolize that this was their land and it has been forcibly stripped away from them. • Exploration of space might be extended to short action-reaction sequences wherein one partner moves and the other responds. Contrasts in speed – quick against slow – and in space - straight against curved spatial floor pathways – could be added for further interest.	**Space:** levels, stage positions, kinesphere. Contrasts in spatial floor pathways (straight, curved). **Effort/Dynamics:** punch, press, wring, slash, dab, glide, flick and float. Contrasts in speed: quick-slow. **Action-reaction sequences**	• Laban's movement framework: Laban, R. (1948) *Modern Educational Dance.* London: Macdonald and Evans. Picture 1: http://blog.lib.umn.edu/ali/2009arts3305/Laban%20Movement%20Analysis1.html
SECTION B - Emotional expression through the physical: wailing, crying, shouting:	Portraying **meaning in movement:** emotions (sadness, pain).	• Laban's movement framework: Laban, R. (1948) *Modern Educational Dance.* London: Macdonald and Evans.

• Improvisation around meaning in movement could be made in this section of the dance. Whilst Smith-Autard maintains that 'There is no *one* way of showing meaning in movement but there are accepted patterns' (1992, p. 20), again there needs to be care taken with regard to the culturally bound nature of movement and how it might be interpreted in many different ways due to each viewer's cultural memories and experiences. • Notwithstanding this, movements that are lower in level, inward facing and more jagged and twisted in terms of body shape and effort could be explored to show sadness and pain, i.e. the 'wailing' and 'crying' that *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal* describes. Reference to Western professional dance works such as 'Lamentation' by Martha Graham (1930) would be appropriate here, although the historical context of this piece would need to be outlined in order to appreciate the expressive dance epoch from whence it originated. • 'Shouting' in dance could be researched through physical gestures upwards and outwards with the arms, and dancers could also perform explosive jumps and leaps across the stage to symbolize their anger.	**Cultural bound nature of movement** (interpretation) **Space:** levels, inward-outward from body. **Body shape and effort/dynamics:** jagged, twisted. **Appreciating a professional dance work:** 'Lamentation' by Martha Graham (1930). **Appreciating historical contexts of dance works.**	• Smith-Autard, J.M. (1992). 2nd ed. *Dance Composition. A Practical Guide for Teachers.* London: A & C Black. • Extract from Martha Graham's 'Lamentation': http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgf3xgbKYko Picture 2: "Lamentation" by Martha Graham http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-NOzrLRQnX5M/Tlxmczknzll/AAAAAAAAC_Q/QQMtSjuoTlo/s1600/lamentation.jpg Picture 3: "Lamentation" by Martha Graham http://seattletimes.com/ABPub/2011/03/08/2014433488.jpg
SECTION C - Conflict and resignation, physically removed, physically shut out: • In this section of the dance, asymmetrical body designs could be studied and performed to illuminate conflict.	**Body design:** asymmetrical, oppositional, still body shapes, strong asymmetrical body lines.	• Laban's movement framework: Laban, R. (1948) *Modern Educational Dance.* London: Macdonald and Evans. • Humphrey, D. (1987) *The Art of Making Dances.* Pennington, NJ: Dance Horizons.

- Humphrey (1987, p. 58) comments that "…oppositional design [where body lines are opposed in a right angle] strengthens and fortifies any mood or meaning which calls for aggressive energy and vitality. It is indispensable for any idea of conflict, either emotional and subjective or with some outside person or force".
- Conflict is a part of being human and something that young children and adults alike experience and learn to manage. Through the dance medium, a range of conflict-type movements could be explored, including holding and resisting with one partner trying to leave and the other holding them back, using different body parts, levels and timing.
- Still body shapes that explore conflict could also be designed in pairs, with strong, asymmetrical body lines and contrasting changes of level.
- Climatic moments of conflict could be punctuated by resignation, involving inward bodily contractions and sinking to the floor with soft, fluid dynamics as if all hope has gone and there is final acceptance of the situation.
- A Western professional dance work that demonstrates such human conflict, including despair and eventual acceptance of fate is 'Ghost Dances' (1981) by Christopher Bruce, which portrays the South American civilian murders, imprisonments and tragedies of the 1970s and 1980s. The dance has a cruel, relentless quality about it, with the peasant villagers trying to carry on with their everyday lives, but remaining constantly aware that death (the ghost dancers)

Portraying meaning in movement: conflict – holding, resisting, trying to leave. Resignation – bodily contractions, sinking to floor, soft and fluid dynamics.
Body parts.
Space: levels (low, medium, high).
Timing.
Effort/Dynamics: soft, fluid.

Picture 4: "Ghost Dances" by Christopher Bruce (aggressive energy and vitality)
http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/1630000/images/_1634743_rambertnew300.jpg
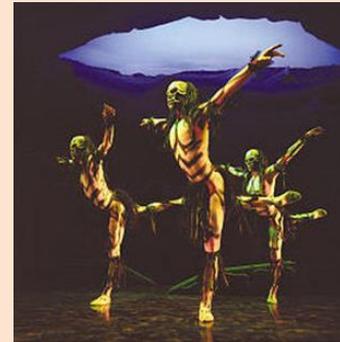
Picture 5: "Ghost Dances" by Christopher Bruce (asymmetrical lower body design)
http://ghost-dances.wikispaces.com/file/view/ghost_trio.jpg/212682700/ghost_trio.jpg

Picture 6: "Ghost Dances" by Christopher Bruce (peasants being transported offstage)
http://www.houstontheatre.com/ghost.jpg

could come at any time and carry them away. They are literally smashed to the ground or transported offstage by the masked, skeleton-like creatures. • When Cassie describes the way in which her own people are physically removed from their homes, herded up like animals in trucks and moved to the other side of town time after time, I am reminded of the same social injustice and can envisage how this might also be the catalyst for an artistic adventure in the dance studio.		
SECTION D - incessant travelling: • Within this final section of the dance, students could explore walking, running and stopping movements in different rhythmic patterns and across circular floor pathways, thus creating the impression of the relentless nomadic existence that Cassie referred to in Scene 1: "Just kept moving us… moving us on.." • Students could try travelling in different formations, holding hands very lightly or connected with bent elbows or holding each other's shoulders. • Effort actions could add texture and color to the travels, with emotions such as reluctance being shown through sustained, slow, heavy qualities and then fear and anxiety quickening the pace and sending the dancers into a fast, climatic sprint.	**Locomotor actions:** walking, running, stopping. **Rhythmic patterns.** **Space:** circular floor pathways. Relationships: travelling in different formations with different body parts connected. **Effort/Dynamics:** texture, color travels. **Portraying meaning in movement:** reluctance – sustained, slow, heavy. Fear, anxiety – quickly, climatic.	• Laban's movement framework: Laban, R. (1948) *Modern Educational Dance.* London: Macdonald and Evans.

Appendix C: Cross-curricular possibilities: links to the New South Wales six Key Learning Areas in primary education

Key Learning Area	Strands	A selection of syllabus content mapped to cross-curricular possibilities in dance (the latter, my personal ideas, are indicated in brackets)
English:	1. Talking and listening 2. Reading 3. Writing	1. Interaction skills, (relationships: group work), presentation (performance of compositions), listening (auditory stimuli such as stories, music), relationship between context and text (socio-cultural and historical contexts of dances), language structures and features (composition, sequence, motif). 2. Contextual and semantic (socio-cultural and historical context of dances), grammatical (punctuation of dance phrases with highlights and climaxes, flow of the dance, shades of meaning, cultural patterns: power, status, class, values and attitudes, ethnicity), letters (body shapes), interpretation and discussion of ideas (dance appreciation). 3. Processes (composition: shaping of ideas, construction of dance language, composition-performance-appreciation), spelling and handwriting (writing words on floor and in air with whole body and then smaller body parts: gross and fine motor skills, word formation in group body shapes), different writing types and patterns (space: floor-air pathways).
Mathematics:	1. Working mathematically 2. Number 3. Patterns and algebra 4. Data 5. Measurement 6. Space and geometry	1. Problem-solving (composing sequences and dance form, decision-making, improvisation and selection of movements), communication (verbal and physical), reasoning (composition, group work), reflection (composition and appreciation skills). 2. Addition and subtraction (dance actions, dynamics, space, relationships in sequence work), chance (compositional devices, e.g. use dice for order of actions in a sequence). 3. Number patterns (floor/air patterns and pathways) linear relationships (body parts to body parts, floor/air pathways), fractions (balancing on different numbers of body parts). 4. Data collecting, representing, analyzing (film dances performed and appreciate them). 5. Length (body shapes, floor/air pathways), time (rhythm, phrasing). 6. Three-dimensional space, spatial visualization (whole body movements in personal and general space), two-dimensional space (appreciation of filmed

		dancing bodies), position (body shapes, body parts to body parts), angles (body shapes), knots (body shape: individual and group).
Science and Technology:	1. Built environments 2. Information and communication 3. Living things 4. Physical phenomena 5. Products and services 6. The Earth and its surroundings	1. Structures (composition: sequence, form), spaces that people construct (body shape and design, space: personal, general), aesthetic and functional qualities of built environments 2. Communication technology and the ways people make, store, organize and transfer images and information (recording body shapes, designs, sequences, final dance form and then appreciating these: description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation), how senses are used to receive messages from all around (kinesthetic, auditory, visual, tactile). 3. People (group relationships, socio-cultural context of dance), other animals and plants (group or body shapes and actions), pushes and pulls can make things move and stop (movement: forces, levers, gravity), living things and machines need energy to do things (dynamics), some things feel hotter and some things feel colder than our bodies (body temperature before, during, after dancing). 4. Phenomena related to energy (dynamics/effort actions), space (floor and air pathways), time (musicality, movement patterns within specific time structures). 5. Goods and commodities, and the systems used to produce and distribute them (dance processes: composition-performance-appreciation, dance product: the final form, professional dance works). 6. Earth and its environment (space: personal, general - local, global) and how people use the resources it provides (manual 'work' actions such as boarding up Indigenous houses).
Personal Development, Health & Physical Education:	1. Active lifestyle 2. Dance 3. Games and sports 4. Growth and development 5. Gymnastics 6. Interpersonal relationships 7. Personal health choices 8. Safe living	1. Participates in daily physical activity, recognizing that it can be both enjoyable and important for health (composition and performance tasks), use of leisure time – active, passive pursuits (dance as a leisure activity), safe stretching and warm-up techniques (dance warm-ups), effects of physical activity on the body (composition and performance tasks). 2. Non-locomotor skills (body part isolation, swaying, swinging, bending, twisting, turning actions in improvisation, composition and performance tasks), locomotor skills (running, galloping, skipping, leaping, jumping), elements of dance (Laban: action, dynamics: time and rhythm, space, relationships), composition (structure, transitions and links, sequences, compositional devices such as unison, canon), dance styles (range of local and global possibilities).

		3. Non-locomotor skills (body part isolation, stretching/bending/twisting, pivoting, swinging, balancing), locomotor skills (jumping, running), manipulative skills (working with objects such as scarves), games (imaginative games as warm-ups and cool-downs, team work), playing the game (safety considerations, roles and responsibility, effort and practice).
		4. Personal identity (feelings, body image, respecting others' ideas and opinions), the body (body parts, systems, functions, senses, caring for the body), changes (physical/social/emotional changes and changing relationships/feelings/environments/needs: exploration through relevant dance themes), values (personal/family/school/cultural/community: explore through a range of dance styles and themes), challenging discrimination and harassment (specific dance themes such as *Cassie's Story: Dyan Ngal*).
		5. Non-locomotor skills (body part isolation, swinging, bending, twisting, turning, stretching, curling, balance, laterality actions in improvisation, composition and performance tasks), locomotor skills (running, hopping, travelling on different body parts), elements of movement (spatial awareness, dynamics, relationships), composition (simple combinations of locomotor and non-locomotor actions).
		6. Relationships (exploring caring, supporting, trust, discrimination through technical exercises and a range of themes), communication (through the physical – dance/drama: recognizing and articulating feelings, appropriate expression of feelings, understanding feelings of others, managing conflict situations/negotiation), families, peers, groups (changes, roles, types of families, responsibilities: investigated through a range of dance themes).
		7. Making decisions (composition tasks: process, influences on, taking responsibility, supporting others, evaluating), nutrition (needs for physical activity such as dance, cultural traditions explored through dance themes), drug use, environmental health, preventative measures (explored through relevant dance themes).
		8. Personal safety, home and rural safety, school and play safety, road safety, water safety (explored through relevant dance themes), emergency procedures (basic first aid following a dance injury).

		N.B. Some of the suggestions in brackets above are aligned directly with the overview of subject matter (NSW syllabus, p. 36) as they have such a close relationship to Dance per se.
Human Society and its Environment:	1. Change and continuity 2. Cultures 3. Environments 4. Social systems and structures	1. Significant events and people (dance composition: describing events or retelling their own or others' heritage), describes events and actions related to the British colonization of Australia and assesses changes and consequences/time and change: changes and continuities in own life and others' lives (using poems and stories on these themes as stimuli for dance compositions). 2. Identities: shared customs, practices, symbols, languages and traditions in communities that contribute to Australian and community identities (composition: through related dance themes), different viewpoints, ways of living, languages and belief systems in a variety of communities (appreciation: international dance works, composition: through related themes). 3. Patterns of place and location (composition: exploring architectural lines of natural and built features through body design, shape and alignment), relationships with places (range of different numbered group composition tasks). 4. Resource systems (meeting needs of own and others in a dance context), roles, rights and responsibilities (group composition: roles, responsibilities and decision-making).
Creative Arts:	1. Visual arts 2. Music 3. Drama 4. Dance	1. *Making* (investigation of world dance), different ways to explore subject matter and use a range of techniques (coloring and texturing the dance with Laban's framework), different audience responses, reflection, judgment (performance and appreciation skills), fine motor skills (performance with small body parts combined with gross motor skills). *Appreciating:* opportunities to look at, talk about, read about and write about, artists and artworks (appreciation of professional dance works), how artists work (dance processes: composition-performance-appreciation), subject matter of works and meanings (dance appreciation), artist's relationship to an audience (dance appreciation: choreographers discussing own dance works). 2. *Singing:* use of speaking voice (exploring singing and dancing simultaneously, use of mime in certain dance forms, e.g. ballet), self-expression (conveying meaning through a silent dance), working cooperatively (group composition tasks). *Playing:* performance skills, aural awareness (students accompanying

their own dances). *Moving:* locomotor, non-locomotor skills (dance performance and composition tasks), body awareness (improvisation with different body parts, composition, performance), spatial awareness (Laban's movement framework: levels and directions changing in response to pitch contour and direction), students' invention of sounds to accompany particular movements (relevant improvisation and composition tasks), *Organizing sound:* experimenting, imitating, improvising, arranging, composing and notating (improvisation, composition, performance, and writing up the dance: appreciation). *Listening:* through listening to a wide range of repertoire, students learn about the music of others and themselves, musical concepts and the ways in which audiences understand music (appreciation of dance compositions from a range of cultures), understanding and awareness of musical concepts (dance tasks based on timing, rhythm, set sequences), selection and rejection (composition process in dance: selecting and developing actions).

3. *Making:* devising, shaping and symbolically representing imaginative situations, ideas, feelings, attitudes and beliefs (dance composition tasks), roles and situations (improvisation, movement, mime, storytelling, composition), the elements of drama (Laban: variation and contrast, symbol, time, space, focus, mood), dramatic content (Laban: what, where, when), drama forms (compared with dance forms, e.g. comic, narrative, lyrical). *Performing:* communicate their roles and imaginative ideas to others through voice and movement (performing in different contexts: each other, others), perform and appreciate a variety of drama forms from different Australian cultures including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples where ceremony and performance are integral to the expression of their cultural identity (awareness and appreciation of world dance). *Appreciating:* describe, reflect and analyse their own drama work and that of others by viewing, talking, reading and writing (appreciation), appreciate drama work that is both live and on screen (view and appreciate dance clips on film, television, video, CD ROM, web, video games).

4. *Performing:* developing bodily competence and confidence using the elements of dance with expressive qualities. Interpreting dance to communicate moods, feelings and ideas is essential to dance performance. Use of safe dance practice with physical skills and techniques appropriate to body types and physical

ability provides a foundation for understanding the body and movement in dance. Interpretation is fundamental to the quality of dancing. Students develop use of expressive qualities (such as being fearful, spiteful, joyful), formal qualities (such as line, rhythm, shape), and sensory qualities (such as soft, gentle, curving movements) to interpret ideas. Students should experience dance that is appropriate to their developmental needs and experience. Modern dance embraces a wide variety of ideas, a broad range of movement possibilities and provides teachers with many principles and techniques for developing dance with all students. The elements of dance indicate basic movement principles that provide a foundation for learning about performance in all types of dance.

Composing in dance involves students developing an understanding of the basic components of dance: dancers, movement, sound and physical settings and how these relate to why people dance, what a dance is about and what effect a dance might create. Dance composition involves learning to use the elements of dance to find and structure movement to express ideas in keeping with the intention of the dance. Learning experiences for composing should use material that is meaningful for primary students so they learn how dances are made to communicate feelings, themes or issues within cultural traditions and historical and contemporary contexts. Ideas for dance can be drawn from a variety of sources such as familiar experiences, fantasy, observations, other key learning areas, and traditional and/or contemporary practices. They might include a teacher's or student's dance idea, or involve ideas from an existing dance. In composing, students respond to a stimulus such as movement itself, poems, narratives, visual images, events, issues and music. Students can draw on direct experience and use their imagination to consider and discuss possible movement responses suggested by a stimulus. Through problem-solving tasks, they can explore and play with movement by improvising with basic movement ideas. While composing, students reflect upon the patterns or sequences of movement that they select, refine, structure and organize through repetition. Observing, reflecting and discussing during the composition process are important learning experiences in the making of dance. Dances are composed using sound or silence as accompaniment, which has an important effect upon the dancers and audience.

Appreciating involves responding to dance works by viewing, talking, writing and reading. It provides students with opportunities to analyse, value and reflect on their own work and the work of others in terms of personal, cultural and structural meanings. Students learn to appreciate live performance and how dance communicates meaning by viewing each other's work and by observing dances performed by other students and amateur and professional groups, both live and on videotapes. Students respond to the dance they view through guided questions: Who is dancing? Where is the dance taking place? What kind of dance is being performed and how? How have the elements been used? What ideas, feelings and moods are being expressed? How are these created? Through guided reflection, they develop an understanding of the purpose, meaning and organization of dances. Such observations can act as a stimulus and enrich their own performing and composing skills. Students should view dances from a range of genres and styles. They will identify familiar types of dance and consider the intention of the dance maker/ choreographer and dancers. By drawing on this range students develop an understanding of dances from different cultures and times, an awareness of links between the past and the present and differences in cultural values and social meanings.

Elements in dance: learning in dance involves students using and understanding the elements of dance. The elements of dance are action, dynamics, time, space, relationships and structure.

Action refers to what is occurring. Dynamics refers to the quality or how it is happening. Time refers to when it is happening. Space refers to where it is occurring. Relationships refers to with or who aspects of the dance. Structure refers to the unity and form of the dance.

Contexts: dance occurs in various contexts, providing wide-ranging material for dance ideas in performing, composing and appreciating. Material can be drawn from dances originating in diverse cultures, times and places as well as in the contemporary world. Learning about dance from the perspective of different contexts provides a broad and balanced dance experience appropriate to the interests, resources and expertise of the school and community. Ideas for dance can be drawn from the following cultural traditions, contemporary and historical contexts:

• contemporary and popular dance in Australia

		• social dances from local and wider sources, including diverse cultures in Australia • modern dance of the 20th century • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional and contemporary dance • Indigenous, folk and traditional dances of the world. *N.B. Some of the suggestions in brackets above are aligned directly with the overview of learning (NSW Creative Arts K-6 Syllabus, pp. 9-17) as they have such a close relationship to Dance per se. The dance strand is quoted in its entirety from the syllabus.*

Images

Picture 1: Laban Movement Analysis. Retrieved from http://blog.lib.umn.edu/ali/2009arts3305/Laban%20Movement%20Analysis1.html

Picture 2: 'Lamentation' by Martha Graham. Retrieved from http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-NOzrLRQnX5M/TlxmczknzII/AAAAAAAAC_Q/QQMtSjuoTIo/s1600/lamentation.jpg

Picture 3: 'Lamentation' by Martha Graham. Retrieved from http://seattletimes.com/ABPub/2011/03/08/2014433488.jpg

Picture 4: 'Ghost Dances' by Christopher Bruce (aggressive energy and vitality). Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/olmedia/1630000/images/_1634743_rambertnew300.jpg

Picture 5: 'Ghost Dances' by Christopher Bruce (asymmetrical lower body design). Retrieved from http://ghost-dances.wikispaces.com/file/view/ghost_trio.jpg/212682700/ghost_trio.jpg

Picture 6: 'Ghost Dances' by Christopher Bruce (peasants being transported offstage). Retrieved from http://www.houstontheatre.com/ghost.jpg