

The language of dance

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Abstract

The NSW Creative Arts Syllabus, released to Primary Schools in December 2000, mandated the teaching of four artforms: Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance.

This research project was designed to facilitate the implementation and teaching of the Dance component of the NSW Creative Arts Syllabus by learning more about the "language" students use in the reflection and appreciation of their own dance making and the dance making of others.

This paper presents the findings of a qualitative study investigating strategies to encourage Stage 2¹ students to use the specialist language/terminology used in the process of dance making and appreciation.

The research project gathered a great deal of information on effective strategies for encouraging students to engage with the language of dance and concludes that the integration of new vocabulary or introduction of specialist language demands explicit teaching, incorporating a wide range of strategies for encouraging students to engage with the specialist language of dance

The paper also presents quantitative and qualitative data demonstrating the value of arts learning across the curriculum suggesting that the teaching of dance is part of a much "bigger picture".

Introduction

The NSW Creative Arts Syllabus K-6 (2000) stresses the importance of students learning to appreciate and reflect on dance making by “*viewing, writing, talking, and reading*”. The Department of Education Queensland, Dance Years 1-10 Curriculum Guide, 1992, also states that children need to

learn how to reflect and need to be taught how to describe, interpret and evaluate dance as well as engage in the process of making dance.

In NSW, the Department of Education and Training annually tests the Literacy and Numeracy skills of students in Years 3 and 5. Parents and teachers are provided with information regarding the student’s learning after completing “The Basic Skills Test”.

Within my school community, dance was viewed as an “extra”, welcomed as long as it didn’t interfere with the teaching and learning of “basic skills”. I was keen for my research to utilise the more literal definition of “language” because it was something that I felt most teachers and parents would relate and respond to. In addition, I hoped it would lead to ways to facilitate the implementation of the Dance Syllabus within the school.

Students, parents, teachers alike have an understanding that in order to communicate with one another we need a common language. This was a view clearly articulated in the curriculum guidelines for Saskatchewan Education(1994),

“It is largely by means of language that the school expects learning to take place,”

and an area specifically addressed in the NSW Board Of Studies Creative Arts Draft K-6 Support Document (June 2000),

Literacy practices may range across the domains of making and appreciating in Creative Arts ... the description of the work/performance should involve students in the specialist language of the field...

Aims of the arts learning research project

My research study had one primary aim: to facilitate the implementation of the artform of Dance as part of the Creative Arts Syllabus by learning more about the language students use to reflect on their own dance making and the dance making of others.

The broad nature of this research aim necessitated specific objectives be stated in order to evaluate the project and demonstrate clear links with the data/information collected.

My specific objectives were to:

- A. increase the vocabulary students use to reflect on dance making
- B. develop student's ability to use language as a means of communication
- C. develop and extend student's ability to use the language of dance
- D. plan dance experiences with specific learning outcomes unique to dance
- E. develop and extend student knowledge, skills and values by promoting dance as a enjoyable and educational activity

Research procedures/methodologies including data collection

Research Procedures

The model I used involved both "action" and "research", that is

- 1) I identify a learning need within my class or school
- 2) I imagine a solution to the problem/need
- 3) I take action in the direction I have chosen
- 4) I reflect on the actions I have taken
- 5) I modified, changed my actions based on new understandings and learning

This cycle continues in an ever increasing spiral of teaching and learning.

Readings from, Carr, W. & Kemmis, S., 1986, Dick, B., (1997), (1999) Holian, R. (1999) Murphy, Jim (2000) were particularly useful in developing a theoretical framework for my research study. It is important to mention here the vital role of educational dialogue and collaboration between fellow researchers, colleagues and mentors. During the research

study I reflected on, evaluated and shared my own experiences and perceptions with my fellow researchers, colleagues and mentor. Critical reflection is a central part of most action research and the process of collaboration can lead to increased awareness and professional growth. Most importantly, action research is an on-going process that is cyclical in nature. Jim Murphy, (2000), Y.Wadsworth, 1988

The project involved teaching eight 40 minutes dance lessons over a period of four weeks. The lessons introduced Stage 2 Primary² students to the basic elements of dance: Shape, Time, Relationships, Space, Dynamics and Action. As part of these lessons students engaged in Performance, Composition and Appreciation through the teaching/learning process of exploring, developing and reflecting. The project was conducted in consultation with lecturers and mentors from the University of Western Sydney, Australia as part of the Graduate Certificate of Arts Education K-6

Collecting the data

Students were asked to reflect on and appreciate their dance making or the dance making of others. Their responses formed the basis of my data collection. Participants were asked to respond to the same set of “core” questions, in four separate sessions, over the four-week period:

1. *What did you see or what did you do? (in reference to a dance making)*
2. *What do you think worked well in this dance? What did you enjoy?*
3. *How would you improve or change this dance?*

I collected data that allowed me to focus on the oral, verbal and written language of students. The language specifically targeted included the following dance

terminology/vocabulary used to describe the elements of dance: Space, Time, Relationships, Action, Dynamics, Shape in context and references to these elements, such as high, low, fast, slow and so on.

The recordings could last anywhere between 30 seconds and 5 minutes so this had to become a flexible time period. I also kept a researcher's journal during the entire period of the project. In this way I established triangulation facilitating the process of data analysis.

Unitizing and coding the data/information collected

The data collected during this project was unitized and referenced according to the Type of Collection, that is

(a) Audio (b) Video (c) Written Documentation

(d) Additional Documentation and the Numerical Order of Collection.

The data was also labelled and unitized in terms of the Teaching/Learning Strategy employed to encourage students to use the "targeted" language. This information is presented in Table II.

As the project developed the "core" questions provided direction and focus for the collection of data but I allowed and actively sought more flexibility in collecting the necessary information and data.

How I analysed the dance project

The data collected was analysed in a number of ways, yielding quantitative and qualitative information. As one of my objectives was to increase student's vocabulary (in relation to dance terminology) I tracked the frequency of dance terminology used by the student during the process of reflection and appreciation. These responses were originally to be classified into four categories. However, the overwhelming amount of data produced necessitated some rationalisation. I decided to unitize responses in terms of

- 1) students using and naming the element of dance e.g. "action" or

2) students using language that referred to an element of dance e.g. "together"

(referring to the element of relationships)

I also analysed and labelled the language in context, annotating descriptive, evaluative and reflective language, as in this transcript from Data Collection 1a for Student 3:

Q.#3 (Teacher/Researcher) How would you change or improve this dance?

I'd probably (**reflective language indicating possibility of change*) get them into groups(*understanding of relationships*) and while they're in groups, (*understanding of relationships*) people would know where (*evaluating performance indicating a need for more structure*) they because some people didn't know where(*reflective and evaluative language*) they were getting into the groups (*understanding of relationships*)

**teacher/researcher's micro-analysis*

The analysis and labelling of data was particularly important as I had also explored different strategies for encouraging students to use the language/terminology of dance and I wanted to find out:

1. if the strategies I had trialled had been successful in increasing the students use of dance vocabulary
2. if I had extended each student's ability to use the language of dance in reflection and appreciation
3. if there was a pattern or trend in the way in which students used and integrated new vocabulary
4. if the strategies I used encouraged language growth
5. if my journal observations and reflections correlated, substantiated or conflicted with the "labelling" of data collected through other sources

6. if certain strategies resulted in dance being viewed as enjoyable

Results

While the focus of my research study was on the development of the specialist language of dance it is significant that the implementation of the project always took part in the wider context of dance making and appreciation. The collection of data and the research study was part of the implementation of the Stage 2 Dance Outcomes within my class. In conducting the project and analysing the data, certain strategies emerged as being particularly useful in encouraging students to use the language/terminology of dance during the process of reflection and appreciation.

Movement aims

My first lesson began with a teacher generated framework, which provided a simple structure for organising movement but included opportunities for students to make individual creative responses. Smith Autard, (1994) suggested using a composed structure for a dance whereby children filled in the number of beats with their own movements. This approach to dance making was also suggested by my research mentor and supported by reading from many other dance education sources: Saskatchewan Education, 1994, Curriculum Support Directorate, (1999), *Quantum Leaps*, Creative Arts K-6 2000.

I decided not to introduce any music at this stage as my prior reading had suggested that music could “structure” or dictate movement, thus limiting the student's unique response or solution. (Saskatchewan Education, 1994) Gough, (1993) stressed the importance of specifying “*movement aims*” and suggested a possible framework from which to begin. I found that broad directions, such as “Try to explore all the space around you” resulted in confused responses and self-conscious behaviours. Students felt much more comfortable

when the suggested movement was something they could easily relate to and therefore perform confidently. The dance was developed utilising the movement principles outlined by Laban. Referring to movement through association with strong visual images, experiences, feelings or responses provided students with a common language for communication between dancers. In reflection and appreciation students would refer to a section of their dancing in terms of the associated movement, e.g *When I was "painting".....*

Role modelling

When I first began the project I thought that if I role modelled the use of dance terminology during the process of dance making and appreciation students would begin to access and integrate new vocabulary for themselves. In Data Collection 1a, Student 1 quickly began to use the modelled language

"I saw people using alot of their personal space, above them, below them, behind them and down below"

However, this was not the case for the other students. Student 7 began with tentative efforts,

..." some people to do bigger actions by some people to try their hardest and do bigger actions"

frequently using the same words repetitively whenever she was unsure of what to say. This was a pattern that emerged across the sample group but was based more on teacher observation until I was able to examine all the data collated for each individual student. An analysis of the complete data showed that students would "latch on" to a key phrases or words that were "safe" responses using them over and over again. Words such as "fast", "slow", "big" and "small" commonly featured in all responses. During the course

of the project I was sharing this observation with a colleague. She came back to me several days later and said that our conversation had made her “tune in” more closely to the language her students used in discussion. She'd been amazed to find that her students rarely engaged with the specific language/terminology associated with a subject unless it was explicitly expected or demanded. As I became more aware of the need to structure experiences and opportunities for students to engage with dance terminology I also found that I looked and listened to my students more purposefully. The importance of the teacher acting as observer cannot be understated. Hole,S., (1998)

Explicit teaching

I decided that if I wanted to students to increase their vocabulary and use the language of dance I'd needed to share my purpose with the students. The Board of Studies K-6 Creative Arts Support Document stated "*clearly articulate expectations and purpose of units of work in relation to school content to ensure the achievement of outcomes*". If I was role modelling, I told them so. I told them what I was doing. What I wanted to see. What it would look like. What it would sound like. I told them very clearly what my expectations were. I explained to them what I was doing and why. I encouraged them to ask me questions. If I wanted them to learn something, I told them what it was I wanted them to learn. The teaching of the specific language was made very explicit,

... *“these are words that we can use when talking about how dancers use space, when making dance.”*

I realised that often I had assumed children knew what it was I was asking them to learn because I was teaching it.

Repetition and immersion

Children with delayed language skills in my study and indeed most other students in the class as well as my colleague's class, needed structured learning experiences to ensure they would engage with and use new vocabulary in a meaningful context. I found children eagerly participated in larger group discussions and that the repetition of key words and phrases were helpful in providing other children with the scaffolding needed to construct their own thoughts and ideas. The use of display large cards with the element clearly printed and surrounded by related vocabulary were not only invaluable in developing the student's ability to access language but quickly improved mine as well. The "Quantum Leaps" dance support resource emphasises the importance of including "literacy links" and "related language" as part of dance making and appreciation but I underestimated how long it took for new terminology/specialist language to "*feel*" and become a part of my own language system. I found that I needed to be immersed in the language through print, through teaching and constant repetition. In analysing the data from each student it was evident that students integrated new terms into their language system at different rates and also required similar strategies to ensure they engaged with specialist language within many different contexts.

Guided questioning and Scaffolded Learning

Earlier in my project I had decided to use open questions during reflection and appreciation. I found it important to ask students questions that didn't dictate a specific response. I also encouraged them to use language to express their ideas. I found that all too often they didn't know where to start and would repeat themselves so that it appeared as if they had something to say. I found that it was important to ask open-ended questions that allowing for an individual response. In listening to their initial responses I realised

that the children needed to learn how to reflect and that I needed to teach them how to describe, interpret and evaluate dance as well as engage them in the process of making dance. The Creative Arts Syllabus K-6 (2000) stresses the importance of students "learning" to appreciate and reflect on dance making by "viewing, writing, talking, and reading. Guiding the questioning is the really important factor. Questions such as, "What did you see happening?" need to be followed up with further questions focussing the student's thinking and scaffolding their learning, for example this excerpt from Data Collection 2a:

(Teacher) Can you tell me anything about the kind of actions we used in the "Painting Dance"?

(Student 2) OK umm the actions that we did in the dance were big and they did and some people did alot of jumps, some of it when they were running they did jumping and for the when they were rolling in the paint, some people did alot and alot of really good rolling

(Teacher) What did you think was interesting about their rolling? *(focussing student's attention)*

(Student 2) Ummm how they all did different rolls

(Teacher) So do you think being different makes a dance interesting?

(Student 2) Yes unless it supposed to be exactly the same *(building ability to critically evaluate)*

I found that by focussing the children's attention through questions, whether written, verbal or in the process of dance itself the responses revealed greater depth and complexity in describing, evaluating and judging dance. However, guided questioning was even more effective if children used guided questions to focus the responses of their peers. I found that by providing children with a scaffold for the kinds of questions they

might ask, they not only increased their own ability to engage with the language of dance, they facilitated the language development of their peers.

Shared Inquiry

In addition the verbal responses of students improved if the dialogue was part of a general group interchange. The modelling of appropriate and inappropriate responses helped students to define and redefine their learning. Isaacs (cited in Dan Leahy and Catherine Johnson, 2000), says

Dialogue is about a shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together. It is not something you do to another person. It is something you do with people . . . Dialogue is a living experience of inquiry within and between people.

Language Links

I found that it was also very important to listen to the language children were already using to describe or evaluate their dance making:

Q.3: (Teacher)What do you think worked really well in this dance?

Well everyone was cooperating and noone said I don't want to be with you

The comment on “co-operation” was a term frequently used by a number of students and I began to wonder why students chose this in particular to focus on. I decided to explore this further and asked students to tell me how they knew dancers were cooperating. As the discussion developed it became evident that the children were very impressed that dancers could work together to make a dance and were acutely aware of the group dynamics involved. This provided an ideal opportunity to introduce the element of Relationships. I began to realise that as the facilitator of the children’s learning it was

important to utilise existing vocabulary and prior knowledge/learning. This view was supported by Curriculum Support Directorate, (1999), *Quantum Leaps* and Saskatchewan Education. (1994).

Learning Styles and Multiple Platforms for demonstrating learning

My teaching became deliberately explicit and students' learning far more purposeful. They became keen to show me they were learning. I found I knew a lot more about each child's learning style and learning needs. Of the students studied some had distinct preferences for the way in which they reflected on their dancing. I had noticed that the data I had collected from one student didn't seem to reflect what I had observed during the process of dancing making. I had found it difficult to do justice to the multiplicity of roles demanded by action research and spurred on by Hole's (1998) article, "Finding the Hidden Driveways: Observing Students At Work" decided to structure some time to act just as an observer.

I asked my research mentor, Michelle to come and work with the students over a number of sessions. In the first session she chatted with the children about what they had been learning. Her questioning technique was unfamiliar to the children and they struggled to communicate their understanding verbally. Michelle wanted to see if they were better able to articulate their ideas during the process of dance. This proved to be the turning point. The student that had difficulty reflecting and appreciating dance through talking and writing was able to show Michelle through body movement and explanation that she well understood the language of dance. The importance of providing students with multiple platforms through which to demonstrate their learning cannot be stressed enough. Analysis of data from all students indicated that certain individuals had preferred "learning styles" and were better able to demonstrate their learning if provided with a range of

experiences incorporating visual, auditory or kinesthetic experiences. This was demonstrated very clearly toward the end of the project. We had watched a television show about The Great Simpson Desert and the children were fascinated by the strong visual images. I asked them if they thought they would be able to talk about how they might plan a dance using this as inspiration. I wanted to video their discussion as part of my final data collection. It was only then that I realised that if I was filming I wouldn't be able to facilitate the discussion so I asked them if they felt they could do it without me. This was part of the final data collection and illustrated how far the students had come. The student leading this discussion began the project with the most negative attitude, had and still has difficulty expressing himself through dance and rarely produces written work.....however, his words speak for themselves:

What I think we should do to start off (*judgement*) we should everyone (relationships) at different levels (*awareness of space*) and they all rise (*using levels*) and that will make it look like a circle (*awareness of patterns and formations*) so it makes it look like the sun (*understanding of intent*) after that (*awareness of order and sequence*) we just go down (*levels*) and then what we have, we have some people (*awareness of relationships, groups*) with red costumes and like white costumes (*mood and intent*) off (*referring to stage*) cause they start off and you know how it said , there's traces of iron in the sand and the iron rusts and makes it go different colours, (*transferring learning and understanding across subject areas*) well they (*referring to a group*) sit there (*action*) for a minute (*time*) looking like sand, (*intent*) (*researcher's micro-analysis)

It seems to support the wealth of arts literature suggesting arts learning impacts across the curriculum. Of course, this small sample in itself is only part of a much larger picture

and can only be interpreted in terms of the context in which it took place.

Building an Arts Culture

The same student, devised special symbols to represent the various elements so I incorporated his designs as visual cues on the language cards. His attitude changed markedly from that point onward. Brookes' (1997) and Horn's (1999) work documents the value of "visual imagery". The "language cards" were constantly in use and provided an ongoing reminder that his ideas were not only valued, they helped others learn too.

Fear of failure, non-compliance and negative attitudes are all issues facing the teacher of dance. In analysing my data I found that there were many strategies that had contributed to dance being viewed as an activity/experience that was valued and enjoyed. These included,

- * accepting and valuing everyone's ideas and contributions
- * increasing student's knowledge and providing different opportunities for them to demonstrate their learning
- * relating dance making to experiences that students could relate to
- * structuring experiences that were sequential and developmentally appropriate
- * providing and encouraging a sense of ownership, that is students composed and performed their own movements and dances
- * delivering clear directions, defining boundaries and ensuring safe dance practice
- * being enthusiastic
- * acknowledging effort, in particular "catching" the negative student doing something well

Most importantly, I found that the dance lesson began well before the students ever engaged in movement. Encouraging children to undertake new learning always involves

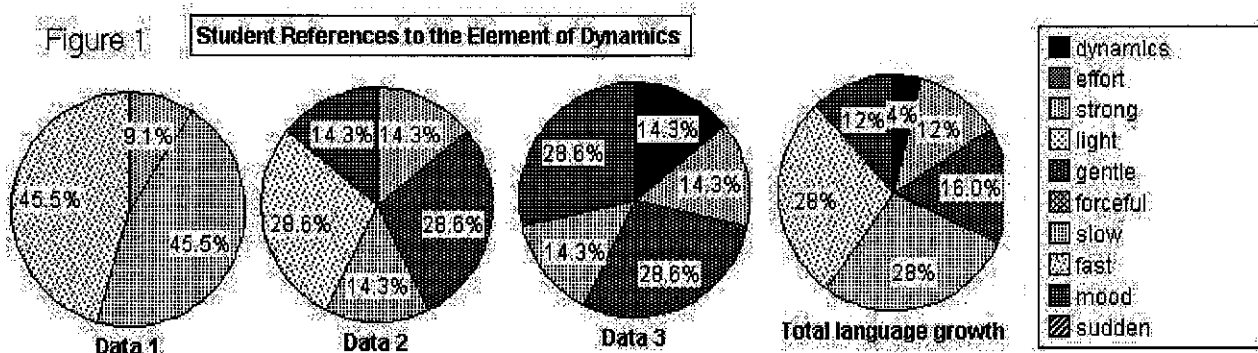
an element of risk and students need to know that the environment in which they learn is supportive. Building a learning environment and a class culture was something that I had worked hard on from the beginning of the year. I was aware that my class was receptive to novelty and keen to try new things. This was something integral to my teaching style and clearly an issue impacting on arts learning in the wider context

Raising the status of dance - Peer modelling

This point was driven home when I conducted a peer-teaching dance lesson with a colleague. My class were keen to model what they had learnt to the younger class. The visiting class had a core of boys with very negative attitudes to dance. They began the session with obvious reluctance. However, as they realised the boys in my class were participating enthusiastically they became increasingly more cooperative and generative. Both classes listened intently when their peers appreciated their performances. The children from the visiting class were quick to pick up appropriate language for reflecting on dance making. It was evident from this experience “peer modelling” was a powerful tool for not only improving the language children use to appreciate their dancing and the dance making of others but a valuable method for facilitating the implementation dance education and raising the status of dance.

Outcomes achieved

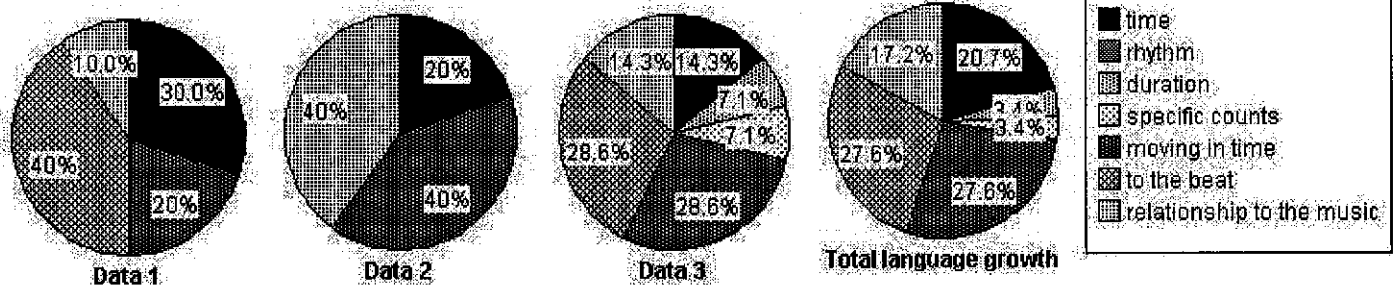
An analysis of the quantitative data generated appeared to correlate with and substantiate my qualitative study. By using both sources I was able to ascertain whether I had met my specific objectives. By tracking student references to a particular element, such as “Dynamics” (see Figure 1)



or "Time" (see Figure 2)

Figure 2

Student References to the Element of Time

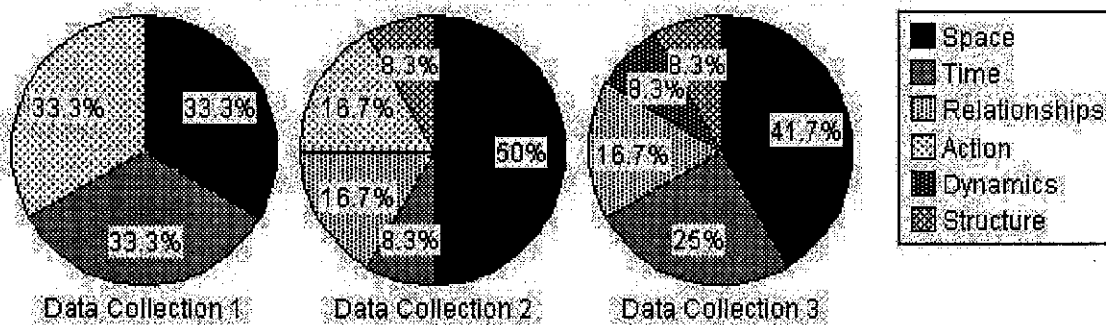


it is evident that the student's vocabulary gradually increased. Figure 1 clearly demonstrates the over-reliance on "generic" words such as "fast" and "slow" in Data Collection 1 and the impact of the various teaching/learning strategies utilised to encourage and develop language growth in the context of dance making and appreciating.

Over the course of the project students' ability to reflect and appreciate dance widened to include more references to less familiar elements of dance, such as relationships. Figure 3 records specific references to the element itself, e.g. *I saw fast and slow actions*

Figure 3

Students using the elements of dance in reflection



This data correlates with written, audio and video data indicating the inclusion of more dance vocabulary/language. Take for example, the response of Student 2:

Data Collection 1a

(Teacher) Tell me what you saw happening in our dancing today

(Student) I saw alot of people doing good dancing. They were doing it really fast.

Data Collection 2a

(Teacher) Can you tell me what you saw happening in our dancing this morning?

(Student)Well ummm I saw people doing big actions and not copying anyone else, unless they were asked to, umm thinking of their own moves and doing stuff in their personal space and that's all

Analysis of the data collated for individual student from each data collection further substantiated results confirming the various strategies employed throughout the project resulted in students learning to use the specialist language of dance, see Table (i)

Taylor (1974) says,

In the creative process it is essential to remember that it is not the end product which is most important, but what is happening to each individual and to the group.

The success of the activity is not determined by a final composed product but what is excitedly evolving. In essence the important criteria for evaluation is how the individual feels about the experience and what growth has taken place.

In this light I think that the most dynamic and exciting outcome achieved was the enthusiasm and commitment my class continue to express with the words,

"Can we do dancing today?"

Recommendations

While dance, as an artform is a unique *“symbol system providing for the communication and exchange of information about the world”* the English language permeates all curriculum. This means that growth in language abilities is necessary for the continuous development of understanding in any Key Learning Areas³. Growth in language abilities takes place as a result of planned language experiences in all four modes, listening, speaking, reading and writing, within the artform itself. The integration of new vocabulary or introduction of specialist language demands explicit teaching, and the structuring of sequential and developmental teaching/learning experiences appropriate to the needs of the learner. The specialist language of a field does not appear to develop through “osmosis” and teachers need to actively promote and engage students with new vocabulary/specialist language. “Mystery teaching” makes it difficult for the learner to know what it is they are supposed to be learning. Explicit teaching means more than being clear about what you are teaching and why, it means having a shared sense of inquiry, purpose and direction. The results from this study suggest a wide range of strategies for encouraging students to engage with the specialist language of dance. These include:

- * having students use expressive language (spoken, written and non-verbal) in order to explore and develop ideas, reflect and appreciate
- * providing opportunities for students to use language in different modes (listening, speaking, reading and writing) for a variety of purposes and audiences, and in a variety of mediums
- * teaching students how to reflect and providing opportunities for students to reflect and appreciate through guided questioning and scaffolded learning
- * engaging in dialogue as listeners, speakers and observers

- * introducing vocabulary specific to an artform through planned activities which help students focus on what they know (or can see) and also provide a bridge between students' real life experiences and their school learning
- * organizing learning experiences/activities utilising prior knowledge and/or to connect to other school learning
- * creating opportunities for students to express their ideas in a variety of ways, allowing them to learn from each others' thinking and to demonstrate their present understanding
- * using visual imagery and symbols to engage learners and support conceptual development

Future Directions

Findings from this project add further weight to the considerable wealth of literature and research confirming what arts educators believe they witness daily, that is a “*remarkable relationship between learning, knowing, and the arts.*” (Fiske, 2000)

My research results clearly demonstrates the value of arts learning as playing a “*vital role in a multiplicity of competencies in social, intellectual and physical realms.*” (Murfee, E., 2000)

Throughout my study I found the teaching/learning issues emerging were addressed or discussed in many of the relevant Departmental publications, such as the Creative Arts Syllabus K-6(2000), NSW BOS Creative Arts K-6 Draft Support Document (1998) and the dance support draft “Quantum Leaps” (1999). The strategies and guidance provided in these teaching documents and resources align well with a wealth of arts literature and

recent research studies undertaken in the arts. Fiske, E., (Ed), 2000, Seidel, S., (2000), Newitt, R.(1999), Murfee, E. (2000)

While my research study focussed on the development of the specialist language in dance it is vital language is viewed as only one of several "symbol systems". Linda Verlee Williams (1983) writes,

Children come to school as integrated people with thoughts and feelings, words and pictures, ideas and fantasies. They are intensely curious about the world. They are scientists, artists, musicians, historians, dancers and runners, tellers of stories, and mathematicians. The challenge we face as teachers is to use the wealth they bring us. They come with a two-sided mind. We must encourage them to use it, to develop both types of thinking so that they have access to the fullest possible range of mental abilities.

The importance of building an arts learning environment and culture, cannot be understated or under estimated. It is far easier to sow seed in fertile ground.

I believe that is vital that teachers not only use the syllabus documents to plan appropriate teaching and learning experiences within each of the artforms in the classroom, they view arts learning as part of a much "bigger picture."

NOTES

¹ The NSW Creative Arts Syllabus, prepared by the NSW Board of Studies, provides specific statements of the intended learning of students as they engage with the content of the syllabus. Learning Outcomes clearly state the knowledge, skills and understandings students are expected to achieve at the end of each stage. The stages of the Creative Arts Syllabus are: Early Stage 1: Kindergarten

Stage 1 : Years 1 and 2
Stage 2 : Years 3 and 4
Stage 3: Years 5 and 6
Stage 4 : Years 7 and 8
Stage 5 : Years 9 and 10
Stage 6 : Years 11 and 12

² Stage 2 Outcomes state:

DA2.1 Performs dances from a range of contexts demonstrating movement skills, expressive qualities and understanding of the elements of dance

DA2.2 Explores, selects and combines movement using the elements of dance to communicate ideas, feelings of moods.

DA2.3 Gives personal opinions about the use of elements and meaning in their own and others dances.

³ The NSW the Primary Curriculum has six main subject areas, referred to as Key Learning Areas.

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