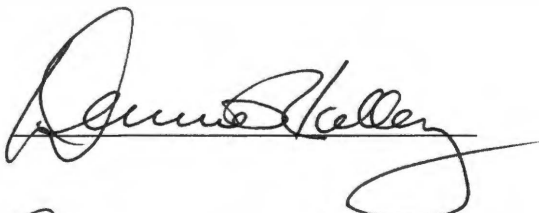


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Laura Leitner Shields entitled "Benefits of Dance Education: The Perceptions of College Dance Students". I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Human Performance and Sport Studies.


Dr. Gene McCutchen, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:




Acceptance for the Council:


Vice Provost and Dean of
Graduate Studies

**BENEFITS OF DANCE EDUCATION:
THE PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE DANCE STUDENTS**

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Laura Leitner Shields
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine college dance students' perceptions of the contributions of dance education to their lives. Its primary goal was to develop a picture of the benefits of dance through the thoughts and words of dancers.

An open-ended dance questionnaire designed to ascertain the students' thoughts on the benefits of dance education in their lives and a demographic questionnaire designed to provide information on the dancers' levels of ability were administered to dance students at a major University in the Southeast United States. Eighty-six and eight tenths percent of the students enrolled in dance classes completed the questionnaire. Each of the student's responses were coded and then categorized. Similar answers were grouped into sub-categories that were then placed under larger general categories. The percentages were calculated for the advanced, intermediate, and beginner levels under each sub-category.

This study answered the following research questions: 1) What are the life long benefits of dance training as perceived by mature students of dance? 2) Are the perceived benefits of dance training different for dancers of different levels of ability? 3) What makes dance a valuable option for physical fitness? and 4) Has dance training influenced students to include physical fitness in their lives?

The answers provided by the students fell under the three major categories of emotional, intellectual, and physical benefits. Dancers from advanced, intermediate and beginner levels reported benefits from all three categories. The differences between groups were in the degree of importance upon which they placed the emotional, intellectual, and physical benefits.

This study revealed the physical benefits of dance as well as the additional emotional and intellectual benefits. The answers provided by the study's participants showed that dance provides an emotional outlet in the form of stress relief and personal expression for many dancers. The physical benefits reported by the dancers included improved physical fitness, increased body awareness, and an increased motivation to maintain a higher fitness level. Intellectual benefits included the development of time management skills, concentration skills, and self-regulation. This study concludes that the combined physical, intellectual, and emotional benefits of dance can contribute to a person's overall health and well being.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Dance has been a part of human civilization for tens of thousands of years (Kraus, Hilsendager, & Dixon 1991, p. 27). Societies have used dance in areas of communication, physical fitness, self-expression, education, war, and as a part of religious ceremony. Dancing has played an integral roll in cultures throughout human history.

The evidence of dance as part of organized education dates back to the early 1800's. Kraus, Hilsendager, and Dixon (1991) state that:

The works of Froebel, the German founder of kindergartens and champion of education for girls and women, began to affect educational philosophy here [the United States]. Increasingly, the conviction developed that the schools were responsible for physical as well as academic growth for children. (p. 294-295)

Dance education was not just a part of education for women. The first recorded example of dance requirement for men was at the military academy of West Point in the early 1800's in the form of ballroom dance (Krause et al., 1991, p. 295).

The Problem

Children in today's society are not spending adequate time engaging in physical and creative activities. During the average school day children are required to spend 5-7 hours seated at a desk. In the past, after-school hours were spent in the pursuit of activities requiring physical and creative energies. Children were required to discover ways to entertain themselves. With the emergence of a computer-driven society, entertainment for children is increasingly provided for them in the form of television, movies, and video games.

As a result of the decrease in physical activity, obesity is increasing at a dramatic rate in America. Obesity among adults has increased nearly 60 percent since 1991.

“Physical inactivity and being overweight account for more than 300,000 premature deaths annually in the U.S., second only to tobacco-related deaths” (Mayo Clinic, 2001, p. 1). Because childhood obesity is one of the main precursors of predicting obesity in adulthood (Woodall & Epstein, 1983), there is a need for implementing good exercise habits in youth. If good exercise habits are established at a young age, physical activity becomes a natural part of life.

Dance is a viable option for physical conditioning. Sports are what most often come to mind when parents are searching for fitness activities for their children. However, dance training provides a conditioning option other than sports with the added opportunities for self-expression, communication, and gender integration. Physical activity that can contribute to intellectual pursuits (Blake, 1988) will benefit additional areas of a child’s mental and physical development.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine college dance students’ perceptions of the contributions of dance education to their lives. The current study examines the perspectives of dancers who have achieved various levels of dance abilities with emphasis on answering the following questions:

1. What are the life long benefits of dance training as perceived by mature students of dance?
2. Are the perceived benefits of dance training different for dancers of different levels of ability?

3. What makes dance a valuable option for physical fitness?
4. Has dance training influenced students to continue to include physical fitness in their lives?

Significance of Study

This study attempts to solidify the physical, intellectual, and emotional benefits revealed in past studies and begins to reveal the broad range of personal benefits students gain from dance education. Despite the presence of dance education in schools for the last two hundred years, many parents do not consider dance as an exercise option for children. People often perceive dance classes as a place for children to jump around a room in a fancy costume. “This misunderstanding of dance education derives from a cultural prejudice suffered by all of the fine arts, in which the visual and performing arts are perceived as purely performance and entertainment” (Koff, 2000, p. 1). This study helps to correct these misconceptions about dance and inform parents, educators, and administrators about the diverse benefits of dance.

Definition of Terms

Dance Training: Dance training refers to learning codified steps and motions in pursuit of a high level of technical achievement in a dance form (i.e., ballet, modern, jazz) (Koff, 2000, p. 2).

Dance Education: Dance education in this study incorporates the learning of codified steps and motions with the development of self-expression and interpretation through motion, with self-knowledge as its aim (Koff, 2000, p. 2).

Formal Dance Training: Formal dance training is participation in one or more dance classes a week that are structured in accordance with traditional dance teaching practices.

Obesity: This term is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher (Mayo Clinic, 2001).

The Performing Arts: In relation to this study the arts are music, theater, and dance (Eisner, 1999).

Phenomenological Approach: To develop an understanding of the subjects' experiences in dance.

Assumptions

This research study maintains the following assumptions:

1. College students are capable of providing valuable insight about the benefits of dance education.
2. There are essences of an individual's experience in dance that are common to the target population.
3. The participants will answer honestly.

My analysis of the statements made by the participating dancers should not be taken as the beliefs of the larger dance population. Although the outlook of one small group of dancers cannot represent the full scope of perceived benefits related to dance education, the students' responses may develop hypotheses for further studies.

CHAPTER II

EVALUATION OF LITERATURE

Introduction

While reviewing the literature related to the benefits of dance education three common themes emerged. The following evaluation of the literature is divided into three main sections discussing the physical, intellectual, and emotional benefits associated with dance education.

Physical Benefits of Dance Education

The most visible benefit of dance education is the development of the dancer's physique. Years of dance training produces the coveted dancer's body. For women, dance produces muscles that are taut, lean, and beautiful. For men, dance sculpts and defines the muscles while building the strength needed for lifting a 100 to 120 pound woman repeatedly during a two-hour rehearsal. While most dance students will not acquire the peak physical conditioning of a professional dancer, similar benefits can be obtained on a smaller scale.

In a study comparing women in athletics, dance, and the general college population, Evans and Norton (1985) examined body composition and body type of female dance majors and discovered the following results about the dancer's body:

Dancers were significantly lighter in body weight and leaner in body density, while having significantly less body fat than the general female college student. Dance majors exhibited significantly smaller skinfold thicknesses at the subscapular, suprailiac, and thigh sites, significantly smaller bitrochanteric, elbow, and knee diameters, and significantly smaller neck, biceps, and calf circumferences when compared to non-dancers. (p. 17-18)

Evans, Tiburzi, and Norton (1985) found that when compared to most athletes, dancers were lighter in body weight, lower in mean body weight, but higher in fat. These results could be attributed to their findings that “dancers had a significantly lower muscularity element when compared to non-dancers” (Evans et al., 1985). Dancers aspire to move gracefully with the appearance of effortlessness. The constant rapid changes in direction while jumping, leaping, turning, and running can be performed more efficiently and gracefully with lower body weight and lower muscle mass.

While body composition is of prime importance to a professional dancer, Vicario, Henninger, and Chambliss (2001) found body image to be of more immediate concern to adolescent dance students. In their study, the dancers were split into low and high dance efficacy groups. The level of efficacy did not produce a difference in body image, however, “girls with high dance efficacy reported feeling both more attractive at dance class and more attractive at school” (Vicario, Henninger, & Chambliss, 2001, p. 13).

The evidence related to the effect of greater dance experience on body image is conflicting. Although a positive relationship of dance experience and body image has been found in past research studies, Vicario and Chambliss (2001) did not find a significant relationship. The difference in results could be a result of the type of dance discipline used in the study. Lewis and Scannell (1995) found that experience in creative dance movement classes correlated positively with satisfaction in appearance, fitness, and body parts. The study conducted by Vicario and Chambliss (2001) did not reveal the type of dance the students were engaged in during the research. Even though some individuals have expressed concern over a prevalence of negative body image among dancers, the concern was not supported in the current research.

Dance as an outlet for releasing and channeling energy, was another less obvious result of dance education. Koff stated that children spend the majority of their weekdays seated in a chair or at a desk. Even some of America's favorite pastimes (i.e. sports, movies, concerts...) involve sitting for extended periods of time. Energy builds up in the body and needs to be released through physical activity. Excess energy can cause tension in the body, which over time produces detrimental effects on the mind and body. Dance is an excellent way to release energy in a productive atmosphere. While dancers use energy to perform movements, they can "shape this natural energy and need for expression into opportunities for communication and self-exploration" (Koff, 2000, p. 3).

Dance is not only an excellent energy releaser it is also great exercise. "Overweight in children and adolescents is generally caused by lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating patterns, or a combination of the two, with genetics and lifestyle both playing important roles in determining a child's weight" (Surgeon General.gov, 2002, p. 1). Exercise reduces the risk of obesity and the health conditions associated with it. As stated in the introduction, the epidemic of obesity in the United States is growing and is a critical public health concern (Mayo Clinic, 2001). Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the Center for Disease Control, stated that, "one critical answer to this problem is that we all must work together to help our children make physical activity a life-long habit" (CDC, 2002, p. 1).

An element of enjoyment must exist in an exercise program for most individuals to continue engaging in the activity. "Challenging, but not overwhelmingly difficult, tasks seem to provide the greatest satisfaction to those involved with physical exercise" (Vicario et al., 2001, p. 3). Adults enrolled in ballet classes at the Joffrey Ballet School

in New York City cited enjoyment as one of the main benefits of dance as an exercise option (Moss & Leopold, 1998). One 27 year old dance student stated that “Ballet is the perfect balance between aerobics (exercise) and yoga (soothing/focus-building) for me” and yet another claimed “Ballet is simply a more interesting and challenging form of exercise” (Moss and Leopold, 1998, p. 2-3). Positive experiences were powerful motivators that kept individuals focused and in pursuit of their fitness goals.

Intellectual Benefits of Dance Education

Some researchers attempt to justify the inclusion of arts courses in school curricula based on the contributions they make towards other subjects. Eisner (1999) stated:

We do the arts no service when we try to make their case by touting their contributions to other fields. When such contributions become priorities the arts become handmaidens to ends that are not distinctively artistic and in the process undermine the value of art’s unique contributions to the education of the young. (p. 10)

Using dance as a tool to develop skills for other gains does not allow students to achieve the full benefits that dance has to offer. Only full concentration in the discipline of dance will produce the optimum results. However, this is not to say that the benefits past research has found are useful only in a dance setting. Each of the skills is valuable in the study of dance, but may also benefit students in other pursuits in life. The current research found a variety of intellectual benefits associated with dance, including concentration, self-regulation, and problem solving.

Blake (1988) claimed, “if the dancer is to succeed, concentration skills are essential” (p. 7). Dancers are required to learn new movement patterns throughout class

and any lapse in concentration is obvious when the student attempts to perform the movements. Research has found that dancers develop an ability to concentrate for hours at a time (Blake, 1988). A typical dance class lasts one and one-half to two hours and the dancer is learning and repeating movements the entire time. In addition to concentration skills, Blake (1988) found that observational and analytical skills are developed. As dancers observed the movement sequences demonstrated by the teacher they had to simultaneously analyze the following elements of the movement: shape, spatial orientation, movement initiators, musical timing, texture, dynamic shading, phrasing, efficiency, and motivation. In an advanced class each of these elements would be observed, analyzed, and memorized in a few seconds (Blake, 1988). Dancers were learning to perform multiple tasks at one time. Blake (1988) concluded that the intellectual abilities a dancer develops are assets in pursuing other areas of academic interest.

Tennen, Oreck, Flores, Hayes, Ludwick, Meckley, and Rosner (1997) found dance developed self-regulating skills. They explain that:

Being self-regulated depends on four events: self-observation, standard setting, self-reaction, and self-efficacy. For students to become self-regulated, they need to monitor what they are doing, compare their progress to some internal standard, self-criticize, or self-praise, and have confidence in their skills.

Evidence was found that environment and instructional strategies were influential in the development of self-regulatory behaviors and “the arts environment inspires students to assume greater responsibility for their learning (Tennen, et al., 1997, p. 185). The four events described above coincided with Blake’s (1988) description of the processes of observing and analyzing the elements of movement sequences. In the New Horizons

project (Tennen, et al., 1997), at risk students who otherwise had low academic skills displayed self-regulating behaviors in dance class. The researchers found that if learning situations were similar students were able to transfer the self-regulating skills to academic classes. Additional skills that students were observed utilizing in arts classes were goal setting and self discipline (Tennen, et al., 1997). Students were motivated to take the time to practice on their own in order to achieve personal goals.

Wakefield (1989) found that problem solving techniques were not strongly associated with the performing arts. "In particular, proficiency in music and the performing arts may call for automatization of psychomotor skills more than adaptation or origination of performances" (Wakefield, 1989, p. 60-61). The complexities of psychomotor skills involved in high levels of dance performance require concentration on the immediate task. Engaging in problem solving would distract from the more important activity of performing.

The presence of problem solving skills was found, however, in the process of choreography. Problem solving, divergent thinking, and problem finding are all necessary skills in the art of creating dances. Tennen (et al., 1997) stated that "effective arts instruction encourages the development of unique individual strategies and multiple solutions to a problem" (p. 197). Wakefield (1989) defined divergent thinking as: finding open-ended solutions to a specific problem. When choreographers create a dance based on a preexisting story or piece of music they are engaging in divergent thinking. Problem finding involves a higher level of creativity and is defined by Wakefield (1989) as discovering or inventing a problem. Creating a dance based on original ideas would involve problem finding.

Emotional Benefits of Dance Education

Alter (1997) found the most common emotional benefits cited by a group of college students majoring in dance were love of dance, means of self-expression, makes them feel “good,” “high,” or “full,” sense of accomplishment, and emotional release. Performing gave the students a sense of accomplishment and the performance “high” was a prime motivator to continue dancing.

Stinson (1997) found that the word used most often by the students in her study to describe their dance classes was fun. Some students viewed fun as a way to just act crazy without trying to reach a specific goal while others viewed fun as an experience that was enjoyable and still had relevance to their lives.

In recent years young people have increasingly begun to release their anger and emotions violently. “In a typical year (1997), there were 4,493 suicides of young people between the ages of five and twenty-four: 701 females, 3,792 males (Hoff-Sommers, 2000, p.25-26).” If adolescents could find a constructive outlet for self-expression they may not feel inclined to choose destructive ways of expressing emotions. Students should be encouraged to search for what makes life meaningful and purposeful for themselves (Stinson, 1997).

Dance is a way for individuals to explore their inner feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Bond and Stinson (2000/01) conducted a study on the dance experiences of male and female children. Many of their comments were related to self-exploration. One high school student expressed need poignantly: “Everyone needs an escape...to help them find stuff in themselves that they never knew would come up and in dance you can find that”

(p. 64). One student summed up her feelings in a poem entitled “Being who I really am (or might become)”.

Dance is part of me.
A place where I can know myself.
I can do what I feel, and
My feelings expand.
A different side of me is expressed.
For 47 minutes I get to be myself.
My own right way.
I...am...creative. (p. 60-61)

Exploration of one’s personal feelings could help students find their purpose in life.

“This would focus not just on a future career, but on what makes life worth living”

(Stinson, 1997, p. 66).

Implications

In my review of literature I discovered that there is very little research on the subject of dance and in particular the benefits of dance. The major focus in the dance world is on teaching, choreographing, or performing. Very little energy is directed towards research and few of the studies that have been conducted are published in journals. Eisner (1999) found that many studies were making claims that did not have data to back the findings. There are numerous articles in print that provide valuable information on the contributions of dance; however, these articles are not formal research studies.

Limited research on the benefits of dance from the perspective of dancers has been conducted. The majority of the studies have employed adolescents as subjects and the studies on college students employed mainly dance majors. Information is needed regarding the benefits of dance from the perspective of young adult dancers of varying

ability who do not necessarily intend to pursue a career in dance. Additional information obtained from a broader population on the perceived benefits of dance would be beneficial to dance educators in attracting more students to their schools and to parents looking for activity options for their children.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Participants

The participants who took part in this study were college students currently enrolled in dance classes. I took my sample from the students enrolled in ballet, modern, tap, and jazz dance classes at a major University in the Southeast United States during the 2003 spring semester. The participants represented three levels of dance ability: beginning, intermediate, and advanced students. A gender imbalance was expected based on past enrollment in dance classes at the university. However, I included the data collected from male students since this gender imbalance is the norm in the dance world.

Selection of the sample was based on convenience sampling. I distributed the questionnaires to all dance classes at the university. My goal was to acquire a response rate of at least 70 percent to reduce the chances of bias. The sample collected was intended to represent a specific population of dance students in the Southeastern United States.

Instrumentation

An open-ended dance questionnaire (see Appendix B) and a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A) were administered to the participants. The open-ended dance questionnaire included questions designed to ascertain the students' thoughts on the benefits of dance education in their lives. The demographic questionnaire provided information on the dancers' backgrounds. The investigator personally designed the dance

questionnaire and the demographic questionnaire and they were deemed acceptable by the committee.

Procedure

This study is a combination of a qualitative study using a phenomenological approach to describe the participants' experiences in the area of dance education, and a quantitative study using percentages to compare the differences between advanced, intermediate, and beginner levels. The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to develop an understanding of the subjects' life-world. The goal of my study was to reveal the individuals' "world of immediate experience" (Johnson & Christensen, 2000, p. 315). The open-ended Dance Questionnaire allowed me to collect the subjects' perceptions in their own words, revealing a deeper knowledge of their personal meanings.

The use of a demographic questionnaire to collect background information provided information on the dancer's age, dance level, and past training. It revealed the differences in answers between beginning, intermediate, and advanced students on the open-ended dance questionnaire. It was not possible to categorize the open-ended questionnaires by class because; scheduling conflicts often result in classes with students of varying dance abilities.

Following the approval of my thesis proposal I submitted the human subjects application to the department and university IRB committee. After approval from the IRB, I approached the dance classes during regularly scheduled class time. I explained the purpose of the study and distributed the questionnaires. I informed the students that participation in the study was not required and that should they could choose to discontinue at any time there questionnaires would be destroyed. The students were also

assured anonymity in their participation. By filling out the questionnaires the students gave consent to participate in the study. I was available for debriefing after the collection of data to answer any questions or concerns the participants may have had regarding the research.

Analysis

The data collected in the study was analyzed by coding the data into common categories (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Similar answers were grouped into sub-categories that were then placed under larger general categories. The percentages for the three levels; advanced, intermediate, and beginner, were calculated for each sub-category. The final stage of data analysis was to identify the essence of the experience by utilizing the participants own words and descriptions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of dance education on the lives of students enrolled in dance classes at a large university in the Southeastern United States. An open-ended dance questionnaire was given to students present in dance classes during regularly scheduled class time. Since many students were enrolled in more than one dance class it was not possible to determine the actual number of students enrolled in the dance department. Therefore the number of students that filled out the dance questionnaire administered by the Dance Program during the spring semester was used to calculate the response rate for the study. Eight-six and eight tenths percent of the students enrolled in dance classes completed the thesis questionnaire. Out of the 165 students that completed the thesis questionnaire, 46 were advanced students, 57 were intermediates, and 62 were beginners.

A demographic questionnaire was given to the students to determine gender, age, academic major, academic minor, current dance classes, dance background, and level of expertise. The information obtained from the demographic questionnaire was used to place each student in a level of beginner, intermediate, or advanced. The level of class in which a student was enrolled was not necessarily an accurate indication of their true level of ability. Many students were enrolled in lower level classes due to scheduling conflicts. Each student's personal evaluation of his or her level of ability was studied closely, since many beginning students did not possess an educated understanding of the expectations of a dancer at each level. Students who classified themselves as an intermediate with just

one to three years of training were placed at the beginning level. Students who danced for five to seven years at an early age, but then stopped participating in dance classes until they entered college were also placed at the beginning level. In the case of students with thirteen or more years of experience who placed themselves at an intermediate level, I followed their decision. A student with this amount of experience should possess an accurate understanding of dance levels. Many factors such as, inconsistent training, frequent breaks from training, incorrect or poor instruction, and injuries could place a dancer of many years at an intermediate level. The advanced level included students who classified themselves as advanced and had at least ten years of consistent training.

Chapter four will present the findings in three sections addressing the research questions stated on page two of the report. The three sections include: a) benefits of dance training, b) differences between levels of ability, and c) the effects of dance on physical fitness. Each section will include the results from any of the questionnaire's twelve questions which relate to that topic. Questions appearing under more than one of the three sections will include only the information relevant to that immediate category.

The open-ended dance questionnaire allowed the participants to interpret each question within the context of their experience. The purpose of allowing individual interpretation was to obtain a more personal understanding of the students' thoughts. Although the questionnaires provided a wide range of responses, the answers to each question fell naturally into general categories which the researcher defined and divided into more specific sub-categories. Some of the general categories are common to all of the questions while others are present in just a few of the questions. It should be noted that the students responded with multiple answers to each question and their answers fell

into multiple categories. Therefore the percentages of the sub-categories do not add up to 100 percent.

The Benefits of Dance Training

Question 1: Why did you begin taking dance classes?

Table 1 on page 22 illustrates the results of question one.

Question one was included to determine what motivates people to enroll in a dance class. During the coding process for question 1, it became clear that the answers provided by the students made it necessary to divide them into two groups: 1) those that began dancing at a young age and 2) those who began dancing after the age of twelve. Students who took classes at a young age, quit dancing, and began dancing again after the age of twelve provided answers that placed them into both groups.

Group 1: Students who began dancing at a young age. Group 1 included the sub-categories of 1) Influence of Others, 2) Desire, 3) Benefits, and 4) Activity.

Category 1: Influence of Others. Influence of Others was Group 1's most common reason for beginning dance classes. Twenty-one and seven tenths percent of the advanced students, 52.6 % of the intermediate students, and 22.5 % of the beginner students began dancing because their parents enrolled them in classes. Following the lead of an older sibling or of a friend were other reasons given.

Category 2: Desire. A desire to dance was the second highest sub-category with 15.2 % of the advanced students, 26 % of the intermediate students, and 14.5 % of the beginner students claiming a desire to take classes. Under this group, students recalled having "a love of movement," "the dream of one day becoming a ballerina," and some thought dance just "looked fun."

Table 1**Question 1: Why did you begin taking dance classes?**

	Percentages		
Category	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Group 1			
Influence of Others	21.7	52.6	22.5
Desire	15.2	26	14.5
Benefits	2.1	5.2	0
Activity	0	1.7	3.2
Group 2			
Personal Desire	0	14	62.9
Fitness	0	10.5	22.5
Skill Development	0	10.4	25.7
Emotional Benefits	0	8.7	8
Fulfilling Credit Hours	0	0	9.6

Category 3: Benefits & Category 4: Activity. Under the sub-category, c)

Activity, 0% of the advanced students, 1.7% of the intermediate students, and 3.2% of the beginner students stated that they began dancing to have “a hobby,” “an activity,” or “something to do after school.” Two and one tenths percent of the advanced students, 5.2% of the intermediate students, and 0% of the beginner students provided answers that were placed under the sub-category d) Benefits.

Group 2: Students who began dancing after age twelve. None of the advanced students were included in Group 2. The sub-categories for Group 2 were 1) Personal Desire, 2) Fitness, 3) Skill Development, 4) Emotional Benefits, and 5) Fulfilling Credit Hours.

Category 1: Personal Desire. Fourteen percent of the intermediate students and 62.9% of the beginner students provided answers under the category a) Personal Desire.

One student wrote, “I have always loved ballet, and have always been drawn to it.”

Additional responses were “fun,” “a love for dance,” “missing it [dance],” “curiosity,” and to “try something new.” Many beginner students were not allowed to take dance as a child and college provided them with the opportunity.

Category 2: Fitness & Category 3: Skill Development. The categories of b) Fitness and c) Skill Development were close in their percentages. Fitness was the purpose of 10.5 % of the intermediates and 22.5% of the beginners while Skill Development was the purpose of 10.4% of the intermediates and 25.7% of the beginners. Popular answers provided under c) Skill Development were a “better understanding of basic body mechanics” and making oneself “more marketable in a career” such as theater or music.

Category 4: Emotional Benefits & Category 5: Fulfilling Credit Hours. A smaller number of students provided responses under d) Emotional Benefits and e) Fulfilling Credit Hours. Emotional Benefits were given by 8.7% of the intermediates and 8% of the beginners and Fulfilling Credit Hours was cited by 0% of the intermediates and 9.6% of the beginners.

Question 2: Why do you continue to dance?

Table 2 on page 24 illustrates the results of question two.

The general categories that emerged in question two were 1) Emotional Benefits, 2) Fitness, and 3) Skill Development.

Category 1: Emotional Benefits. The sub-categories under Emotional Benefits were a) Enjoyment, b) Stress Relief, c) Expression, d) “Part of Me,” and e) Social Benefits. The majority of the answers dealt with the positive feeling dancing produced.

Table 2

Question 2: Why do you continue to dance?

Category	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Emotional Benefits			
Enjoyment	67.3	70.1	64.5
Stress Relief	26	28	20.9
Expression	17.3	14	0
“Part Of Me”	15.2	10.5	4.8
Social Benefits	13	1.7	9.8
Fitness	36.9	29.8	54.8
Skill Development			
Personal Accomplishment	17.3	12.2	19.4
Skill Development	8.7	21	32.1

Enjoyment of dance was cited by 67.3% of the advanced group, 70.1% of the intermediate group and 64.5% of the beginner group. Dancers also used such phrases as “the beauty of dance,” “a passion,” “fun exercise,” “happiness,” and “feeling alive” as reasons to dance. One dancer wrote, “It’s so independent, I guess. It just gives me this feeling of freedom and joy.” Many students shared this combined benefit of enjoyment and stress relief. Twenty-six percent of the advanced students, 28% of the intermediate students, and 20.9% of the beginner students felt that dance provided them with stress relief. In dance class the students felt that they could “focus on me,” “release energy,” “relax,” “escape,” and “release emotions.” A dancer claimed that, “The emotional release involved in dance can be matched no where else.”

Fifteen and two tenths percent of the advanced students, 10.5% of the intermediate students, and 4.8% of the beginner students felt that dance had become a

“part of them.” In other words, they could not stop dancing and felt incomplete without dance in their lives. As one student stated, “Very simply, I can’t stop. Even if I stopped taking class, stopped calling myself a dancer, I could not stop dancing. It’s sort of an involuntary response to music and sometimes, even silence.”

The sub-categories e) Social Benefits and c) Personal Expression had varying degrees of importance at the different levels. Social benefits such as “friendships” and “being part of a team” were expressed by 13% of the advanced students, 1.7% of the intermediate students, and 9.8% of the beginner students. Personal Expression was a benefit to 17.3 % of the advanced students, 14% of the intermediate students, and 0% of the beginner students.

The responses for sub-categories a) Enjoyment, b) Stress Relief, c) Personal Expression, and d) “Part of Me” support the findings of Bond and Stinson (2000/01) and Alter (1997) who studied the emotional benefits of dance. The review of literature did not reveal any studies relating to the findings under the sub-category e) Social Benefits.

Category 2: Fitness. The second general category of Fitness was a reason to continue dancing for 36.9% of the advanced students, 29.8% of the intermediate students, and 54.8% of the beginner students. They said that dance helped them develop strength, flexibility, a toned body, and energy while having fun. One student stated, “Dance is also a really fun form of exercise that allows me to forget about things that are bothering me.” Dancers felt that one of the unique benefits of dance was that while they were exercising they were also creating art and this allowed the dancer to release mental and physical tensions simultaneously. Authors Moss and Leopold (1999) received similar comments in their interviews with adult ballet students.

Category 3: Skill Development. The final general category for question two was Skill Development with the sub-categories a) Personal Accomplishment and b) Skill Development. Personal Accomplishment was a reason given by 17.3% of the advanced students, 12.2% of the intermediate students, and 19.4% of the beginner students to continue dancing. Dance provided them with “improvement,” “motivation,” “talent,” “a challenge,” and “self-esteem.” The skills mentioned by the students ranged from intellectual, to physical, to personal improvement. Eight and seven tenths percent of the advanced students, 21% of the intermediate students, and 32.1% of the beginner students believed dance provided them with benefits such as “learning,” “marketability in their career,” “body awareness,” “grace,” “discipline,” and “focus.” The responses “improvement” and “motivation” under sub-category a) Personal Accomplishment, support the findings of Tennen (et al., 1997) who indicated that dance developed self-regulating skill. Under the sub-category b) Skill Development, the responses “body awareness,” “discipline,” and “focus” support the findings of Blake (1988) who stated that dancers were required to perform multiple tasks at one time.

Question 3: How do you feel when you are dancing?

Table 3 on page 27 illustrates the results of question three.

The answers to question three were placed into the three general categories of 1) Positive Emotions, 2) Self-improvement, and 3) Negative Emotions.

Category 1: Positive Emotions. The category of Positive Emotions received the highest percentage of responses. The sub-categories under Positive Emotions were a) Stress Relief, b) “Feels Great,” and c) Personal Expression. Seventy and seven tenths percent of the advanced students, 47.4% of the intermediate students, and 51.6% of the

Table 3**Question 3: How do you feel when you are dancing?**

Category	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Positive Emotions			
Stress Relief	71.7	47.4	51.6
“Feels Great”	36.9	64.9	51.6
Personal Expression	26	12.2	12.9
Self-Improvement			
Self-satisfaction	17.3	22.8	24.2
Concentration	19.6	21	19.4
Improvement	8.7	17.5	27.4
Negative Emotions			
Stress	13	7	11.2
Negative Self- image	0	3.5	12.9

beginner students feel a release from the stress and tension of their lives while in a dance class. They reported feeling “relaxed,” “relieved,” “no negatives,” “calm,” “peaceful,” and “free.” In the words of three students: “Nothing from the outside can touch me once I walk through those studio doors,” “I feel as if nothing else matters at that moment I’m dancing,” and “I feel like I’m in another world. A world where I can focus on myself and not feel that I’m being selfish.”

Under the sub-category b) “Feels Great,” 36.9% of the advanced students, 64.9% of the intermediate students, and 51.6% of the beginner students reported feeling “good.” Students used such expressive words as “energized,” “incredible,” “vivacious,” “exhilarated,” “great,” “invigorated,” and “euphoric” to describe their experience.

The last sub-category under Positive Emotions was c) Personal Expression. A greater percent of advanced dancers, 26%, reported feeling expressive when dancing,

while only 12.2% of intermediate and 12.9% of beginner students felt expressive. Those students who experienced dance as a form of expression felt “creative,” “artistic,” “poetic,” and “passionate.”

The responses under the general category, Positive Emotions, reflect the findings in the research by Alter (1997) and Bond and Stinson (2000/01) who studied the emotional benefits of dance. Both studies revealed that dance made students feel “good” and “high”; it was “fun” and it was an emotional release.

Category 2: Self-improvement. The second highest general category, Self-improvement, included the sub-categories a) Self-satisfaction, b) Concentration, and c) Improvement. Dancing made 17.3% of the advanced students, 22.8% of the intermediate students, and 24.2% of the beginner students feel pride in themselves as a person. They felt “confident,” “special,” “beautiful,” “strong,” “accomplished,” “powerful,” and “important.” One dancer stated, “I feel that I have something special with my dance ability.” Dance gave some of the students a reason to feel proud.

Nineteen and six tenths percent of the advanced students, 21%, of the intermediate students, and 19.4% of the beginner students felt focused. They were “in control,” “concentrated,” “centered,” “disciplined,” and “driven” when dancing. Dance required the students to focus on their movements and improve concentration skills. If a dancer’s concentration wanders, they will make mistakes. In the words of one student, dance “exercises another part of my brain for awhile.”

A feeling of improvement was reported by 8.7% of the advanced students, 17.5% of the intermediate students, and 27.4% of the beginner students. “I feel energized and

open to pushing myself.” Students felt they were “productive,” “challenged,” “helping their body,” “learning,” and “unstoppable.”

The responses in sub-category a) Self-satisfaction supported the findings of Alter (1997) and Bond and Stinson (2000/01). Sub-categories b) Concentration and c) Improvement supported the findings of Tennen (et al., 1997) and Blake (1988).

Category 3: Negative Emotions. Negative emotions expressed by students fell under the two sub-categories of a) Stress and b) Negative Self-image. Feelings of “frustration,” “nervousness,” “confusion,” “tension,” and “feeling exposed” were reported by 13% of the advanced students, 7% of the intermediate students, and 11.2% of the beginner students. However, the majority of these students felt these emotions only part of the time. One student stated, “sometimes I feel frustrated or confused, but with practice, those feelings change into more confident ones,” and another felt “frustrated, but when I get it a jolt of energy.”

Under the general category, Negative Emotions, 0% of the advanced, 3.5% of the intermediate, and 12.9% of the beginners had a negative self-image while dancing. They felt “awkward,” “stupid,” and “embarrassed” when unable to execute steps properly and some possessed a negative body image. None of the studies reviewed related to the topic of negative emotions.

Question 4: How do you feel when you are dancing in front of an audience?

Table 4 on page 30 illustrates the results of question four.

The three general categories for question four were 1) Negative Emotions, 2) Positive Emotions, and 3) Concentration. Although the answers to question four fell under three separate categories, when performing, the students experienced many

Table 4**Question 4: How do you feel when you are dancing in front of an audience?**

Category	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Negative Emotions			
Nervousness	39.1	42.1	45.1
Negative Self-image	0	5.2	4.8
Positive Emotions			
Excitement	36.9	49.1	24.2
Enjoyment	30.4	35.1	12.9
Self-satisfaction	52.2	22.8	16
Stress-Relief	8.7	7	6.5
Concentration			
Internalized	13	12.2	9.8
Connected to Audience	4.3	15.8	8

different emotions simultaneously. Many students would experience emotions from all three categories during a performance. Negative emotions almost always gave way to positive emotions after the initial phase of nervousness.

Category 1: Negative Emotions. The main category of Negative Emotions included the sub-categories a) Nervousness and b) Negative Self-image. Nervousness occurred in 39.1% of the advanced students, 42.1% of the intermediate students, and 45.1% of the beginner students. Students reported feeling “scared,” “vulnerable,” “overwhelmed,” “insecure,” and “pressured during a performance. However, these feelings did not appear to last long for most students. One student stated, “I’m nervous at first but then I just feel excited, ecstatic, and free.” Another student felt, “nervous right before I go onstage, but totally confident and ‘in-the-zone’ when I’m out there.” Some

students' believe the nervous energy helped them perform better. Zero percent of the advanced, 5.2% of the intermediate, and 4.8% of the beginner students experienced feelings of "stupidity" or "embarrassment." None of the literature reviewed related to the comments under the sub-category of negative emotions.

Category 2: Positive Emotions. The category of Positive Emotions included the sub-categories, a) Excitement, b) Enjoyment, c) Self-satisfaction, and d) Stress Relief. Thirty-six and nine tenths percent of the advanced students, 49.1% of the intermediate students, and 24.2% of the beginner students gave responses that fit under the sub-category of a) Excitement. The students used a broad vocabulary of adjectives to describe the intense feelings they experienced when performing. Students were "exhilarated," "electric," "energized," "overjoyed," "ecstatic," "elated," "euphoric," and "on top of the world." One student said that, "There is nothing in the world that compares to performing." Many students mentioned the "adrenaline rush." In the words of one of these students, "Feeling the heat of a spotlight and the eyes of the audience on me is the adrenaline rush every dancer lives for."

Responses under the sub-category b) Enjoyment included "happy," "good," "fun," and "wonderful." The category included responses from 30.4% of the advanced students, 35.1% of the intermediate students, and 12.9% of the beginner students. One student expressed enjoyment in a list of adjectives, "excited, strong, brave, fearless, alive....it's the most fun I have ever had."

The sub-category c) Self-satisfaction included 52.2% of the advanced students, 22.8% of the intermediate students, and 16% of the beginner students. Students reported feeling "important," "powerful," "proud," "confident," "appreciated," "accomplished,"

and like a “superstar.” The following quotes show the students’ feelings of accomplishment: “I love to perform and when I dance in front of an audience it is the biggest thrill and feeling of accomplishment,” “It’s a chance to show people something I’m good at,” and “ after its over, I’m proud of myself for doing it.”

The final sub-category under Positive Emotions, d) Stress Relief, included 8.7% of advanced students, 7% of intermediate students, and 6.5% of beginner students. The percentage of students whose statements are represented in this category were much lower than the percentage in the sub-categories of a) Excitement, b) Enjoyment, and c) Self-satisfaction. Feelings of “relaxation,” “freedom,” and “peace” were less common than “excitement” and the “adrenaline rush.”

The responses under sub-categories a) Excitement and c) Self-satisfaction support the findings of Alter (1997) who found that performing gave the students a sense of accomplishment and a performance “high.”

Category 3: Concentration. The third general category, Concentration, included the sub-categories a) Internalized and b) Connected to Audience. Under the sub-category a) Internalized, a feeling of total concentration was reported by 13% of the advanced students, 12.2% of the intermediate students, and 9.8% of the beginner students. These students were focused on their movements and felt completely “in the moment.” They reported feeling “immersed,” “consumed,” “centered,” and “aware.”

Under the sub-category b) Connected to Audience, 4.3% of the advanced students, 15.8% of the intermediate students, and 8% of the beginner students reported feeling connected to the audience. Two types of connections were experienced by students. A sense of sharing was felt by some students. These students believed they

were “sharing the beauty of dance” or “educating the audience” about dance. One of these students reported, “I feel as though I’m sharing something beautiful.” Other students felt they had a reciprocal relationship with the audience. In the words of two students, “I feed off of their [the audience] energy, so depending on the audience, some performances and competitions are more fun than others,” and “They [the audience] provide energy, and I try to give them energy, and it just builds for an incredibly positive experience.” None of the studies reviewed related to the findings in sub-categories a) Internalized and b) Connected to Audience.

Question 5: What are the most positive results of your dance experience?

Table 5 on page 34 illustrates the results of question five.

The responses to question five were placed in the general categories of 1) Physical Benefits, 2) Emotional Benefits, 3) Self-improvement, and 4) Relationships.

Category 1: Physical Benefits. The general category, labeled Physical Benefits, was divided into two sub-categories, a) Fitness and b) Body Awareness. Forty-three and four tenths percent of the advanced students, 31.6% of the intermediate students, and 53.2% of the beginner students believe dance keeps them physically fit. Dance developed a “toned body,” flexibility, strength, and energy and promoted health and weight loss by providing them with an activity. One student claimed, “It gives me more energy and a more positive attitude toward exercising.”

Under the sub-category, b) Body Awareness, 15.2% of the advanced students, 22.8% of the intermediate students, and 27.4% of the beginner students felt dancing contributed to their understanding of body mechanics. In the words of a student, “I’ve learned to appreciate my body and know the limits of what it can and cannot do.”

Table 5**Question 5: What are the most positive results of your dance experience?**

	Percentages		
Category	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Physical Benefits			
Fitness	43.4	31.6	53.2
Body Awareness	15.2	22.8	27.4
Emotional Benefits			
Self-Satisfaction	21.7	12.2	14.5
Stress-Relief	21.7	17.5	17.7
Personal Expression	17.3	15.8	11.2
Enjoyment	10.9	19.3	16.1
Self-Improvement			
Personal Growth	39.1	26.3	32.3
Skill Development	26	29.8	38.7
Opportunities	13	14	4.8
Relationships	45	17.5	6.5

According to the students who provided responses in this category, dance promoted “grace,” “coordination,” “balance,” “posture,” and “control over one’s body.” None of the studies reviewed addressed the effects of dance on physical fitness and body awareness.

Category 2: Emotional Benefits. In the second general category students felt that emotional benefits were a positive results of dancing. The student’s answers were divided into four sub-categories. The categories were a) Self-satisfaction, b) Stress Relief, c) Personal Expression, and d) Enjoyment. Twenty-one and seven tenths percent of the advanced students, 12.2% of the intermediates students, and 14.5% of the beginner students gained self-satisfaction. They expressed feelings of “pride,” “accomplishment,”

“self-esteem,” and “positive body image.” Some dancers were encouraged by receiving awards and recognition. “Having people say that I danced well, or they enjoyed seeing me dance” was one dancer’s most positive result of dancing.

In the sub-category of b) Stress relief, positive results were reported by 21.7% of the advanced students, 17.5% of the intermediate students, and 17.7% of the beginner students. Students were able to “relax,” “focus on me,” “rejuvenate,” “escape,” “release energy,” or “develop a healthy mind.” One student was able to “release a lot of negative energy that may be surrounding me at that time.”

Under Emotional Benefits, c) Expression was the third sub-category. Seventeen and three tenths percent of the advanced students, 15.8% of the intermediate students, and 11.2% of the beginner students found that dance allowed them to “develop their artistic abilities” and encouraged “personal expression,” “self-discovery,” and “uniqueness.”

The final sub-category under Emotional Benefits was d) Enjoyment and included 10.9% of the advanced students, 19.3% of the intermediate students, and 16.1% of the beginner students. The dancers stated that dance provided “a good environment,” “happiness,” “memories,” “fun,” and “a love.” In the words of one dancer, “I have found a passion in life; most people wait a lifetime and never find that.”

The findings under the general category, Emotional Benefits, support the research of Alter (1997) who studied the emotional benefits of dance majors. The responses under sub-categories c) Expression and d) Enjoyment support the findings of Bond and Stinson (2000/01).

Category 3: Self-improvement. The third general category from question five, Self-improvement, was divided into a) Personal Growth, b) Skill Development, and

c) Opportunities. Thirty-nine and one tenths percent of the advanced students, 26.3% of the intermediate students, and 32.3% of the beginner students considered a) Personal Growth to be a positive result of their dance experience. Students reported experiencing benefits such as “success,” “progress,” “self-control,” and “discipline” and some believed dance “shaped them as a person,” “kept them out of trouble,” and “made them more adventurous in trying new activities.” In their own words: “I learned to have self-control, be disciplined, and control daily movements,” and “I’ve also found out a lot about myself as a person through my dance experiences and journeys.”

Under the general category of Self-improvement, 26% of the advanced students, 29.8% of the intermediate students, and 38.7% of the beginner students felt a positive result of dancing was b) Skill Development. A few of the skills listed by students were “leadership,” “art appreciation,” “structure,” “time management,” “communication skills,” and “memorization.” Some students also believed that dance “improved their grades,” “motivated them,” and enabled them to “learn more quickly.” One dancer said a positive result was, “seeing how far I have come in one semester, and thinking how far I could go” and another felt developing dancing skills gave them “the feeling that I have something that can’t be taken away – my body and its ability to dance.”

Self-improvement led to d) Opportunities for 17.3% of the advanced students, 21% of the intermediate students, and 6.4% of the beginner students. Some of the opportunities included “fulfilling a dream,” “performing,” “competing with a team,” “traveling,” “teaching,” and “new career options.” One individual felt dancing had given her the opportunity to share their love of dance with others and stated that, “Just to have one person moved by a piece I performed is a positive result to me.”

Several of the responses under sub-categories a) Personal Growth and b) Skill Development support the findings of Tennen (et al., 1997) who found that dance developed self-regulating skills and Blake (1988) who pointed out that dancers were required to perform multiple tasks at one time.

Category 4: Relationships. Relationships, the fourth general category, was not divided into sub-categories. Forty-five percent of the advanced students, 17.5% of the intermediate students, and 6.5% of the beginner students counted relationships as one of the positive results of their dance experience. Dance gave them “friends,” “a place to belong,” “a connection with a sibling,” and “a chance to be part of a company.” Some of these relationships provided them with connections that led to new opportunities. The following response by one dancer included all of the four general categories: “I have found a passion in life; most people wait a lifetime and never find that. Obviously, it helps to keep me in shape, I meet a new person everyday, and it’s fun to be able to do something most other people cannot.” None of the studies reviewed discussed the topic of relationships.

Question 6: What are the most negative results of your dance experience?

Table 6 on page 38 illustrates the results of question six.

It can not be assumed that all experiences in dance are positive. Like any activity dance will have some negative results for people. An individual must weigh the positives and the negatives when making the decision to participate or continue participating. Five general categories emerged when the answers were examined. The categories were labeled 1) Self-criticism, 2) Physical Ailments, 3) Environment, 4) Time issues, and 5) None.

Table 6**Question 6: What are the most negative results of your dance experience?**

Category	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Self-criticism			
Inadequacy	17.3	21	27.4
Negative Body Image	19.6	1.7	8
Failure	2.6	3.5	6.5
Physical Ailments	30.4	43.8	33.9
Environment	13	14	4.8
Time Issues			
Time Commitment	23.9	10.5	3.2
Not Dancing Enough	6.5	8.8	8
None	4.3	10.5	20.9

Category 1: Self-criticism. The general category of Self-criticism was divided into three sub-categories entitled a) Inadequacy, b) Negative Body Image, and c) Failure.

Seventeen and three tenths percent of the advanced students, 21% of the intermediate students, and 27.4% of the beginner students had feelings of inadequacy while dancing.

Some of the negative results expressed by the dancers were “dissatisfaction with technique,” “slow progress,” “inability to master a step,” “messaging up,” “feeling self-conscious,” “low self-esteem,” and “body limits.” Three of the dancers experienced the following: “I lack the flexibility and strength to advance as quickly as I’d like to,” “I can get angry with myself when I don’t do something right,” and “[I’m] upset when I don’t feel I’m working hard enough in order to measure up.”

Negative Body Image was the second sub-category identified under the general category of Self-criticism. Of the students suffering from a negative body image 19.6%

were advanced students, 1.7% were intermediates, and 8% were beginners. Outside pressures were occasionally a factor in the problem. As one student said, “There was a lot of pressure put on me in high school to look a certain way and to fit a certain image. I was almost to the point of anorexia.” The responses under negative body image in this study conflict with the findings of Vicario, Henninger, and Chamblis (2001) who found that level of efficacy did not produce a difference in body image. They also conflict with the findings of Lewis and Scannell (1995) who found that experience in creative dance correlated positively with satisfaction in appearance and body parts. The difference in findings could be a result of the style of dance studied. Vicario, Henninger, and Chamblis (2001) did not reveal the style of dance the students were engaged in during their study and the students in this study were not involved in creative dance classes. The remaining sub-categories under Self-criticism, and the general categories of Physical Ailments, Environment, Time Issues, and None, did not relate to any of the studies reviewed.

The final sub-category under Self-criticism, c) Failure, included comments from 2.6% of the advanced students, 3.5% of the intermediate students, and 6.5% of the beginner students. The students reported “losing,” “bad performances,” and “not making the audition” as negative results of their dance experience.

Category 2: Physical Ailments. The most common negative result reported by the students was physical pain. The general category, Physical Ailments, was not divided into sub-categories. Thirty and four tenths percent of the advanced students, 43.8% of the intermediate students, and 33.9% of the beginner students mentioned such problems as pain, injuries, soreness, blisters, and bruises. However, even though dancers

considered these problems to be negative, the drawbacks were not enough to cause them to quit dancing. One student wrote, “My body becomes stiff because of my old injuries and sometimes ballet aggravates them, but it’s worth it.” Another student held a similar opinion, “I don’t know if it’s making my knees worse, but I’d rather keep dancing and get surgery rather than stop altogether.” The dancers’ decisions were not always the best for their bodies.

Category 3: Environment. The general category, Environment, was not divided into sub-categories. Some students, 13% of the advanced, 14% of the intermediate, and 4.8% of the beginners, experienced a negative environment in dance. They were faced with “competitiveness,” “intimidation,” “negative attitudes,” “bad facilities,” “hateful dancers,” and “negative teachers.” One student felt, “Some people... will be overly judgmental and try to look down on everyone who may not have the same skills.” Another student reported disliking, “the things I see some dance teachers do to their students, like encouraging them to smoke to lose weight.”

Category 4: Time Issues. The Time Issues fell under the sub-categories of a) Time Commitment and b) Not Dancing Enough. Commitment to dance requires many hours in the studio and 23.9% of the advanced students, 10.5% of the intermediate students, and 3.25% of the beginner students found it to be a negative result of their dance experience. They reported that “the time commitment was hard on relationships,” “it [dance] caused them to have only one focus,” and “it [dance] required a sacrifice in their social lives.” However, although the time commitment for some dancers appeared to be negative initially, it resulted in a positive experience. One dancer wrote, “We

always had practice on the weekends and they were mandatory (even after prom and homecoming). That became somewhat stressful, but in the end it was worth it.”

The second sub-category under Time Issues was b) Not Dancing Enough. Six and five tenths percent of the advanced students, 8.8% of the intermediate students, and 8% of the beginner students wished they had danced more. Some dancers wished they had “not quit dancing at a young age” or that they had “started dancing earlier” while others wished they “had time to take more classes.” One dancer believed, “I could be a much better dancer if I would have kept it up from a young age...I lack technique in many areas.”

Category 5: None. The final general category, None, included 4.3% of the advanced students, 10.5% of the intermediates, and 20.9% of the beginners. The dancers in this category claimed to have had no negative results from their dance experiences.

Question 9: Have you ever choreographed? If so, how does the process of choreographing make you feel?

Table 7 on page 42 illustrates the results of question nine.

In the first part of question nine the data revealed that 71.7% of the advanced students, 77.2% of the intermediate students, and 48.4% of the beginner students had Choreographed. Three general categories emerged from the responses to how choreographing made them feel. The categories were labeled 1) Positive Emotions, 2) Negative Emotions, and 3) Concentration.

Category 1: Positive Emotions. Three sub-categories, a) Accomplishment, b) Good, and c) Expressive, were under the general category, Positive Emotions. Thirty-six and nine tenths percent of the advanced students, 33.3% of the intermediate students,

Table 7

Question 9: Have you ever choreographed? If so, how does the process of choreographing make you feel/

	Percentages		
Category	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Percentage that had Choreographed	71.7	77.2	48.4
Positive Emotions			
Accomplishment	36.9	33.3	20.9
Good	8.7	22.8	16.1
Expressive	8.7	19.3	16.1
Negative Emotions			
Frustrated	23.9	17.5	17.7
Stressed	13	19.3	8
Concentration	8.6	10.4	3.2

and 20.9% of the beginner students expressed feelings of accomplishment when choreographing. The student's descriptions included words like "proud," "smart," "powerful," "important," "rewarded," and "satisfaction." Like question four, the answers to question nine tended to apply to more than one general category. Most of the student's feelings of accomplishment were preceded by feelings of frustration. Many quotes were similar to the following: "It makes me stressed out while I'm working on it because I'm a perfectionist, but I feel such an incredibly proud feeling when I see it on the dancers."

Under the sub-category, b) Good, 8.7% of the advanced students, 22.8% of the intermediate students, and 16.1% of the beginner students expressed feelings of enjoyment. They recalled feeling "joy," "happiness," "thrilled," "excited," and "fun."

The final sub-category under Positive Emotions was c) Expressive. It included responses from 8.7% of the advanced students, 19.3% of the intermediate students, and 16.1% of the beginner students. Words such as “open,” “creative,” “inspired,” and “free” were used to describe the dancers’ experiences. One dancer said “I felt free to speak my own thoughts and control my own actions.” Two other dancers wrote, “The feeling of creativity that seems to hit you all at once is awesome” and “It’s less about getting something right and more about creating something.”

Category 2: Negative Emotions. The second general category was Negative Emotions which included two sub-categories, a) Frustrated and b) Stressed. Frustration with the process of choreography was expressed by 23.9% of the advanced students, 17.5% of the intermediate students, and 17.7% of the beginner students. Words such as “confusion,” “struggle,” “overwhelmed,” “lost,” “dissatisfied,” and “unsure” appeared throughout their responses. The problem of deciding which ideas to include in the choreography was expressed in the following words: “I have all these ideas and it’s hard to use them all as well as narrow them down.” However, as stated earlier, frustration was generally combined with feelings of accomplishment. One dancer wrote, “[I feel] frustrated, but good. There are times when it flows and times when I sit and wonder why I’m trying.”

The second sub-category under Negative Emotions b) Stressed, included 13% of the advanced students, 19.3% of the intermediate students, and 8% of the beginner students. Words such as “uncomfortable,” “pressured,” “consumed,” “self-conscious,” and “nervous” were used to describe their anxiety. The dancers also reported several of these feelings when waiting to learn the audience’s reaction to their creation.

Category 3: Concentration. The general category Concentration was not divided into sub-categories. Eight and six tenths percent of the advanced students, 10.4% of the intermediate students, and 3.2% of the beginner students reported feeling “in control,” “in tune with myself,” “immersed,” and “challenged” while choreographing. The following quote once again expressed feelings from more than one category: “It makes me feel in control, but also anxious because I don’t know what others will think of my movement.”

The topic of choreography was not addressed in any of the studies reviewed.

Question 10: Have you ever improvised? If so, describe the experience and how it made you feel.

Table 8 on page 45 illustrates the results of question ten.

Question ten was a two part question. The first part of the question revealed that 78.3% of the advanced students, 89.5% of the intermediate students, and 50% of the beginner students had improvised. The students’ descriptions of the experience were placed under the general categories of 1) Positive Emotions, 2) Negative Emotions, and 3) Concentration.

Category 1: Positive Emotions. The general category, Positive Emotions, included three sub-categories. The sub-categories were labeled a) Free, b) Enjoyment, and c) Accomplishment. Under the category, a) Free, 25% of the advanced students, 29.4% of the intermediate students, and 19.4% of the beginner students felt “liberated,” “alive,” “wild,” “spontaneous,” “open,” “adrenaline,” “creative,” “expressive,” and “emotional” while improvising. Three of the students wrote the following quotes: “[I feel] free when I allow my movement to take over my process, rather than my mind”; “Sometimes it’s almost a spiritual experience”; “It’s a very free experience, an escape

Table 8

Question 10: Have you ever improvised? If so, describe the experience and how it made you feel.

Category	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Percentage that had Improvised	78.3	89.5	50
Positive Emotions			
Free	25	29.4	19.4
Enjoyment	30.6	19.6	19.4
Accomplishment	5.6	2	6.5
Negative Emotions			
Stressed	30.6	19.6	22.6
Bad	13.9	17.6	6.5
Frustration	22.3	15.7	0
Concentration			
Focused	8.4	5.9	0
Connected	5.6	5.9	9.7

from the rigidity of life”; and “As an expression of inner feeling in the moment, with the body, it has little parallel.”

The sub-category, b) Enjoyment, included comments of 30.6% of the advanced students, 19.6% of the intermediate students, and 19.4% of the beginner students. The students used the words “Fun,” “great,” “excited,” “rush,” “energized,” and “wonderful” to describe their feelings when improvising. One student wrote, “It was exciting to do something so individually expressive.”

The final sub-category under Positive Emotions was c) Accomplishment. Five and six tenths percent of the advanced students, 2% of the intermediate students, and 6.5% of the beginner students reported feelings of accomplishment when improvising.

The words “proud,” “confident,” “empowered,” and “productive” were used to describe the experience.

The studies by Stinson (1997) and Bond and Stinson (2000/01) revealed the feelings that students experienced while dancing. Improvisation was used in many of the dance classes the students attended in these two studies and their responses were similar to the findings under the general category of Positive Emotions in this study.

Category 2: Negative Emotions. Negative Emotions, the second general category, included the three sub-categories a) Stressed, b) Bad, and c) Frustration. Thirty and six tenths percent of the advanced students, 19.6% of the intermediate students, and 22.6% of the beginner students reported feelings of tension and stress while improvising. Words such as “nervous,” “on the spot,” “vulnerable,” “panicked,” “self-conscious,” “scared,” “tense,” and “uncomfortable” were used by the students to describe their feelings during improvisation. However, feelings of stress were often mixed with positive emotions. In the words of one student, ‘It was scary, but very exciting at the same time.’

The sub-category, b) Bad, included statements from 13.9% of the advanced students, 17.6% of the intermediate students, and 5.5% of the beginner students. Improvising made these students feel “angry,” “embarrassed,” “awkward,” “stupid,” “funny,” “weird,” and “disappointed.” Some students felt they were not good at improvisation and would “get embarrassed thinking I might do something stupid.”

The final sub-category under Negative Emotions was labeled c) Frustration. The comments provided by beginner students did not fit under this category. Twenty-two and three tenths percent of the advanced students and 15.7% of the intermediate students felt that improvising was “difficult,” “unorganized,” and “a struggle.” Students reported

feeling “flustered,” “lost,” “confused,” and “unsure.” An inability to “let go” was mentioned by several students. One student admitted that improvising was “difficult for me sometimes because I am so use to structured dancing like ballet” and another stated, “I sometimes have trouble ‘letting go’- It’s one of the hardest elements of dance.” None of the studies reviewed addresses the topic of negative emotions.

Category 3: Concentration. The general category, Concentration, represented comments by a small number of students. It was divided into the sub-categories, a) Focused and b) Connected. Eight and four tenths percent of the advanced students, 5.9% of the intermediate students, and 0% of the beginner students provided answers under the sub-category, a) Focused. The students felt “centered,” “in tune,” “concentrated,” and “challenged” by the experience of improvising. Five and six tenths percent of the advanced students, 5.9% of the intermediate students, and 9.7% of the beginner students provided answers in the sub-category, b) Connected. Some of the dancers felt a connection to the group like they were “moving as one unit.” Other dancers felt a connection to the music. One student wrote, “I feel like it’s the true dance of the music I’m dancing to.” The topic of concentration in relation to improvisation was not discussed in any of the studies reviewed.

Question 11: How has dance contributed to your life?

Table 9 on page 48 illustrates the results of question eleven.

The research revealed that dance contributed to the students’ lives in the general categories of 1) Physical Fitness, 2) Emotional Benefits, 3) Self-improvement, and 4) Opportunities.

Table 9

Question 11: How has dance contributed to your life?

Category	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Physical Fitness			
Fitness	21.7	15.8	27.4
Body Awareness	4.3	12.2	14.5
Hobby	4.3	1.7	6.5
Emotional Benefits			
Self-satisfaction	30.4	7	16.1
Personal Expression	13	10.5	20.9
Stress-relief	15.2	12.2	24.2
Relationships	15.2	7	11.2
Enjoyment	23.9	22.8	24.2
“Part of Me”	13	14	3.2
Self-improvement			
Personal Growth	34.8	40	22.6
Skill Development	19.5	33.3	19.2
Opportunities	8.7	5.2	8

Category 1: Physical Fitness. Under the General category, Physical Fitness, three sub-categories emerged. The sub-categories were labeled a) Fitness, b) Body Awareness, and c) Hobby. Twenty-one and seven tenths percent of the advanced students, 15.8% of the intermediate students, and 27.4% of the beginner students' answers were placed into the category of a) Fitness. Dancers noticed improvement in their energy, health, flexibility, strength, and endurance.

An increase in b) Body Awareness was noted by 4.3% of the advanced students, 12.2% of the intermediate students, and 14.5% of the beginner students. The dancers' "coordination," "balance," "grace," and "knowledge of body mechanics" improved with dance training. Four percent of the advanced students, 1.7% of the intermediate students,

and 6.5% of the beginner students responses were included in the final sub-category,

c) Hobby. Dance provided these students with “an activity.”

Category 2: Emotional Benefits. The general category, Emotional Benefits, included six sub-categories labeled a) Self-satisfaction, b) Personal Expression, c) Stress Relief, d) Relationships, e) Enjoyment, and f) “Part of Me.” The sub-category, a) Self-satisfaction, included responses from 30.4% of the advanced students, 7% of the intermediate students, and 16.1% of the beginner students. The dancers reported that dance made them feel “good about themselves.” Dance contributed to their lives by providing “recognition,” “accomplishment,” “confidence,” “a positive body image,” and “improved self-esteem.” One dancer felt that, “More than anything else, dance has helped with self-confidence.”

The sub-category, b) Expression, included responses from 13% of the advanced students, 10.5% of the intermediate students, and 20.9% of the beginner students. The contributions of dance included “self-expression,” “a creative outlet,” and “a new outlook.” Students were able to “be creative and be myself onstage or in class.”

Stress Relief was the third sub-category under Emotional Benefits and included comments from 15.2% of the advanced students, 12.2% of the intermediate students, and 24.2% of the beginner students. Dance helped to “keep life balanced,” “maintain sanity,” “release energy,” and “release emotions.” It also provided students with “an escape,” “an outlet,” “relaxation,” and “stress relief.” Dancers provided the following quotes: “It [dance] has become a vital component of my mental and physical well being,” “Dance is also a release for me and has helped me through a lot of difficult times in my life,” and “Dance has been a constant in a life filled with uncertainties.”

In the sub-category, d) Relationships the associations developed through dance were an important contribution in 15.2% of the advanced students, 7% of the intermediate students, and 11.2% of the beginner students. Many students made friends in dance and enjoyed “sharing a common bond” with their dance friends. Other students valued the teachers in their lives.

Under the sub-category, e) Enjoyment, 23.9% of the advanced students, 22.8% of the intermediates, and 24.2% of the beginners believed the enjoyment of dance was an important contribution to their lives. The words “fun,” “enjoy,” “pleasure,” “joy,” “entertainment,” and “memories” were used by the students to describe the benefits of dance. One dancer stated, “It keeps me happy and focused.” Dance helped others appreciate life and made life more interesting; “It gave me a passion, something to love and yearn to improve on.”

The final sub-category under Emotional Benefits, f) “Part of Me,” included comments from 13% of the advanced students, 14% of the intermediate students, and 3.2% of the beginner students. The students in this category felt that dance was not only a contribution, but had become a “part of who they were” as an individual. In the words of one student, “It [dance] has become part of my life. It is something that is so special to me; I love every moment that I dance.”

All of the sub-categories, excluding Relationships, supported the findings of Alter (1997), Stinson (1997), and Bond and Stinson (2000/01). Alter’s study on college dance majors revealed that dance provided the students with self-expression, enjoyment, emotional release, accomplishment, and a love of dance. The quotes provided by the participating students in the studies by Stinson (1997) and Bond and Stinson (2000/01)

were similar to the findings in this study. None of the studies reviewed related information on the topic of relationships.

Category 3: Self-improvement. The third general category, Self-improvement, was divided into the sub-categories a) Personal Growth and b) Skill Development. Thirty-four and eight tenths percent of the advanced students, 40% of the intermediates, and 22.6% of the beginners believed dance had contributed to their personal growth. Students believed that because of dance, they were more “well-rounded,” “confident,” “humble,” “focused” and a “better student.” Dance “shaped them as a person” and made some students a “better person.” One student stated, “I believe it [dance] helped me grow as a person.” Other students wrote, “It’s [dance] made me a more confident, creative woman who believes in my ability to achieve,” “Made me a better person physically and mentally,” and “It has allowed me to recognize my strengths and weaknesses.”

Under Self-improvement, 19.5% of the advanced students, 33.3% of the intermediates, and 19.2% of the beginners provided answers in the sub-category, b) Skill Development. Students’ believed that “discipline,” “determination,” “responsibility,” “time management,” “focus,” “motivation,” “leadership,” and “knowledge” were some of the skills that dance contributed to their lives. In the words of one student, “I have greater discipline than most of my peers and I can stay with almost any task I start.” Another student believed, “I don’t think I would make as good of grades in school because it [dance] taught me time management.” Although none of the studies reviewed addressed the topic of personal growth, the findings in the sub-category b) Skill Development support the research of Tennen (et al., 1997) and Blake (1988).

Category 4: Opportunities. The final general category of question eleven, Opportunities, was not divided into sub-categories. Eight and seven tenths percent of the advanced students, 5.2% of the intermediate students, and 8% of the beginner students felt the opportunities that dance brought into their lives were an important contribution. Students reported having the opportunity to perform and travel and some students found a career in dance. None of the studies reviewed discussed the topic of opportunities.

Question 12: Why will dance continue/discontinue to be a part of your life?

Table 10 on page 53 illustrates the results of question twelve.

Question twelve was divided into two groups. Group 1 contained students that intended to discontinue dancing and Group 2 contained students that wished to continue dancing. Advanced dancers were not included in Group 1.

Group 1. Five and three tenths percent of the intermediate students and 10% of the beginner students reported that they would discontinue dancing. The answers provided by Group 1 were placed in the general categories of 1) Inconvenience and 2) Physical Injury.

Category 1: Inconvenience & Category 2: Physical Injury. Under the category Inconvenience, “time constraints,” “difficulty finding classes,” and “expense” were problems mentioned by 3.5% of the intermediate and 4.8% of the beginner students. Physical Injuries were cited by 1.7% of the intermediate dancers as a reason to discontinue dancing. The reasons that cause dancers to quit dancing were not researched by any of the studies reviewed.

Group 2. The general categories that emerged in Group 2 were labeled 1) Emotional Benefits, 2) Physical Benefits, 3) Intellectual Benefits, and 4) Love of

Table 10

Question 12: Why will dance continue/discontinue to be a part of your life?

Group 1: Will Discontinue Dancing			
	Percentages		
Category	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Inconvenience	0	3.5	4.8
Physical Injury	0	1.7	0
Group 2: Will Continue Dancing			
Category	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Emotional Benefits			
Stress-relief	8.7	10.5	4.8
Self-satisfaction	2.1	5.2	1.6
Personal Expression	2.1	3.5	8
Physical Benefits	4.3	21.1	17.7
Intellectual Benefits			
Improvement	4.3	7	14.5
Sharing	6.4	7	19.3
Love of Dance			
Love of Dance	41.3	61.3	64.5
Necessity	39.1	28.1	16.1

Dance.

Category 1: Emotional Benefits. Emotional Benefits contained the three sub-categories, a) Stress Relief, b) Self-satisfaction, and c) Personal Expression. Eight and seven tenths percent of the advanced students, 10.5% of the intermediates, and 4.8% of the beginners felt that stress relief was a reason to continue dancing. Dance allowed them to “relax,” “let loose,” and “keep their life balanced.” It also provided them with “an escape,” “an outlet,” and “therapy.” One dancer wrote, “Dancing has taught me that there are always ways to relax your self, and to feel better about life”.

Under the sub-category, b) Self-satisfaction, 2.1% of the advanced students, 5.2% of the intermediate students, and 1.6% the beginner students believed that the pride they felt when dancing was a good reason to continue dancing. They reported that dance was “personally satisfying” and “rewarding.” It gave them a “positive self-image” and “confidence.”

Expression was one of the reasons for 2.1% of the advanced students, 3.5% of the intermediate students, and 8% of the beginner students to continue dancing. Dance gave them an opportunity to express themselves physically and emotionally. One dancer explained that dance was, “a very positive outlet for creativity, energy, and frustration.”

Category 2: Physical Benefits. The general category of Physical Benefits was not divided into sub-categories. Four and three tenths percent of the advanced students, 21.1% of the intermediate students, and 17.7% of the beginner students included fitness as one of the reasons to continue dancing. Dancing “kept them active” and “encouraged a healthy lifestyle.” In the words of one student, “Dance is also just an easy way for me to stay in shape because it’s something I enjoy doing and you have to be in good physical

condition in order to improve.” Authors Moss and Leopold (1999) received similar comments in their interviews with adult ballet students at the Joffrey Ballet.

Category 3: Intellectual Benefits. The general category, Intellectual Benefits, was divided into the two sub-categories of a) Improvement and b) Sharing. Improvement was a reason to continue for 4.3% of the advanced students, 7% of the intermediate students, and 14.5% of the beginner students. They cited reasons such as, “the challenges,” “self-betterment,” “marketability,” “performing,” “learning,” and “good for me.

The sub-category, b) Sharing, included 6.4% of the advanced students, 7% of the intermediates, and 19.3% of the beginners. The opportunity for sharing their talent and love of dance encouraged the students to continue dancing. One dancer wrote, “Someday I would like to be good enough to teach children how to do something that I love: Dance.” The responses in the general category, Intellectual Benefits, were not found in the studies reviewed.

Category 4: “Love of Dance”. For question twelve the highest percentages of students fell under the general category, “Love of Dance.” The two sub-categories were labeled a) Love of Dance and b) Necessity. Forty-one and three tenths percent of the advanced students, 61.3% of the intermediate students, and 64.5% of the beginner students continued dancing because of their “love of dance.” Students expressed feelings of “enjoyment,” “fun,” and “joy.” They wrote that dancing made them “feel good,” “they loved moving,” “dance made them happy,” and “dance has much to offer.” Three dancers expressed the enjoyment they received from dancing in the following quotes:

I love the feeling of being on the dance floor, and just dancing my heart out ... Out of all the sports I have played, dance is the most personally satisfying and rewarding ... I don't consider myself an advanced dancer and there are certainly things that I cannot do, but you don't have to be professional to enjoy moving your body.

The second sub-category, b) Necessity, contained the most expressive quotes provided in the questionnaire. Thirty-nine and one tenths percent of the advanced students, 28.1% of the intermediates, and 16.1% of the beginners stated that their reason to continue dancing was because it had "become a part of their identity." These students felt that dance was "like an addiction for them," "it made them feel complete," and they "could not stop." The following quotes reveal the importance of dance in the lives of these students: "Dance is me & I am a dancer," "Without it [dance], I am not myself," and "I will dance until I can't move anymore and watch dance til I can't see. It describes me." The final quote expressed how this dancer felt that dance was a "part of me" and how she viewed everyone as a dancer:

Because it's [dance] not part of my life, its part of me. It's in the way we walk, and talk. It's in the way our eyes move. It's in the way we address people and they address us. It has to do with the way you perceive yourself and how other's perceive you. It's confidence and love.

The comments in the general category, "Love of Dance," support the findings of Alter (1997), Stinson (1997), and Bond and Stinson (2000/01).

The Differences Between Levels of Ability

A significant difference in the dancers' overall experience was found in only three of the questions. The majority of questions revealed similar answers from the three levels in most of the categories. Differences that appeared were found in the percentages of students from each level that included responses under individual sub-categories.

Questions one, nine, and ten revealed the most significant differences between the advanced, intermediate, and beginner students. Question one revealed that 53.2% of the beginner students were over the age of twelve when they began dancing compared to 14% of the intermediate students and 0% of the advanced students. This finding was not unexpected as most dancers who continue dancing from an early age would have reached a level higher than beginner by the time they entered college.

The differences in Questions nine and ten were also expected. Question nine revealed that 51.6% of the beginner students had never choreographed compared to 28.3% of the advanced students and 27.8% of the intermediate students. Question ten found that 50% of beginner students had never improvised compared to 21.7% of the advanced students and 14% of the intermediate students. The majority of beginner students (82.3%) reported having danced for less than five years. These students would not have been exposed to as many opportunities and styles of dancing as the intermediate and advanced students who had more years of dance experience. Although varying degrees of experience were reported by the advanced, intermediate, and beginner students, similar answers were still provided by the three different levels under questions one, nine, and ten.

Question 1: Why did you begin taking dance classes?

As mentioned previously, question one was divided into the following groups: Group 1 - Students who began dancing at a young age and Group 2 – Students who began after the age of twelve. Any differences found between advanced, intermediate, and beginner students within the sub-categories were in the number of students within each sub-category.

In Group 1, a differentiation was found in the percentage of students who began dancing because of the influence of another person. A greater percentage of intermediate students (52.6%) began dancing as a result of outside influences than advanced (21.7%) and beginner (22.5%) students. Another difference was found under the sub-category, Benefits. Two and one tenths percent of the advanced students and 5.2% of the intermediate students began dancing at a young age because of the possible benefits associated with dancing. None of the beginner students listed Benefits as a reason they began dancing. Very few, 1.7% of the intermediate students and 3.2% of the beginner students began dancing to have an activity and even fewer, 0% of the advanced students, provided answers under this sub-category.

The most significant difference in Group 2 was between the intermediate and beginner students in the sub-category, Desire. A much higher percentage of beginner students than intermediate students began dancing at an older age because of a desire to dance. The beginner students fell into two categories, those who danced when they were young and then returned to dance after the age of twelve and those who began dancing after the age of twelve. Under the category, Desire, 53.8% of the beginner students who returned to dance at an older age and 78% of beginner students who began dancing over the age of twelve listed a desire to dance as a reason they began dancing. Comparatively, 14% of the intermediate students began dancing for the same reason. None of the advanced dancers provided answers that fit under the category, Desire.

Question 2: Why do you continue to dance?

Differences were found between levels in the sub-categories Personal Expression and "Part of Me" and in the general categories Fitness and Skill Development. Under

Personal Expression, the percentages were similar between the advanced (17.3%) and intermediate (14%) but 0% of the beginner students listed personal expression as a reason to dance. The percentages became progressively lower with each level in the sub-category, "Part of Me." The top percentage was 15.3% for advanced then lowered to 10.5% for intermediate and down to 4.8% for beginner students. The declining numbers could be attributed to the dancers' level of involvement. The longer an individual participates in an activity the more attachment they tend to feel towards that activity.

Under Fitness, the percentage of the beginner students (54.8%) who counted fitness as a reason to dance was higher than the percentages for advanced (36.9%) and intermediate (29.8%) students. The final category with differences between the levels was Skill Development. The percentage of students who listed skill development as one of their reasons to dance got progressively higher as the levels became lower. The numbers began at 8.7% for advanced students then rose to 21% for intermediates and finally 32.1% for beginner students. The declining numbers at upper levels could be attributed to the students changing focus as they become more advanced. While beginner students are still working on mastering the basic skills and techniques of dance, intermediate and advanced students have better control over their technique which allows them to focus more on the development of style and expression in their movement.

Question 3: How do you feel when you are dancing?

Five of the sub-categories Stress Relief, Personal Expression, "Feels Great," Negative Self-image, and Improvement showed differences between levels. Stress relief while dancing was experienced by a greater number of advanced (71.7%) than intermediate (47.4%) and beginner (51.6%) students. Similar results, 26% of advanced,

12.2% of intermediate, and 12.9% of beginner, were found under the sub-category, Personal Expression. The opposite was found under the sub-category, "Feels Great." The advanced were lowest at 36.9% compared to 64.9% of intermediate, and 51.6% of beginner students.

The number of students that felt a Negative Self-image while dancing got progressively lower with each level. The numbers moved from 12.9% of the beginner students, to 3.5% of intermediate, and finally 0% of advanced students. These results would indicate an increase in self-confidence with an increase in skill level. A similar progression in the numbers was found in the sub-category, Improvement, where the advanced was lowest at 8.7% followed by an increase to 17.5% of intermediate, and finally 27.4% of beginner students. More beginner students reported having a bad self-image while dancing, but at the same time, the beginner students experienced more feelings of improvement while dancing.

Question 4: How do you feel when you are dancing in front of an audience?

The four sub-categories, Negative Self-image, Enjoyment, Self-satisfaction, and Connected to Audience, showed differences among the levels. Although a few of the intermediate (5.2%) and beginner (4.8%) students felt a negative self-image while performing, 0% of the advanced dancers reported feeling bad about themselves during a performance. Under the sub-category, Enjoyment, the percentages were similar for advanced (30.4%) and intermediate (35.1%) and lower for beginner students (12.9%). A significant difference between levels was found under the sub-category, Self-satisfaction. More advanced students (52.2%) felt pride when performing than intermediates (22.8%) and beginners (16%). The last sub-category under question four, Connected to Audience,

found a greater number of intermediates (15.8%) felt a connection to the audience than advanced (4.3%) and beginner (8%) students. This difference could be explained by the students' comfort with their level of ability. While beginner students tend to be more concerned with performing the choreography correctly and avoiding mistakes, intermediate students have moved beyond this phase and are better able to devote more of their energy towards interacting with the other dancers and the audience. Most advanced performers have learned to dance and perform for themselves and their concentration is focused more towards the artistic development of the choreography.

Question 5: What are the most positive results of your dance experience?

The sub-categories, Self-satisfaction and Opportunities and the general category Relationships, showed differences between the levels. A higher percentage of advanced students (21.7%) than intermediates (12.2%) and beginners (14.5%) believed that self-satisfaction was one of the positive results of dancing. An even larger gap was found between the levels under the general category, Relationships. Forty-five percent of the advanced students compared to 17.5% of the intermediates and 6.5% of the beginners reported that the relationships they developed were a positive result of their dance experience. Under the sub-category, Opportunities, the percentages were similar for advanced (13%) and intermediate (14%) students and lower for beginner students (4.8%). The results for Relationships and Opportunities could be related to the students' amount of experience. Beginner students may not have been involved in dance long enough to develop relationships and opportunities.

Question 6: What are the most negative results of your dance experience?

The sub-categories Negative Body Image, Negative Environment, and Time Commitment, and the general category None produced differences in levels. Nineteen and six tenths percent of advanced dancers reported negative body image while only 1.7% of intermediate and 8% of beginner students had negative feelings about their bodies. Fewer beginner students (4.8%) reported experiencing a negative dance environment than advanced students (13%) and intermediate students (14%). The percentages got progressively lower under the sub-category, Time Commitment. Twenty-three and nine tenths percent of the advanced, 10.5% of the intermediate, and 3.2% of the beginner students reported that the time commitment required in dance was a negative experience. This difference is likely related to the amount of time that each level dedicates to dance. The time requirement increases with a dancer's level of ability. In the sub-category, None, the percentages got progressively higher. Four and three tenths percent of the advanced, 10.5% of the intermediate, and 20.9% of the beginner students had not experienced any negative results in dance. The amount of dance experience could be the factor in the level differences. The longer a student dances the possibility they will encounter a negative experience becomes greater.

Question 7: How has dance influenced your physical fitness?

Four sub-categories, Motivation, Relieves Tension, Enjoyment, and Body Awareness, showed differences among the levels. In the sub-category, Motivation, it was found that 31.5% of intermediate students believed that dance motivated them to stay in shape compared to 17.3% of advanced and 20.9% of beginner students. Only the beginner students (3.2%) reported that dance influenced their physical fitness by relieving

tension. More advanced (8.7%), than intermediate (0%) and beginner students (1.6%), reported that dance influenced their physical fitness by making it more enjoyable. The final sub-category under question seven showed that a lower number of advanced (6.5%), than intermediate (21%), and beginner students (14.5%) thought dance increased their body awareness. Whereas advanced students have had a good sense of body awareness for a number of years it may be a more recent development for the intermediate and beginner students and they are therefore more conscious of the increased awareness.

Question 9: Have you ever choreographed? If so, how does the process of choreographing make you feel.

As stated earlier there was a significant difference between the advanced and intermediate students and the beginner students. Fewer Beginner students had experience choreographing. However, the answers from beginner students with choreographic experience were similar to the advanced and intermediate in all but two of the sub-categories. Good and Expressive were the sub-categories with differences among the levels. Twenty-two and eight tenths percent of the intermediate students and 16.1% of the beginner students reported feeling good when they choreographed compared to only 8.7% of advanced students. The results of the sub-category, Expressive, were similar with 19.3% of the intermediate, 16.1% of the beginner, and only 8.7% of the advanced feeling expressive while choreographing. The results may be attributed to the student's expectations of their work. Advanced students often set much higher standards for their work than beginner and intermediate students.

Question 10: Have you ever improvised? If so, describe the experience and how it made you feel.

It was noted earlier that there was a significant difference in the number of beginner students who had improvised compared to the advanced and intermediate students. Fewer beginner students had experienced improvising. The answers from the beginner students who had improvised were similar to the advanced and intermediate answers in half the sub-categories. The sub-categories that showed differences in levels were Enjoyment, Bad, Frustration, and Concentration. A greater percentage of the advanced (30.6%) than the intermediate (19.6%) and beginner (19.4%) students enjoyed the experience of improvising. The number of students that felt bad while improvising was similar for advanced (13.9%) and intermediate (17.6%) students while the number of beginner students (6.5%) was lower. Under the sub-category, Frustrated, none of the beginner students reported feelings of frustration while 22.3% of the advanced and 15.7% of the intermediate students were frustrated by their improvisation experience. Similar results were found under the sub-category, Concentration. None of the beginner students, 8.4% of the advanced, and 5.9% of the intermediate students felt focused while improvising.

Question 11: How has dance contributed to your life?

The different levels' responses were similar in all but three of the sub-categories. In the sub-category, Body Awareness, the intermediate (12.2%) and beginner (14.5%) levels had similar percentages while the advanced (4.3%) level had a lower percentage. More students in the advanced level (30.4%) believed dance had given them self-satisfaction compared to 16.1% of the beginners and 7% of the intermediates. Thirteen

percent of the advanced, 14% of the intermediate, and only 3.2% of the beginner students felt that dance had become a part of them. The results for Self-satisfaction and “Part of Me” could be explained by the students’ amount of experience. A higher level of ability produces a higher level of personal satisfaction and the longer an individual is involved in an activity the more likely they are to develop a personal connection to that activity.

Question 12: Why will dance continue/discontinue to be a part of your life?

Differences in the levels were found in four sub-categories and two general categories. The sub-categories were Necessity, Love of Dance, Improvement, and Sharing, and the general categories were Physical Benefits and Inconvenience. The percentages progressively decreased in the sub-category, Necessity. The highest level was advanced at 39.1%, then intermediate at 28.1%, and beginners at 16.1%. This result is expected as advanced dancers have committed the greatest amount of time to dance and would likely have a greater connection to dance than intermediate and beginner dancers and likewise intermediates would have a greater connection than beginners. Under Love of Dance, the intermediate and beginner levels had similar percentages of 61.3% and 64.5% while the advanced level had a lower percentage of 39.1%. Under the general category, Physical Benefits, Fitness influenced 21.1% of the intermediate and 17.7% of the beginner students to continue dancing while only 4.3% of the advanced listed fitness as a reason to continue. A greater number of beginner students (14.5%) than intermediate (7.5%) and advanced (4.3%) gave Improvement as a reason to continue dancing. Sharing had similar results with 19.3% of beginner and only 7% of intermediate and 6.4% of advanced students listing sharing as a reason to continue dancing. Under the general category, Inconvenience, 0% of the advanced, 3.5% of the intermediate, and

4.8% of the beginner students intended to discontinue dancing because of the inconvenience.

Discussion of the Findings in; The Differences Between Levels of Ability

The results of the questionnaire showed similarities as well as differences among the levels. Each level contributed answers to almost every category, but different levels contributed more in different categories. Although all three levels expressed enjoyment while dancing, the advanced and intermediate levels reported more answers in the emotional areas of enjoyment, such as stress relief and personal expression while the beginners' answers related more often to the fun and "feels good" aspects of enjoyment. Beginner and intermediate students considered fitness to be a positive result of dance more often than advanced. When asked specifically how dance influenced physical fitness the answers were similar for all three levels, but the majority of advanced students did not include fitness as a priority in their responses to other questions. Beginner and intermediate students also listed skill development more often than advanced students. Advanced students were more involved with the emotional results of dance such as stress relief and personal expression while the beginner students more often focused on the physical rewards. Intermediate students were in touch with both the emotional and the physical.

The Effects of Dance on Physical Fitness

Question 7: How has dance influenced your physical fitness?

Table 11 on page 67 illustrates the results of question seven.

The responses to question seven fell into the general categories of 1) Positive Results, 2) Negative Results, and 3) A Source of Fitness.

Table 11

Question 7: How has dance influenced your physical fitness?

Category	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
Positive Results			
Helps Injuries	2.1	1.7	1.6
Relieves Tension	0	0	3.2
Body Awareness	6.5	21	14.5
Enjoyment	8.7	0	1.6
Negative Results			
Not Much	2.1	3.5	4.6
Less than Others	2.1	0	1.6
Physical Injury	0	1.7	1.6
A Source of Fitness			
Keeps Fit	82.6	87	80.6
Motivation	17.3	31.5	20.9
Awareness	10.8	1.7	4.8

Category 1: Positive Results. Positive Results was divided into the sub-categories

a) Helps Injuries, b) Relieves Tension, c) Body Awareness and d) Enjoyment. A small percentage of students, 2.1% of the advanced, 1.7% of the intermediates, and 1.6% of the beginners felt that dance improved their physical fitness by helping heal their injuries.

Only beginner level students provided answers under the sub-category,

b) Relieves Tension. Three and two tenths percent of the beginner students felt that

The sub-category, c) Body Awareness included 6.5% of the advanced students, 21% of the intermediate students, and 14.5% of the beginner students. Dance helped these students develop “balance,” “good posture,” “coordination,” “grace,” and “a good body image.”

The final sub-category, d) Enjoyment, included 8.7% of the advanced, 0% of the intermediate, and 1.6% of the beginner students. Dance gave these students an alternate and “fun” way to exercise. In the words of one student: “I really do hate all other forms of exercise like running and sports and stuff.” Some students enjoyed the challenge dance provided and one of these students stated that, “I think that I love it [dance] because I have been challenged physically in dance.” Dance is an option for students who do not enjoy sports or traditional forms of exercise. The interviews with adult ballet students conducted by Moss and Leopold (1999) revealed similar findings. The remaining sub-categories under Positive Results were not discussed in the studies reviewed.

Category 2: Negative Results. Three sub-categories emerged under the general category, Negative Results. They were labeled a) Not Much, b) Less Than Others, and c) Physical Injury. Two and one tenths percent of the advanced students, 3.5% of the intermediate students, and 4.6% of the beginner students did not feel that dance had any influence on their physical fitness. Two and one tenths percent of the advanced students, 0% of the intermediate students, and 1.6% of the beginner students felt that dance contributed less to their physical fitness than other forms of physical activity. One student wrote that dance did not contribute, “much for weight loss or keeping in running/swimming shape, but only because I only dance around three to four hours a week.” In the final sub-category, c) Physical Injury, 0% of the advanced students, 1.7% of the intermediate students, and 1.6% of the beginner students felt that injuries sustained during dance class had a negative impact on their physical fitness.

Category 3: A Source of Fitness. The majority of answers for question seven fell under the general category, A Source of Fitness. The sub-categories were a) Keeps Fit, b) Motivation, and c) Awareness. The highest percentage of students provided answers under the sub-category, a) Keeps Fit. Eighty-two and six tenths percent of the advanced students, 87% of the intermediate students, and 80.6% of the beginner students felt that dancing helped them maintain a good fitness level. Students reported that dance developed “flexibility,” “cardiovascular fitness,” “strength,” “agility,” “endurance,” “muscle control,” and “a toned body.” It made them “feel better,” “increased metabolism,” “elongated muscles,” and “helped maintain proper weight.” One student wrote, “[Dance] helped me really focus on core strength and balance which improves my other areas of fitness all around”. Another student claimed, “Dance has helped me to stay more active.”

Under the sub-category, b) Motivation, 17.3% of the advanced students, 31.5% of the intermediate students, and 20.9% of the beginner students felt dance encouraged them to be more active. Some students believed that dance motivated them to eat healthier. One student claimed that, “It [dance] has made me want to stay in shape more and eat right. I want to have a dancer’s body so it motivates me to achieve that.”

The final sub-category under A Source of Fitness was c) Awareness. Dance made 10.8% of the advanced students, 1.7% of the intermediate students, and 4.8% of the beginner students more aware of their physical fitness. In the words of one student, “I think it has contributed to my constant awareness of the importance of physical fitness.”

The studies reviewed did not address the subject of physical fitness in relation to the physical contributions dance provides.

Question 8: What other forms of physical fitness do you engage in regularly?

Table 12 on page 70 illustrates the results of question eight.

The majority of students participated in other forms of physical fitness outside of dance. Only 6.5% of the advanced students, 5.2% of the intermediate students, and 4.8% of the beginner students reported that they did not engage in other forms of physical fitness. The most common forms of exercise were jogging, working out, sports, and walking. Fifty-four and three tenths percent of the advanced students, 93% of the intermediate students, and 67.7% of the beginner students worked out. They listed weights, aerobics, abdominals, cardio, strength training, body sculpting, push-ups, and pilates as forms of working out. Jogging was listed by 45.7% of the advanced students, 50.9% of the intermediates, and 43.5% of the beginners. Thirty-four and eight tenth percent of the advanced students, 52.6% of the intermediates, and 51.6% of the beginners engaged in sports and 21.7% of the advanced students, 17.5% of the intermediates, and 35.5% of the beginners walked regularly for physical fitness.

Table 12

Question 8: What other forms of physical fitness do you engage in regularly?

Form of Physical Fitness	Percentages		
	Advanced	Intermediate	Beginner
None	6.5	5.2	6.5
Working Out	54.3	93	67.7
Jogging	45.7	50.9	43.5
Sports	34.8	52.6	51.6
Walking	21.7	17.5	35.5

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine college dance students' perceptions of the contributions of dance education to their lives. Few studies have been conducted that allow dance students to express their opinions about dance education in their own words. This study is intended to add to the current information available. The results of this study may begin to educate parents, educators, and administrators about the diverse benefits dance has to offer.

One demographic questionnaire and one open-ended questionnaire were given to students currently enrolled in dance classes at a major University in the Southeast United States. One hundred and sixty-five students responded resulting in an 86.8% response rate. The students were placed into the levels, advanced, intermediate, and beginner, according to their past training. Each of the student's responses were coded and then categorized. Similar answers were grouped into sub-categories that were then placed under larger general categories.

Conclusions

The primary goal of this study was to develop a picture of the benefits of dance through the thoughts and words of dancers. The responses fell under the three major categories of emotional, intellectual, and physical benefits. Dancers from advanced, intermediate, and beginner levels reported benefits from all three categories. The differences between groups were in the degree of importance upon which they placed the various categories. Many beginner students found the physical benefits of dance to be

more important than the emotional benefits. The majority of advanced and intermediate students felt that emotional benefits contributed the most to their lives. When the advanced and intermediate students were asked specifically how dance influenced their physical fitness over 80% said that dance contributed significantly to their fitness in the areas of strength, endurance, cardiovascular fitness, and muscle control. However, when asked to describe the most positive results of their dance experience the majority of answers from advanced and intermediate students involved emotional benefits such as stress relief and self-expression. All three levels felt that dance developed intellectual skills, such as time management, concentration, and self-regulation but the beginner and intermediate students tended to place more importance on the development of these skills than the advanced students. Although dancers of every level felt dance provided emotional, physical, and intellectual benefits, each category's level of importance may change throughout a dancer's life. It can be reasonably assumed that the student's amount of experience affects their perceptions of dance.

A student's amount of exposure to dance can also be a factor in the opportunities they have experienced. More beginner students than advanced and intermediate students reported having no negative results in their dance experience. Beginner students have often not been involved in dance long enough to discover any negative aspects of dance. It is unreasonable to assume that any activity is free of negatives and it can be assumed this is a direct result of their amount of exposure to dance. The longer an individual is engaged in an activity the more likely they are to find some drawbacks.

The second goal of this study was to determine the benefits of dance as a form of physical fitness. Question seven revealed that over 80% of the students from each level

considered dance to be a significant factor in their physical fitness. A dislike for traditional exercise was expressed by several students. However, these students were motivated to exercise through dance classes because it was an enjoyable form of exercise. Dance also increased some students' awareness of their bodies and the need to stay fit. The goal of improvement encouraged other students to exercise outside of dance class. It can be reasonably determined through the data that not only is dance a viable option for physical fitness it serves as a motivation to exercise for many dancers.

Final Observations and Recommendations for further study

As stated earlier in this study, children in present day society are becoming less active and obesity rates are rising. Current research shows that obesity causes a number of health problems. Parents should be encouraged to involve their children in physical activities to help promote good exercise habits. This study reveals the physical benefits of dance as well as the additional emotional and intellectual benefits. The answers provided by the study's participants show that dance provides an emotional outlet and stress relief for many dancers. A healthy outlet for relieving tension is an important component in the lives of people of all ages. The combined physical, intellectual, and emotional benefits of dance can contribute to a person's overall health.

Further studies in the area of dance are needed to develop a deeper understanding of its contributions. Of the limited number of research studies in the area of dance, few explore the opinions of the dancers themselves. Further research studies involving students of varying ages would be beneficial in discovering the changing effects of dance throughout life.

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APPENDIXES

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Gender _____ Age _____

Major _____

Minor _____

Dance Classes enrolled in during 2003 Spring Semester (Check all that apply):

Ballet I _____

Ballet 2 _____

Ballet 3 _____

Jazz 1 _____

Jazz 2 _____

Jazz 3 _____

Modern 1 _____

Modern 2 _____

Modern 3 _____

Composition _____

Dance Ensemble _____

Dance Background

Age you began dancing _____

Total years dancing _____

Total years performing _____

Number of years studying: Ballet _____ Modern _____
 Jazz _____ Tap _____ Other _____

Level of Achievement

Check the level that applies to your dancing abilities in the following areas:

	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced
Ballet	_____	_____	_____
Modern	_____	_____	_____
Jazz	_____	_____	_____
Tap	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____

Appendix B

By filling out this questionnaire I consent to participate in this study.

Open-ended Dance Questionnaire

1. Why did you begin taking dance classes?
2. Why do you continue to dance?
3. How do you feel when you are dancing?
4. How do you feel when you are dancing in front of an audience?
5. What are the most positive results of your dance experience?
6. What are the most negative results of your dance experience?

7. How has dance influenced your physical fitness?
8. What other forms of physical fitness do you engage in regularly?
9. Have you ever choreographed?
If so, how does the process of choreographing make you feel?
10. Have you ever improvised?
If so, describe the experience and how it made you feel.
11. How has dance contributed to your life?
12. Why will dance continue/discontinue to be a part of your life?

Please feel free to add any additional thoughts you have on dance as a part of your life.

VITA

Laura Leitner Shields was born in Knoxville, Tennessee on September 29, 1973. She graduated from Oak Ridge High School in 1991. From there, she attended college at the University of Cincinnati, College Conservatory of Music where she graduated with a M.F.A. in Dance in 1995. After graduation Laura taught dance in Cincinnati, Ohio until she returned to Knoxville, Tennessee in 1999 to teach at a local studio. In the fall of 2001 Laura entered the graduate program of Sport Management at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville as a graduate teaching associate.