Dance Literacy in the Studio: Partnering Movement Texts and Residual Texts

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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2015

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Abstract

In this series of qualitative case studies, I study current conceptions of “dance literacy,” and explore dance literacy as contextualized within various studio practices. Literacy has traditionally meant reading and writing alphabetic texts, but more recently has stood in for knowledge about a particular field or meaning-making processes. I ask “how are dancers literate” across several different kinds of studio activities (teaching and learning technique, making choreographic work, re-staging repertory, documenting artistic process) and how these dance literacies contribute to creating dance specific knowledge. I examine dance literacy in three areas: reading, writing, and uses of written scripts. Through multimodality — visual, kinesthetic, aural/oral, tactile, verbal/linguistic, alphabetic/textual modes of communication — dancers process sensate information about what they see, feel, hear, and sense. I also examine how dancers produce notational and alphabetic residual texts in support of their movement texts.

I explore both dance literacy and interactions between dance and literacy. Dance literacy scholarship has typically fallen on two sides of a literacy/orality binary, defining dance literacy either as multimodal processes of dance-making or the use of and fluency in written dance notation systems. Rarely have dancers or dance scholars considered these two seemingly opposing definitions in relation to one another. By drawing connections between traditionally defined literacies and multimodal literacies to examine how they produce dance-specific knowledge and affect meaning-making in the studio, I
problematize the conception of dance as an “oral-only” enterprise and reveal an oral-literate continuum that subverts the literacy/orality divide.
Dedication

For the dancers and teachers whose eclectic literacy dance practices inspired this research, and most of all for Carl E Riggs.
Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee chair and advisor Melanie Bales for her continuous support and guidance at every stage of this process, including more than a few roadblocks. She frequently delivered sharp wit and honesty when they were most needed to bring everything into focus. In addition to Melanie, I extend sincere thanks to Dr. M. Candace Feck, and Dr. Harvey Graff for their enthusiastic support and insightful and challenging feedback. I am truly honored by the patience and generosity of my entire committee. My gratitude to Dr. Valarie Williams who guided me at the beginning of this research and for reminding me, “it’s just hard work.”

Many thanks to the faculty of the Department of Dance at The Ohio State University and especially to my graduate colleagues near and far. My heartfelt appreciation goes to the dancers in project. I am indebted to their generous sharing of their time and creative work and for their welcoming me into their studio spaces.

To my son Jack whose energetic presence was both a source of motivation and distraction, I give many thankful Mommy snuggles. Finally, my deepest gratitude is for my husband Chris. This project would not have been possible without his patience, humor, and unwavering support.
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Chapter 1 Dance, Literacy, Definitions

Defining the Problem: A tale of two dance literacies

*Literacy* and *literacies* have become pervasive terms in colloquial speech — visual literacy, computer literacy, cultural literacy, critical literacy, media literacy, dance literacy and so on. As a dancer, I recognize “dance literacy” as one of the many “new” literacies. However, defining literacy is a tricky and value-laden project. Increasing variations of reading and writing activities are cited as being types of literacies, which is an acknowledgement of the diversity of the uses of literacy. Additionally, what “counts” as literacy changes within different contexts.

Even in one field, such as dance, there are a number of literacies. I can read a dance notation score and bring it to life with my body. I can “read” (observe and interpret) the choreography of a dance performance. Many choreographers write in journals or notebooks to work through and document their creative process while making new dances. Dancers map intellectual and physical understandings of their bodies through kinesthetic sensations and imagery in the mind’s eye. Many of my colleagues read books about dance scholarship and theory, dancers’ lives, or dance techniques, and are in turn influenced by them in their own research and physical practices. These activities are all aspects of dance literacy. Asking, “what is dance literacy” cannot possibly result in a singular definition. Literacy in dance includes alphabetic and textual
practices, uses of language, and visual, kinesthetic, aural, and spatial modalities. The complexity of dance literacy lies in the extent to which each aspect is present and interacting with the others in any given context.

As a dance notation expert, I experience personally and hear from colleagues the effects of notational literacy in dance practices. There is general agreement among dance notation practitioners that dance notation has many uses and applications for dance, but evidence for this primarily exists anecdotally. Major dance notation practices are professional only — staging canonical works from dance notation scores and notating dances from performance; these two activities require extensive, specialized training and are limited to a small number of professionals. I have heard from dancers and students that dance notation is irrelevant to current dance, outdated, too-cerebral. Perhaps these perceptions stem from seeing and experiencing the professional uses of dance notation.

There is also a general perception of studio activities — technique classes, making new choreography — as non-literate or as only body-to-body transmissions and untouched by written scripts. I would like to challenge these perceptions.

An experience in my university department demonstrates the problem of definition for literacy. In 2012, the Department of Dance at The Ohio State University held a Dance Literacy Symposium for faculty, emeriti, and grad students, in which several international dance scholars, primarily from Laban Theory¹ and notation research

¹ Laban Theory or Laban Studies is the name frequently given to the collection of movement analysis and movement notation theories and practices stemming from the work of Rudolf von Laban. Laban was an Austro-Hungarian movement theorist, choreographer, and educator, and father of German modern expressionist dance in pre-WWII Germany, and in England post-WWII. He developed a number of theories about movement known as Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) in addition to a dance notation system, known as Kinetography Laban in Europe and as Labanotation in the United States.
areas, were invited as guest experts. In the interest of disclosure, I took part in two early meetings planning this symposium. As an emerging scholar with interests in the relationships between literacy and dance, and because of my position within the department teaching dance notation and movement analysis, my involvement in this early brainstorming stage led to the inclusion of literacy in the title of the symposium. At the time, using the word literacy seemed to be a way to avoid explicitly naming the symposium as Laban-based, notation-based, or even movement analysis-based, in order to make the symposium more inviting to participants who were not themselves experts in those areas. I was not, however, part of any subsequent organizing or decision-making around panels, or finalizing the roster of guest experts, so I attended the symposium with curiosity about how this topic might be framed by someone other than myself.

Near the beginning of the symposium, a tension arose regarding what “dance literacy” is, and what could be deemed as “literacy” in general. Some participants defined dance literacy as only related to the use of notation systems, while others wanted to expand the definition to include embodied forms of knowledge that dancers possess. Other guests equated uses of systematic bodies of knowledge or analysis as literacy, whether or not a symbol system was involved. Yet another scholar, a renowned dance critic, wanted to define all literacy, dance or otherwise, as any understanding of a subject. No one explicitly defined what she meant by literacy or the specific contexts to which her definitions applied.

The tension came to a head as one guest scholar noted that, in her opinion, the dance field encourages illiteracy in terms of its lack of widespread use of notation systems. In response, a faculty participant noted how literacy at large is afforded
privilege and status, especially in academe, and that excluding embodied knowledge from dance literacy devalues and marginalizes the substance of the field. By taking advantage of the very privilege and status literacy is given, she seemed to argue that it should be used to raise the status of embodied knowledge. To counter, a second guest scholar acknowledged that power is afforded literacy rightly or wrongly, but that dance oral transmissions require different processes that are distinct from notational or alphabetic dance transmissions. She also clarified that in her opinion “different” did not equate to “less than”; her use of dance literacy as relating to writing systems was not to diminish the importance of orality or embodied knowledge, but rather to distinguish them from writing. At this point, no one had mentioned non-notational writing practices such as reviews of performances, writing autobiographies, dancers’ personal note-keeping, or holdings in dance archives as possibilities for dance literacy, though these and others would be addressed later in the afternoon.

This symposium inadvertently and indirectly addressed several major questions about literacy that literacy scholars have been asking for decades (and with which I had recently been concerned), such as the supposed dichotomy created between orality and literacy, and literacy’s presumed associations with power, knowledge, and education. In addition, when definitions revolve around skills, functional abilities, and specific forms of knowledge, attention is called to what counts as literacy and who counts as either literate or deficient. For example, if dance literacy is limited to the use of notation systems, embodied knowledge processes that are crucial to dancing are excluded, and this exclusion can contribute to marginalization in the field. For my interests, how could apparent divides between literacy and orality, between skills and other forms of
knowledge be reconciled? What is meant when literacy is used to refer to non-written, i.e. non-alphabetic/notational/textual, practices? Does literacy as a concept function as an analogy for interpretive and descriptive practices, such as reading movement visually as someone dances, for example? Perhaps most importantly, how do definitions and aspects of literacy — reading and writing — change between differing dance practices and contexts?

**Dance Literacy in Scholarship**

As a subject of dance scholarship, “dance literacy” did not appear until the late 20th-century. Scholarly writing on dance literacy echoes the literacy/orality divide found in the great debates of Literacy Studies. The two major sides of dance literacy in scholarship show tension between dance-notation-as-dance-literacy, and embodied knowledge and competency in dance-related activities such as learning movement, interpreting choreography, and composing dances. The literature further establishes a dance literacy dichotomy between uses of dance-specific written scripts (dance notation systems) and embodied modes of learning, teaching, and creating dance.

Most early scholarship concerning dance literacy focused on promoting the uses and benefits of notation systems. It is unsurprising that notation practitioners would adopt the usage of “literacy” because dance notation systems are dance-specific written scripts. This literature stressed the applications of notation to dance education and training, preservation of the canon, developing dance-specific theory, and analysis of movement.

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2 The literacy/orality binary has been the debate of much scholarship in Literacy Studies, delineating power relationships between written and non-written modes of communication, and exposing assumptions about literate and non-literate cultures. I will discuss this construct further in the next section “Understanding Literacy in Context.”
and technique. Uses of notation as literacy among dance philosophers and anthropologists called attention to their need for dance-specific ways of describing movement. Dance anthropologist Brenda Farnell defines dance literacy as the ability to “read and write movement so that translation into the medium of words is unnecessary for creating ethnographically appropriate descriptions of actions” ("Methodological Move" 38). Dance literacy in notation systems communicates movement intention from movement-centered concepts rather than language-centered concepts or frameworks from other fields. Further, notation systems are themselves value-laden with their frames of analysis, but I believe, like Youngerman and Farnell, there is less translation involved between actions and dance-specific symbols than between actions and verbal language.

Dance scholars such as Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck, Teresa Heiland, and Tina Curran place written notation inside a larger view of dance literacy and include conceptual understandings about movement patterns and elements such as phrasing and dynamics (Curran; Heiland "Constructionist"; Chilkovsky Nahumck). Chilkovsky Nahumck writes:

The term dance literacy is meant to imply competence in the techniques for recognising [sic] dance patterns — physical shapes, rhythms, spatial paths, dynamics — as combinations of basic elements which, in infinite variations, produce the magical symbolic ‘statements’ that transform ordinary movements into dance. The term also includes skill in reading and writing choreography in its

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4 See Farnell “Methodological Move” and “Where Mind is a Verb” for further discussion on how cultural and movement knowledge can be embedded into notations; and Marion “Notation Systems and Dance Style” for discussion and comparison of how notation systems affect movement thinking of notators.
own symbolic language without interposition of verbal descriptions. (emphasis in original, 9)

Literacy here is a communicative competency with attendant uses of notation/symbol systems. The reading and writing refer to a notation system and symbols, and to “reading” movement and composition evidenced in live bodies. Chilkovsky Nahumck’s dance literacy includes competency in elements and structures of dance — physical shapes made by the body, pathways traveled in space, gestures, choreographic forms, and so on. For her, literacy arises from developing understanding with notational systems, about movement and choreography.

In a more recent example, Teresa Heiland ("Constructionist") both honors and criticizes the “illiterate” nature of the dance field with a definition that highlights dance literacy. Heiland describes literate dancers as “conscious movers” i.e., students who can verbally communicate using analytical language are literate (36-37), yet later she implies that only use of a second-order symbol system, such as a dance notation system, creates literacy through symbols and organizing languages (30). She continues, “Dance certainly requires teaching and learning using an oral tradition, but it seems to me that we could keep our valued oral tradition and support it with a tool that...generates dance literacy” (52). There is tension between acknowledgement of and honoring deeply embedded oral traditions on the one hand and the desire for growth and spread of notation systems on the other.

Unfortunately, but revealingly, some pro-notation, pro-literacy dance scholarship is sometimes disparaging about the “illiterate” state of the field. Mentions of literacy and illiteracy in dance did appear in print in relation to uses of notation systems in the mid
20th-century. Influential New York Times dance critic and Labanotation supporter John Martin referred to the state of literacy in a number of his articles. Martin was concerned with preservation of the dance canon and the elevation of dance to the prestige of other literate arts such as music, literature, and theatre. The lack of literacy, argues such scholarship, diminishes dance to an illiterate status — an art form without history, canon, methods of analysis, choreographic ownership/intellectual property, or recognition as a legitimate field of study.

In another example, Julia Macguinness-Scott echoes Martin’s sentiment for dance to elevate itself to the level of music and literature. A notation-literate dance field would, in her view, operate more like the musical field in terms of private study of roles, the conducting of rehearsals, and in the academic study of choreographic works. Her proposed future for dance implies a rather complete recasting of physical/oral traditions with notation-based literacy. Under these definitions, dance is cast on the negative side of the literate-oral binary, and notation systems are cast as the means to elevate dance with literate status to the positive side of the binary. As seen at the dance literacy symposium in my department, this is unfortunately still a tactic used by some scholars.

In contrast to notation-based definitions of literacy, definitions based in embodied or kinesthetic knowledge emerged near the end of the 20th-century. This shift roughly follows a larger social turn in the Literacy Studies field and a cultural trend toward defining new literacies. For example, Kentel and Dobson’s article “Beyond Myopic

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Visions of Education” describes movement literacy of Kenyan children as discourses that promote mind-body connection (145), and knowing through/about/because of movement (150). Linguistic and cognitive modes of understanding are common when dance literacy includes the ability to describe and analyze movement and choreography, with or without a notation system (Lepczyzk; Marich; Strate). Other scholars, such as Ann Dils, see a dance literacy moniker, even without use of a notation system, as a way for the dance field to gain status in educational systems, public policy and funding, and academe.

Perhaps one of the earliest scholarly uses of literacy in dance without mention of notation systems was Susan Foster’s Reading Dancing (1986), which explored the ways in which literary tropes work as modes of representation in dance. Foster offers her theory that dance conventions for creating and interpreting choreography can be explicated within literary terms — frame, modes of representation (literary tropes), style, syntax, and lexicon. Foster defines reading dancing as the “active and interactive interpretation of dance as a system of meaning” (xvii). She explicitly acknowledges her use of reading and writing as metaphors for interpreting dance in-step with literary and cultural critics’ discussions of contemporary literary theory (xix). Her project here is, in a sense, translating the work of the likes of Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, and Michael Hayden into a theory of representation in dance.

Foster directly mentions literacy in dance twice, in relation to viewers of dance as readers of dance:

Literate dance viewers, like choreographers, “read” dances by consciously utilizing their knowledge of composition to interpret the performance… (Reading 57)
Literacy in dance begins with seeing, hearing, and feeling how the body moves. The reader of dances must learn to see and feel rhythm...The reader must also notice changes in the tensile qualities of movement...and be able to trace the path of dancers from one part of the performance to another. And in addition to perceiving these features of the dance, the dance reader must be able to remember them. Only the viewer who retains visual, aural, and kinesthetic impressions of the dance as it unfolds in time can compare succeeding moments of the dance...and finally the dance as a whole (Reading 58, emphasis added).

Literacy in Reading Dancing revolves around meaning-making processes and embodied knowledge of movement and composition. In an interesting turn, Foster uses alphabetic literacy — in the form of literary tropes and theories — to theorize about dance literacy. However, her project is not literacy directly, but a theory of representation and meaning-making in which reading and writing are the vehicles for analysis.

The tension between notation-based dance literacy and multimodal dance literacy\(^6\) echoes not only the literacy/orality divide found in Literacy Studies, but also the expansion of what counts as literacy. Dance, as a traditionally marginalized field in academe, has much to gain from naming its meaning-making practices and embodied ways of knowing as forms of literacy. However, the binary between notational and non-notational dance literacies remains strong. When dance literacy includes only uses of notation systems, the majority of practices within the field are excluded. As an ardent supporter of notation systems, I see how they continue to be marginalized within the dance field when they are cast in opposition to embodied meaning-making practices. Must one replace the other? Rather, I assert that we need to look at both sides of the

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\(^6\) Multimodality as an aspect of dance literacy will be discussed more thoroughly in the following section of this chapter, Recent Lessons and Frameworks: Applications to Dance.
binary to critically analyze the inter-relationship as practiced by actual dancers within their respective contexts.

In this dissertation, I look analytically at literacy in dance, and acknowledge and reconcile two elements of literacy in dance — written and non-written — by bringing them together through exploration of their contexts in actual practices of reading and writing. This research examines relationships between dance and literacy in two ways. One investigates the ways in which written literacies — books, journal keeping, magazines, notations, — are used in dance practices and how they affect dance-specific knowledge. The other explores an expanded definition of literacy as interpretive and meaning-making practices dancers utilize in the studio. I ask “how are dancers literate” in various ways (visually, symbolically, alphabetically, kinesthetically) across different kinds of studio activities such as teaching and learning dance technique, making choreographic work, staging dances from notation scores, or documenting dances. My research explores the parameters of dance literacy (the definition and scope of “literacy in dance”) and dance and literacy (the ways dancers interact with written language and texts). In this dissertation, I turn a critical eye to the ways in which the contexts of literacy and dance shape one another by applying the lessons and questions emerging from Literacy Studies.

Understanding Literacy in Context

In order to understand the complexity of researching literacy in dance, I first turn to scholarship in Literacy Studies. Concepts and terminology from Literacy Studies are used to understand and analyze the meaning-making and knowledge production activities
of dancers in the studio. Debates and developments in the study of literacy open a window to a new view of how dancers understand their creative practices, as well as how roles within those practices operate and relate. Conversely, Literacy Studies can gain from dance an embodied understanding of literacy as meaning-making practice. Dance literacies — crossing between texts, bodies, and the senses — bring fresh perspectives on ways that new forms of literacy can function, especially non-alphabetic or non-text-based literacies. Dance literacies further complicate definitions about what is literacy and what counts as literacy, and how literacy can be an active shaping of knowledge through the body, mind, and senses.

Dance literacy in the context of this research is limited to studio-based practices in Western concert dance contexts such as teaching technique classes, rehearsing repertory, and making new dance works. Dance literacies stemming from text-based practices such as history and criticism, while vital and traditional literacy practices of the field, are not included in this research. Finally, this investigation is limited to dance practitioners’ perspectives of dance literacy as opposed to audience perspectives of dance literacy.

The Literacy/Orality Divide, and The New Literacy Studies

The study of literacy in the 20th-century is often marked by great debates and divides (Graff Myths; Street "New Literacy Studies"). The literacy/orality divide is perhaps one of the most enduring debates and is particularly salient to this dissertation. The chasm between literacy and orality separates the two into a series of binaries, cognitive consequences, and associations. Literacy is typically on the positive and more
powerful side, with orality on the negative and less powerful side. Literacy often is attributed with abstract reasoning, permanence over time, the accumulation of information over time, a separation between audience and speaker; it is also associated with spreading education, democracy, critical thinking, and cultural progress (Finnegan Literacy and Orality; Goody and Watt). Orality is marked as homeostatic, conflating myth with history; empathetic and participatory rather than objective; situational rather than abstract; and as collective rather than individual (Goody and Watt; Ong).

The literacy/orality divide has spurred arguments over whether literacy directly causes certain attributes or was one of many facilitating factors in creating those attributes. An autonomous model of literacy, as explained by Brian Street (“New Literacy Studies”), supports the ideology that literacy is solely causal of such cognitive consequences as spreading democracy and critical thinking. This autonomous model defines literacy in technical, de-contextual terms, “an autonomous variable whose consequences for society and cognition can be derived from its intrinsic character” (Street "New Literacy Studies" 431-32). This attributes to literacy an independent power, free from social, political, and other contexts, while failing to take into account how reading and writing activities or skills can change across different contexts and operate variably within ideological and power structures.

More recent scholarship in literacy studies shows relationships between literacy and orality, and proposes a model of literacy as facilitative of certain consequences rather than strictly causal of them. According to F. Niyi Akinnaso, literacy is a “facilitating agent” that “promot[es] the deployment of preexisting cognitive capabilities…facilitates the acquisition of certain cognitive skills and operations [but], it does not, in itself,
engender novel cognitive ‘capacities’” (139). For example, literacy can facilitate, but
does not by itself, stimulate critical thinking and empowerment. This “consequence” of
critical thinking and empowerment is most salient among marginalized populations who
have been denied access to literacy and means of political involvement, and in situations
where literacy is used as a means of social, political, or religious control (Collins and
Blot Literacy and Literacies; Cornelius; Ginzburg; Greene). Under such oppressive
power structures in which literacy is denied to groups of people, obtaining literacy can
function in an emancipatory way. When literacy is commonplace or assumed to be freely
attainable, this “consequence” is less likely.

Brian Street traces the origins of the autonomous model and the shift to
recognizing the ideological connections between literacy and “cultural and power
structures in society” and a “variety of cultural practices associated with reading and
writing in different contexts” ("New Literacy Studies" 434-35). Spurred by
groundbreaking studies such as Harvey Graff’s The Literacy Myth, this shift brought
about the New Literacy Studies in the 1980s, Street asserts. Literacy scholarship turned
toward investigating literacy within its historical, social, and cultural contexts, and
prompted attention toward ways that literacy and orality mix ("New Literacy Studies").
During the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, scholars began to question the autonomous view of
literacy, as well as the dominance of the orality-literate divide and the efficacy of so-
called cognitive consequences attributed to literacy, such as critical thinking, personal
empowerment, objectivity, freedom of expression and interpretation, and cognitive ability and intelligence.  

In “Not by Words Alone: Reclothing the ‘Oral,’” Ruth Finnegan analyzes and builds on the anthropological work of Jack Goody to argue that “orality” is actually multimodality. She argues that casting the literacy and orality binary places the emphasis on modalities of language in written or spoken delivery, or relegates the “oral” to everything else that is non-written. She writes, “First, the term [oral], has many ambiguities, not least that between 1) what is spoken, uttered through the mouth and 2) everything that is not written (the first thus excluding physical movements, gestural systems, or instrumental music, the second including them)” (Finnegan "Reclothing" 284). A narrow focus on a literacy/orality divide disguises the importance of other modalities such as smells, tastes, music and rhythms, iconography, or movement, and relegate analyses of oral literature or oral performance to a transcription of words only, excluding these other modalities. She continues:

It is true that for something to be termed ‘oral’ at all we would (probably) expect some aspect of voice to be somehow involved, but this can only be the starting point for a series of questions about the range of dimensions and media with which it might be interwoven — visual, auditory, tactile, kinesic, proxemic, material, and music resonances, pictorial associations, evocations of written words (that too), somatic presences, and movements. In practice, most forms labeled ‘oral’ turn out to have some element of multidimensionality about them. (Finnegan "Reclothing" 285)

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“Orality” is in many cases, actually multimodality. Marking orality as multimodality is salient to the study of dance literacy. The literacy/orality tension persistently demonstrated by dance literacy scholarship supports the notion that orality is taken for granted as everything-that-is-not-written literacy. Within the literacy/orality tension in dance literacy, literacy-as-notation is juxtaposed with literacy-as-embodied knowledge or multimodal processing, placing dance-specific written scripts and symbol systems opposite body-to-body multidimensional transmissions. Multimodality, particularly as a component of multiliteracy and its relevance to the consideration of dance literacy, will be discussed further in the following section of this chapter, Recent Lessons and Frameworks: Applications to Dance.

Shaped by the social and cultural turn during the 1970s and 1980s, the New Literacy Studies (Street "New Literacy Studies" 431) began to examine the ways in which literacy appears in people's lives, and how literacy differs across changing contexts of place, time, culture, or purpose. New definitions of literacy were sought that highlight distinct viewpoints about relationships between literacy and its contexts, opening up possibilities for difference between practices within their contexts.

**Expanding Definitions of Literacy**

The on-going struggle to define literacy has been an important development in the Literacy Studies field. In a practical sense, definitions extend or withdraw access to social programs or educational funding by deciding what does or does not "count." By asking

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8 Early work includes scholars such as Street Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy; Cook-Gumpertz The Social Construction of Literacy; Scribner and Cole The Psychology of Literacy; Graff The Literacy Myth; Barton Literacy; the New London Group, Brandt, and Heath Ways with Words and "Protean Shapes in Literacy Events."
what literacy is at its core, we can question the value and politics of the definition game.

When literacy is limited to mechanical acts of reading and writing letters, or when literacy expands into new domains of knowledge, winners and losers emerge as they are categorized into or out of the definition, either toward or away from the power and privileges associated with literacy. Considering the power and consequences historically attributed to literacy, inclusion or exclusion from the definition of literacy brings significant consequences for education, public policy, and funding. Conversely, there is much to lose through the stigma of receiving the label “illiterate.” In this regard, I seek a framework for defining parameters for dance literacy.

With the advent of the New Literacy Studies, interest grew in defining literacy, either in tying it to specific contexts or expanding it as a universalizing concept. With the expansion and recasting of literacy, its definition has been debated, updated, and remolded many times. Definitions of literacy range from strictly functional or mechanical work with letters, to conceptual, knowledge-based domains, to specific skills of interpretation and composition. I review the following definitions of literacy in order to compare them and to explore the breadth of defining literacy in context.

The Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of literacy is first “the quality, condition, or state of being literate; the ability to read and write,” and second “the ability to ‘read’ a specified subject or medium; competence or knowledge in a particular area” ("Literacy, N."). However, as we have seen, literacy is not so simple as a dictionary definition might imply. The OED definition does not elaborate on the complexity of what it means to be literate, or what skills or uses of reading and writing count toward being
literate. Vague and simplistic definitions are at the root of many problems with understanding and studying literacy.

Some definitions emphasize the skills of reading and writing, or contrast school-based with non-school-based literacies. Carl F. Kaestle describes two dimensions of literacy: a vertical dimension of school-based literacy with grade-level achievements; and a horizontal dimension of “functional” literacy in everyday and practical situations that occur outside of school settings (78). The texts we choose to read and write in our time away from school differ greatly from those of the essays and textbooks we encounter at school. Deborah Brandt notes the tendency in educational policy to:

equate literacy only with the technical matters of decoding or encoding of written language, a literacy lodged merely in discrete linguistic and scribal skills such as sounding out, spelling, or semantic fluency... as if it were a decontextualized skill, neutral, self-contained, portable, a skill that can be acquired once and for all and used and measured transparently without regard to contextual conditions. (3-4)

A technical, decontextualized view of literacy assumes that mastery of decoding letters and words on a page leads to ready mastery of any and all uses of the written word. Not unlike the autonomous model, this view fails to take into account how the skills of encoding and decoding depend on the particular situation. For example, in her article “Essayist Literacy and Other Verbal Performances,” Marcia Farr describes the “essayist literacy” of the academy: a style of discourse and writing instruction in which claims and information are cited, standard syntaxes and spelling applied, the text is logical and ordered, and the author is usually invisible and authoritative. The ideology of essayist literacy considers itself as the pinnacle of literacy, and other uses of reading and writing are considered less valuable. If one cannot compose within this discourse, one is not literate. However, essayist literacy would be wholly out of place in a mommy-blog, prose
fiction, or kitchen appliance manuals, all examples of genres of written texts that have their own standards and values.

Even the meaning of literacy within the American school system has changed over time. James Collins and Richard Blot trace the changing conception and purpose of literacy in the United States from a moralizing and character-building for the middle and working classes in the common schools of the 19th-century, toward a testable, measurable, and technical skill in 20th-century curriculum-tracked classrooms ("Literacies and Power").

Harvey Graff’s study, The Literacy Myth, exposes the ways in which morality and compliance to middle class ideals were mapped on to literacy and education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Graff documents several myths about literacy that persist today: namely, that literacy in and of itself is the key to obtaining a middle-class economic station, to social mobility, and to sanctioning morality. The literacy myth is powerful because there are elements of truth within it. To succeed in modern society, one must be able to read and write, particularly within certain contexts of education and business. However, obtaining literacy does not in and of itself guarantee a successful career, which also depends on one’s educational achievement, networking capabilities, placement in particular socio-economic classes, and on the economic realities of one’s culture. The literacy myth minimizes ascriptive qualities such as race, gender, or class, and social, political, and economic ideologies and systems. Accompanying myths include the power of literacy to lift people out of poverty without regard to overarching structures of social order, and the equation of illiteracy with criminality. The literacy myth is at the heart of the debate about the causal vs. facilitative nature of literacy. When left
unchallenged, myths about literacy demonstrate belief in the causal nature of literacy to bring about various ends.

Another set of definitions connects social and linguistic contexts with literacy. In this view, definitions of literacy align with communicative competence, or ways of using reading and writing, and social knowledge about their appropriate uses. Jenny Cook-Gumpertz situates language and literacy within social contexts:

As socially constructed, literacy is best regarded as part of an ideology of language, a sociocultural phenomenon where literacy and orality coexist within a broader communicative framework not as opposites, but as different ways of achieving the same communicative ends. (3)

As Cook-Gumpertz asserts, orality and literacy need not be mutually exclusive of one another. Ideas are expressed differently in spoken and written language because they are different modes of transmission. Literacy is more than just encoding and decoding; it is purposefully and meaningfully applying “skills” associated with literacy. Cook-Gumpertz’s conceptualization is important to expanded ideas of literacy because it situates literacy within other modalities for communication and knowledge production. Other modalities include oral/aural, physical and kinesthetic, spatial, rhythmic, visual, verbal and language-based, and symbolic and written means of communication. I will discuss these modes and multimodality in the next section of this chapter. When literacy is not positioned against or above orality and other modalities, the meaning-making core of literacy encourages growth of understanding in how literacy functions.

9See also Farr “Essayist Literacy” for descriptions of communicative competence in social origins and mixing oral and written texts; and Heath Ways with Words for her study of language and literacy practices across race and social class.
Additional definitions stretch literacy beyond decontextualized skills and written texts toward conceptual, knowledge-producing domains. Perhaps Graff’s definition provides a summary for the contextualization of literacy:

We define literacy here not in terms of values, mentalities, generalized knowledge, or decontextualized quantitative measures. Rather, literacy is defined as basic or primary levels of reading and writing and their analogs across different media, activities made possible by a technology such as alphabets, syllabaries, pictographs, and other systems, which themselves are created and used in specific historical and material contexts. (Myths 37, emphasis added)

In Graff’s definition, literacy distills as reading and writing across different modes within their historical and social contexts. New literacies sometimes describe a set of reading and writing practices of a given field. Other times they seek to capitalize on the prestige and value afforded literacy in order to advance particular domains of knowledge with or without attention to what constitutes reading and writing in their particular contexts. The expansion of literacy acknowledges that literacy is not a monolith, that literacy practices vary, and that the use of texts and engagement with language is diverse. Ambiguous conceptions and unexamined definitions of literacy continue to support myths about literacy. The growth of many literacies deserves scrutiny through contextual grounding to prevent trivializing literacy, and its overuse renders it meaningless.

While it is not possible to create an all-encompassing definition of literacy, these examples highlight several elements: the role and uses of language; the communication of ideas and/or creation of knowledge; crossing modes of transmission; and the importance of context and purpose. Despite an expansion of literacy, tensions about “what counts” as literacy persist. The autonomous model and other definitions as identified by Graff’s literacy myth persist today in calls for school reform based on the overemphasis on
testing and the common core curriculum. The power ascribed to literacy is strong, and marginalized ways of knowing stand to gain recognition as new literacies. While acknowledging established power differentials and the possibilities for new forms of power, this dissertation goes beyond the issues to capitalizing from them. By highlighting the changes in conceptions and definitions of literacy over time and context, I hope to show that there is room for examining dance literacy critically and contextually.

Recent Lessons and Frameworks: Applications to Dance

Recent approaches to studying literacy ask questions about literacy in context. How do people use reading and writing in varied experiential settings, at work, at school, at play or leisure, for civic, economic, or social purposes? How are these uses of literacy similar, different, or even at odds with one another? What roles does literacy play in how people go about their business, interact with customers, friends, or family? How does literacy enhance or prevent access to certain statuses, benefits, or power? As seen in the previous section, literacy scholars continually re-discover that the social construction of literacy is just as important as the “skills” of literacy, and that literacy’s social construction often determines which “skills” count or don't count.

Today, recognition of literacies goes beyond written texts. The terms literacy, reading, and writing are used in reference to meaning-making activities or acquiring knowledge or skills. For example, visual literacy often refers to interpreting or creating visual images such as paintings, comic books, or even signage. Digital literacy often

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10 See Graff “The Literacy Myth at 30,” “Many Literacies: Reading the Signs of the Times,” and “The Literacy Myth” in Literacy, Myths, Legacies & Lessons for examples and analysis of the persistent continuation of the literacy myth and emergence of new myths about literacy.
refers to creating or understanding how to analyze, create, or evaluate information via digital technologies such as computers, smartphones, or social media. Visual and digital literacy adopt the concept of literacy to describe how people make sense of non-written texts, often words and images. Analogously, “reading” is an interpretive process, while compositional or creative acts operate as “writing” — not only appreciating visual or digital artifacts, but producing them for oneself. When applied to dance, these same constructs arise in critical examination of what literacies dancers use, and how. Where and how were these literacies learned? What uses of written literacies will be found? In what ways might dance literacies cross the literacy/orality divide?

**Literacy Events and Literacy Practices – Applications to Dance**

Foundational concepts for this dissertation include the ideas of “literacy events” and “literacy practices.” Scholar Shirley Brice Heath developed the concept of literacy events as any activities in which reading or writing is involved: reading a book to a child, making a grocery list, seeing/hearing the news read by a reporter, or writing an academic paper, for example. Shirley Brice Heath’s definition of a literacy event specifically notes “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interaction and their interpretive processes” ("Protean Shapes" 445). Heath’s accounts of literacy events with residents of Trackton, a small, African-American, working-class community in the Piedmont Carolinas, demonstrate how literacy events are intertwined with oral language. This includes filling out application forms while receiving verbal instructions, or listening to a Girl Scout’s cookie sales pitch while browsing the accompanying cookie folder. In each event, the importance given to speech or writing
varies (445-56). Not everyone present need be involved with the written text in a literacy event, nor do the written texts exist in a vacuum apart from the actions and contexts framing them. In addition to verbal speech, however, gesture, rhythm, and the kinesthetic sense will have roles to play in my examination of dance literacy events.

Various contexts of these events create literacy practices, “common patterns using reading and writing in a particular situation...[or] social practices associated with the written word” (Barton 36-37). Literacy becomes literacies as researchers discover and reinforce different uses of alphabetic texts. The way a person engages with the morning newspaper differs from how that person reads a story to a child or combs through an academic paper; nor would it be appropriate to approach each of these literacy activities in the same manner.

Dance literacy events could include making denotations in choreography journals or demonstrating movement from a notation score. Dance literacy events can and do revolve around alphabetic or notational texts, but they also make use of multimodal texts. Examples of these events could include using improvisation scores\(^\text{11}\) to generate choreography or reading the bodies of one’s dance students for technique proficiency. Switching between vocabularies, such as French ballet terminology and kinesiological jargon, also constitutes dance literacy events. Within literacy practices, we find ideologies of literacy, functions of literacy, issues of access to literacy, and complexity in the roles of the players involved. This dissertation examines how dancers interact with alphabetic/notational texts as well as movement/embodied texts. It asks who acts more

\(^{11}\)See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Improvisation Scores.”
often as readers or as writers in dance literacy, and in which settings? Literacy events and literacy practices serve as focal points for beginning a discussion of dance literacy in this study.

**Multiliteracies, Multimodality**

Many of the “new” literacies do not make use of written texts exclusively but include visual, participatory, and auditory texts. Dance literacy troubles mutually exclusive conceptions of literacy and orality. Scholars such as Jenny Cook-Gumpertz, Ruth Finnegan, and Shirley Brice Heath have demonstrated how literate and oral communications are frequently present at the same time. Once literacy is attained, it does not necessarily replace orality, but supplements, enhances, or juxtaposes it. Dance literacies by their nature cross physical, linguistic, aural, visual, and written modes. In addressing this complex crossing of modes, I look to studies of multiliteracies and multimodality, and of orality and literacy (See Table1.1).

**TABLE 1.1 MODE CATEGORIES: DANCE ARTISTS, MULTILITERACIES, MULTIMODALITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes Used by Dance Artists</th>
<th>Multiliteracies</th>
<th>Multimodality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Visual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesthetic/Tactile</td>
<td>Gestural, Spatial</td>
<td>Gestural, Spatial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language/Verbal</td>
<td>Spoken-Linguistic</td>
<td>Language, Verbal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aural/Musical</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>Speech, Sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabetic/Notational</td>
<td>Written-Linguistic</td>
<td>Language, Textual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode Ensembles</td>
<td>Multimodal (interconnection of modes)</td>
<td>Mode Ensembles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12 See Cook-Gumpertz *The Social Construction of Literacy*; Finnegan *Literacy and Orality*, and “Literacy and Non-Literacy”; and Heath *Ways with Words*. 
In the 1990s, a cohort of scholars dubbed The New London Group\(^\text{13}\) developed the concept of multiliteracies. Multiliteracies engage with a dynamic system of representation beyond language alone, including linguistic, visual, aural, symbolic, gestural, or spatial aspects of meaning-making (Cope and Kalantzis 5). As media increasingly relied more heavily on images, sounds, and other elements in addition to text, members of the New London Group saw the need for developing pedagogies for literacy that included multimodal media. Traditional literacy pedagogy addresses alphabetic reading and writing, whereas multiliteracies pedagogy addresses the ways images, sound, spatial patterns, combine with alphabetic text to communicate the whole message. Multiliteracies account for the many layers of meaning found in diverse literacy events.

In addition, multimodality, as described by Gunther Kress, positions the body at the center of one’s interaction with the world for meaning-making purposes (“Literacy Learning” 184). Multimodality occurs through multiple modes — visual, aural, spatial, linguistic, and gestural — that are read and interpreted together. Modes, according to Kress, “are a result of a social and historical shaping of materials chosen by a society for representation” (Social Semiotic 11). Therefore, what constitutes a mode may change according to the context of the literacy event. When discussing multimodality, one must consider what areas are covered by a particular mode, what does a particular mode do or

\(^{13}\) The New London Group is a group of academics who met in 1996 to discuss the development of literacy pedagogy that could address how literacy, as a means of communication, changes within a world in flux due to globalization and growing cultural diversity, and the emergence of new technologies.
not do, and how does it function with other modes to communicate. Multiliteracies and multimodality occur as modes of meaning-making overlap — visual with verbal, tactile with aural, and so on. They also implicitly include cultural and social aspects of such knowledge-making.

Multiliteracies and multimodality, with other New Literacy Studies concepts, open the door to ways of knowing, understanding, and meaning-making inherent to dance. Dancing requires multimodal engagement to create dance-specific knowledge. To “know” dancing, I recognize movement and patterns in other bodies, feel momentum and gravity, speak descriptions and rhythms, touch the floor or dance partners, and move my own body in space and time. According to dance educator Tina Curran, dance literacies are also built on reading/writing constructs, and by gaining and using dance-specific knowledge to communicate, learn, understand, and interpret dance cognitively and physically. Dance has typically been considered a primarily “oral” art form due to the primacy of body-to-body transmissions, such as when a teacher demonstrates a movement sequence to a student. Dance relies on multimodality because its transmission crosses kinesthetic, visual, aural/musical, tactile, and verbal modes. For example, many dance teachers will sing, count, or speak dance words in rhythm while they physically demonstrate a movement sequence to students who both watch the demonstration and simultaneously mark\textsuperscript{14} the movement with their bodies. Body-to-body transmissions include visual, physical, verbal, and even written modes of communication.

\textsuperscript{14} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Marking.”
**Visual Mode**

The visual mode is present anytime dancers see or view movement, video, or symbols and is an assumed aspect in most dance literacy events. The visual mode figures prominently in the demonstration of movement, in watching students in order to give feedback, or in watching a run-through of choreography. Furthermore, two major themes dominate visual reading in dance: reading choreography and reading bodies. Reading choreography involves discerning individual movements, phrases or sequences of movement, or the organizational structures of an entire dance such as theme and variations, ABA section patterns. Reading choreography also includes interpreting narrative or abstract meanings from a dance’s structure, dynamics, music, and production elements. In contrast, the visual reading of bodies narrows in scope to seeing and understanding how a body is executing movement, typically during technique teaching and learning. Rather than paying attention to the movement, one attends to the body — alignment of the pelvis or vertebrae, engagement of specific muscle groups, use of Effort qualities, and shapes and spatial designs of the body, for example.

**Kinesthetic/Tactile Mode**

Tactile and kinesthetic modalities comprise another major arena for multimodality in dance because dance is movement. Dancers use their kinesthetic sense to locate their bodies in space and to understand their bodies in action. The kinesthetic sense relays information about the body’s relationship to gravity, or the sharing of weight between bodies. Dancers “know” movement through proprioceptive senses: kinesthesia or “the feeling of movement”; feeling of position in space or vestibular sensations from the inner
ear; and impressions from viscera and organs (Todd 27). Through kinesthesia, we physically understand weight and force, coordinate our body parts in action (Todd 33). When we move, we program neuromuscular pathways that record and remember the actual “doing” of movement.

Touch, although distinct from the kinesthetic sense, can be an important aspect of the kinesthetic mode in a dance class. Touch cues given by dance teachers guide students to clarify their kinesthetic understanding of particular actions and of technique generally. Touch can place a student’s leg in proper alignment or provide a directional cue to sense that alignment. Touch can also communicate energetic intentions to sequence through the body. Dancers use touch cues when improvising to communicate with each other as they compose-in-the-moment — how much weight they might share and give or take when partnering, for example. Tactile and kinesthetic modes operate through sensing the body in action.

*Language/Verbal Mode*

Language and verbal modalities connect in this research and include spoken language, verbal instructions, and specialized vocabularies and jargon. Language and verbal modes very often happen at the same time as visual or kinesthetic modes. Dancers describe or narrate their actions when they teach dance phrases. Linguistic vocabularies provide cues on quantitative aspects of movement, such as direction, timing, or placing a name on a series of actions to create a shared understanding of them as a unit. Language can also convey qualitative information or provide imagery about *how* to perform actions. There is an element of the aural mode in the language/verbal mode because one hears
what is spoken. However, for the language/verbal mode, emphasis is placed on linguistic aspects, rather than on aural aspects — or if the language is written, the visual or notational aspects.

*Aural/Musical Mode*

The aural/musical mode encompasses music and ambient sounds played during dancing, counts and aural rhythms, and vocal sound effects. Surprisingly, this mode did not play as prominent a role in the practices observed for the dance artists in this research as I expected. The aural mode took a backseat to the type of content it was delivering, which was most often language and verbal descriptions. However, the musical aspect of this mode often delivered qualitative information to the dancers about how to perform or when particular actions were to occur.

*Alphabetic/Notational Mode*

The final mode observed was the alphabetic/notational mode. For the purposes of this research, I am combining the two modalities. This mode encompasses uses of written scripts, whether they are alphabetic or based on a dance notation system, such as Labanotation or Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation. It also includes books and magazines, written notes and journaling, and other idiosyncratic notations used by dancers. In terms of reading and writing practices, I found different events inside and outside the studio. In-studio events focused on the learning of choreography or movement concepts, and documentation. Outside-of-studio events focused on personal-professional development and preparation for class and/or rehearsal.
Dancers read movement and write choreography through multimodal transmissions. Particular modes may be more or less present in certain contexts than in others, which influences the ways in which those particular dance practices cultivate dance literacies. Considering multimodality and multiliteracies along with literacy events and literacy practices allows analysis of the ideologies, functions, and roles surrounding dance literacy.

Studies of Orality and Oral Literature

Dance “texts” are akin to oral literature, as studied by scholars such as Ruth Finnegan. Finnegan’s study of composition and performance in oral cultures is particularly instructive as an example of bridging the divide between literacy and orality. Her work is salient for literacy in dance because most concert dances are currently composed not through written texts but through body-to-body transmissions and improvisation.15 Finnegan’s work shows how oral cultures do create oral literature, a challenging assertion at the time it was written in the 1970s and 1980s. Literature, as the expression of creative and intellectual thought, held the key to bridging a gap between literate and non-literate societies (Finnegan "Great Divide"). If oral cultures create oral literature, Finnegan argued, they too are capable of creative and intellectual thought.

15 See the following texts for orality, oral transmissions, literacy/orality divide: Connerton How Societies Remember; Finnegan Literacy and Orality; Heath Ways with Words; McHenry and Heath. "The Literate and Literary: African Americans as Readers and Writers - 1830-1940"; Hahn Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance.
Finnegan identifies differing conceptions and practices between literacy and orality regarding composition, memorization, authorship, and performance. Oral literature affords an amount of elasticity, in memorization and transmission. She summarizes four assertions regarding oral literature:

1. The text of oral literature is variable and dependent on the occasion of the performance, unlike the fixed text of a book...

2. The form of composition characteristic of oral literature is composition-in-performance, i.e. not prior composition divorced from the act of performance...

3. Composition and transmission of oral literature is through the process mentioned above and not (as we once thought) through word for word memorization...

4. In oral literature, there is no concept of a ‘correct’ or ‘authentic’ version. There is no fixed text and all versions are equally authentic as performed... (italics in original Literacy and Orality 88-89)

Finnegan questions what is transmitted in oral and literate modes. The “how” of transmission is important in determining the “what” of transmission including particular texts, fixed versions of a single performance, “a storehouse of known formulae and themes,” or even skills for using both-and/either-or texts and formulas (Literacy and Orality 169, 71, 73).

The idea of “exactness” of text as criteria for transmission is primarily a construct arising from the interaction with and uses of written literature, rather than pertaining to oral literature. Ruth Finnegan and Walter Ong describe how oral memorization is not word-for-word but according to rhythms and formulas (Finnegan Literacy and Orality; Ong 57-58). The idea of a “fixed text” to be memorized word-for-word is anathema when

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16Finnegan’s work centers primarily around composition-in-performance, which is a form of improvisation, but her study does include instances of pre-composed oral literature.
the text is composed and re-composed with each performance — there is no written text to “act as a yardstick of accuracy” (Finnegan Literacy and Orality 81). It is not that knowledge is poorly preserved or transmitted in oral cultures, but that ideas of what is preserved and transmitted are much different.

Dance works are a form of oral literature when they are created and transmitted body-to-body without fixing them into writing. Through oral-physical transmission, dances evolve and change with new performers and new performances. In many dance performance traditions, composed dances are considered “alive” as they are passed down from dancer to dancer. For example, Selma Jeanne Cohen’s “The Problems of Swan Lake” investigates the fact that although the many Swan Lakes we see today are not the same Swan Lake from 1895, they do resemble it to varying degrees in staging and choreography. Through body-to-body transmissions, the exact original performance is lost, but not mourned. Some specific dance steps, phrases, stage groupings, or rhythms may be altered, but the essential nature of the dance is maintained.

With the advent of recording methods like dance notation and video, questions about “exactness” and the “what” of transmission enter the picture. What is to be preserved — the single performance, the rules of the movement style — and to what extent is it flexible for alteration? A performance may be “correct” either by accuracy of steps or by capturing the “spirit” of the dance. Dance critic Jack Anderson poses this question in relation to the famous thirty-two fouettés of Swan Lake in his article “Idealists, Materialists, and the Thirty-Two Fouettés”: must the ballerina performing

17 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Fouetté.”
Odette/Odile execute thirty-two fouettés in her Black Swan variation, or will an equally flashy and technically contemporary alternative suffice? How can new performers know or learn the movement style and tradition from a fixed form, like a score or a video? Dance notation scholars and dance critics have argued that through dance notation the exactness of the original and the choreographer’s intentions can be preserved and recorded; that dance notation provides a yardstick of accuracy. However, body-to-body transmission is what most often lends authenticity to a performance because the dancers learn from the choreographer, from an original dancer, or from another agent authorized to pass on the choreography. The reproducibility of a dance as a text becomes paramount in instances of its restaging, especially with new dancers. How well does a new performance or staging measure against either the letter of the law and/or the spirit of the law — usually the original dance text or performance? To what extent is the choreography faithfully represented, including stylistic elements, expected physicalities and the training habitus embodied by the dancers?

The similarities between Finnegans’s oral literacy and dance composition diverge here. Unlike the performers and oral literature studied by Finnegans, choreographic works in modern/contemporary and ballet traditions often become fixed dance texts, and choreographers are ascribed authorship and control over their compositions. Choreographic works are presently not shared freely as part of a community; they are

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18 For literature in Labanotation regarding authenticity of performance, reproducibility, and preservation of the choreographer’s “true intentions” see: Van Zile “What is the Dance? Implications for Dance Notation”; Howell, Valerie Preston-Dunlop, et. al. “Résumé of a Symposium on Dance Literacy”; Topaz “Reconstruction: Dead or Alive? Authentic or Phony?”; Preservation Politics ed. Jordan; “Philosophical Issues Related to Notation and Reconstruction” panel discussion in Choreography and Dance; Barnes “Reconstructions: Dead Ducks Do Not Fly.”
economic and intellectual commodities. However, the differences and commonalities between written and oral literature outlined by Finnegans and the notion of dance literacy (as orality/multimodality and uses of notation systems and alphabetic scripts) can guide the examination of dance literacy practices with regard to questions about the nature of a dance text, and its reproducibility, composition, and authorship.

Defining Dance Literacy

**Literacy/Orality Tensions in the Evolution of Dance Literacy**

Part of the difficulty in defining dance literacy lies in the relationship between writing and dance. Much of dance activity — taking class, improvising, setting choreography — is multimodal. Dancers most frequently learn movement through viewing physical demonstrations or spoken guided explorations, not through written texts.\(^\text{19}\) Choreography is primarily passed down through body-to-body transmissions or is generated through improvisational structures. The word choreography derives from the Greek words *khoreia* (movement in unison, from *khoros* for chorus) and *graphia* (writing), yielding “movement writing.” Composing dances, despite its origins in the verb to *choreograph*, does not primarily involve writing. Composing and writing are essentially separate activities. However, this was not always the case.

In *Choreographing Empathy*, Susan Foster chronicles the emergence and development of the concept of choreography. The first uses of *choreography* (as the French *chorégraphie*) appeared in 16th-century dancing manuals in reference to the

\(^{19}\) However, many dance technique books are published every year, and dance artists can and do sell their choreography as word notes and videos through workshops such as those hosted by such regional organizations as the Omaha Dance Teachers’ Association, or via websites such as danceart.com or nda.varsity.com, which offer various teaching and recital resources for studio teachers.
writing of dance sequences in letter notations or symbol notations (16-17). Beauchamp-Feuillet notation (see Fig. 1.1) systematized French court dance steps through notation. Choreographers or dancing masters could read and write dance manuals, as well as sell and circulate their dances and teaching materials. According to Foster, “Dance became authored for the first time” (30). Dance was authored in the sense of being composed and owned by a specific person, and made available as an economic commodity.

FIGURE 1.1 TWO PAGES OF BEAUCHAMP-FEUILLET NOTATION FOR GIGUE A DEUX, A DUET JIG FROM CHOREOGRAPHIE BY RAOUL-AUGER FEUILLET, 1701

20 Images for Fig. 1 from Raoul-Auger Feuillet Choreographie, 1701, http://publicdomainreview.org/collections/collection-of-dances-in-choreography-notation-1700/.
Amateur dancers from the upper echelons of 16th-century society purchased manuals and lessons from dancing masters to keep current with the dances of the court necessary for participation in court life. In this ecosystem, Beauchamp-Feuillet notation and written choreography flourished.21 By the 18th-century, notation and court dance practices grew out of favor, replaced by professional ballet dancers performing story ballets with written narratives. Foster notes one significant continuation of this usage of choreography in the 19th-century in Carlo Blasis’ *Elementary Treatise (Choreographing)*.

However, choreography in this context referred to arranging steps rather than the invention of new dance steps.23 As use of notation waned, the meaning of a choreographer changed to reflect the composing aspect rather than the writing aspect.

Choreography returned full-force in the early 20th-century in modern dance24 and Broadway programs to specify an “author of an original work” (Foster *Choreographing*).

Authorship of the dance, the choreography, was assigned to the person who ostensibly created, taught, and arranged dance steps and spatial formations of bodies on

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22 Carlo Blasis was one of the earliest ballet theoreticians whose work aided in the codification of classical ballet.

23 Dance treatises provide yet another kind of dance literacy practice, separately from dance manuals. Dance manuals collected dance steps and choreographed dances, which amateur dancers would use to learn court dances. Dance treatises, on the other hand, contained lengthy expositions on the philosophy, aesthetics, and proper performance of ballet. See Blasis *An Elementary Treatise Upon the Theory and Practice of the Art of Dancing*; and Hammond *Ballet Basics*.

24 A period of concert dance spanning the early to the mid 20th-century. The name “modern dance” came from dance critics as a descriptor of concert dancing of artists such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St. Denis, Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham, who rejected the ideals and aesthetics of ballet. Modern dance was “modern” in terms of novelty, but its concerns and aesthetics were not modernist. See note 24 regarding “postmodern dance” for further discussion.
stage. The functions of composition and creative ownership overtook the meaning of choreography and lost its connection to writing or using notational systems. In some contexts, the owner of the dance is not important. During the height of court dance, a few dance masters/teachers widely disseminated dance books and copied one another; social dances were shared culturally without an attributed author. Authorship of a dance allowed for its commodification: who was allowed to disseminate it, perform it, and exact monetary gain from its performance. Often, and especially from 20th-century concert dance and forward, a single artist, the choreographer, has received credit for creating the work. Authorship is separate from but related to composition: to compose a dance is to generate and arrange movement; to author a dance implies a measure of creative autonomy and input, ownership over the dance-as-product.

The authorship concept of composition shifted as modern dance emerged in the early 20th-century through the 1940s/50s, and its aesthetics and ideologies gave way to postmodern dance25 and its aesthetics and ideologies. Modern dance placed an emphasis on a lead dancer-choreographer as the creator-author-composer of dance masterworks. Veneration of master artists was one of many ideals of modernism and modern dance, which was in turn rejected by postmodern dancers, beginning in the 1960s. Collaboration, improvisation, chance procedures, and pedestrian tasks gained significance during the

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25 A concert dance form that evolved in the latter half of the twentieth century in reaction to the conventions of modern dance, incorporating such radical notions as the use of everyday movement and employing novel methods of dance composition. Dance scholar Sally Banes describes the complexity of defining postmodern dance well in Terpsichore in Sneakers. The problem begins with modern dance, the era generally understood to span from the early 20th-century until the 1960s. Postmodern dance is most commonly acknowledged as the choreographic and aesthetic practices emerging in the 1960s through the 1980s/1990s — dance in the period following modern dance. See also note 24 regarding "Modern Dance" for further discussion.
shift from modern to postmodern dance. Dances began to appear in programs as “directed
by” or “arranged by,” or merely “by,” rather than “choreographed by,” reflecting the
increased use of improvisational structures (Foster Choreographing 61). Eventually,
collaborative and improvisational modes of dance-making shifted the role of composition
away from a single choreographer-author to various models in which choreographers and
dancers share responsibility for generating and structuring dances.

Dance artists increasingly defined their activity as “making work” rather than
“choreographing,” part of the postmodern rejection of “old,” i.e. modern dance, and its
modernist artistic and power structures. Postmodern dance (and now contemporary
dance) features improvisational works, with choreographers and artists co-creating dance
as collaborative dance-making processes began and developed since the 1960s have
become more commonplace. A more collaborative model diverged from that of earlier
modern dance with its hierarchy of a lead dancer-choreographer as creator set well above
the dancers, although this distinction is still most popularly assumed by the general
population today. Composition, Foster notes, began to be more clearly separated into
improvisation and repertory in the 1980s, distinguishing between generating movement
and creating a specific dance work (Choreographing 69-70). However, general use of the
word choreographer to mean a person who composes or creates dances, rather than a
person who writes dances on paper, has not disappeared since its resurgence in the early
20th-century.

Distinctions between movement/writing and between composition/authorship
contribute to the complexity of defining parameters for dance literacy. Further,
scholarship on dance literacy divides between uses of notation systems (writing
movement), and domain-specific knowledge or analysis of movement (composition and meaning-making). Without an ecosystem such as that which ensconced Beauchamp-Feuillet notation, most contemporary notation systems such as Labanotation, Benesh Notation, or Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation, have not achieved usage levels of mass literacy. In my own experience as a Labanotation expert, I have met more dancers unfamiliar with any dance notation systems or only marginally familiar with one than dancers those who are fluent in one or more. However, these contemporary systems are used worldwide, if in small numbers. Benesh Movement Notation is used throughout the world, but most widely in the United Kingdom due to its implementation as a method for documenting choreography for the Royal Ballet in the 1950s, and its integration into the Royal Academy of Dance examination syllabus. Having been invented in Israel, Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation is the dominant dance notation system of that country and is primarily used for compositional purposes. The largest bases for Labanotation are in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Europe, although practitioners reside worldwide.

Despite this, the majority of members of the dance field cannot read or write in any of these notation systems because the systems are not systematically regulated into larger educational and professional institutions and structures. Most dancers are not exposed to them, and those who are do not typically adopt them into their everyday dance practices. Therefore, defining a large part of the dance field as illiterate, or as the less offensive term, non-literate, due to non-use of dance notation systems, seems counterproductive to the purpose and not representative of their knowledge of the field.
However, the “oral” — body-to-body — transmissions of dance must be taken into consideration if we are to study dance literacy.

**Dance Literacy: Aspects of Reading and Writing, Uses of Written Scripts**

In this dissertation, I examine dance literacy in three areas: reading, writing, and uses of written scripts. As my case studies will show, these three areas overlap in practice. I define dance literacy broadly as acts of reading and writing movement. Through a framework of dance literacy, we can examine how dancers, choreographers, notators, and viewers interact with dances, make sense of their artistic practices, and enact meaning-making in dance. Reading and writing employed in dance literacy become interpretive means of interacting with “texts,” of embedding and discerning meaning, of making sense of movement or choreographic information, of composing and performing, and of creating documentary texts. Roles of reader and writer are permeable within dance literacy, shifting with the context of the dance phenomenon or artistic practice. Dance literacy, as we will see in the following case studies, highlights the complexities of both literacy and dance.

In dance literacy, reading is a meaning-making process by diverse readers – audiences of live performances, critics, students of dance, even choreographers and dance dramaturgs. Multimodality provides the vehicle for reading dance. Through various modes — visual, kinesthetic, aural/oral, tactile, verbal/linguistic, alphabetic/textual — dancers process sensate information about what they see, feel, hear, and sense. Dancers then read this multimodal, sensual information and interpret it for various purposes — to respond during an improvisation, to learn a phrase of movement,
to clarify a rhythm, to hone a performance quality, or to revise a section of choreography, for example.

Further, the context of reading holds powerful influence. *How* one reads is guided by *why* one is reading – for enjoyment, to learn a dance phrase, to provide feedback to a choreographer, to correct a student’s technique, or to review a performance. Kinesthetic information, as well as visual information, can provide bases for readings and understandings of dances by readers and writers. Labanotation teacher for the LABAN Centre in London, Valerie Preston-Dunlop, discusses dancers’ perceptual habits and awareness of those habits, especially kinesthetic awareness, as a source for understanding dance (*Looking* 44-45). She asserts that as dance-makers, dancers require several perceptual strategies to draft and learn movement – how to see it, hear it, sense it in motion. Readers of dances draw from the content elements of a dance, such as shapes and trace forms made by bodies, gestures, dynamics, or use of stage space, as well as their own knowledge and experience, taking meaning from and injecting meaning into dance texts.

Readers of dances may use semiotic methods to interpret and understand dances. Barthes argues that images hold denotative or literal signs and connotative signs, which when compiled become rhetorical messages. Applying this construct to dance, one need only look to the formal or compositional elements of a dance and read their connotative possibilities. Nearly any compositional element holds denotative and connotative

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26Semiotics is marginally addressed in this chapter and in this dissertation, and it is not the core of my methodology. While there is overlap between dance literacies and semiotics, and both engage with “reading” and “writing/authorship,” they are not interchangeable. Both use discourses, dance compositions, and bodies as subjects of analysis, but my investigation of dance literacies does not adopt a wholesale appropriation of the semiotics methodology.
potential: proximity of dancers to each other could imply intimacy; unison movement could demonstrate a unified community or a lack of individualism; violent partnering might show conflict between antagonists. Gestures and images formed by bodies likewise create signs that act as referents to culture. The rhetoric of the choreography interpretively emerges across the dance text as whole. Although this dissertation does not include audiences, critics, or dance historians as readers of dances, they too possess dance literacy practices. Reading dances in performance, as a meaning-making enterprise for education, review, scholarship, or entertainment, comprises a substantial portion of dance literacy. However, these types of literacy practices are left to another study.

The complexity of reading lies in the relationships between modes and in relationships between the reader and the dance text. Since the development of the field of semiotics, the use of “text” has been blown wide open. A text is no longer bound to a written, scriptural, alphabetic, or notational form. Nearly anything can be a text — a dance, a painting, a cultural event, a t-shirt — and attendant meanings inscribed within and around these new texts become readable, analyzable. Further, the expansion of text from a written object to entities such as images, events, or dances grants the freedom to apply textual frameworks to these previously non-textual subjects. Movement and bodies in addition to written documents act as “texts” in dance literacy.

27 See the following for semiotics texts about text and meaning-making from texts: Rose Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials; Barthes Image-Music-Text, particularly the essays “From Work to Text,” and “Rhetoric of the Image”; Fish Is There a Text in This Class?; and Foster Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance, especially for her chapter 2 footnotes in which she directly addresses the applications of semiotics and poststructuralist theory to her dance meaning-making framework.
Writing has been deployed less readily than reading as we have seen previously in definitions of dance literacy. This may be in part due to the break between composition and writing in the historical development of choreography as a concept for dance-making. Further, writing has multiple associations: physical acts of inscription; acts of composition or expression; authorship over a creation; and documentation or record-keeping. Perhaps it is easier to imagine reading a dance as the act of viewing and understanding it than it is to imagine writing a dance without pervasive notation systems or other written scripts. However, if I am to examine dance literacy and dance and literacy, generating an understanding of writing as it applies to literacy is a necessity.

Writing encompasses several facets, which I examine in my case studies: composition, authorship, and documentation. These aspects are tied into writing as distinct yet overlapping. In dance, writing involves both the creation and handling of primary dance texts (i.e. choreographies, dances, improvisations), and creation and handling of residual texts (i.e. scores, journals, notes).

Writing is generating ideas and movement material, creating order, form, and sequence; it is the act of composition. Because of the body-to-body nature of dance-making, most choreographers work with live bodies to create their dances. The traditional dyad between choreographer and dancer that strictly divides those roles in making choreography is only one of several models employed, and one often challenged by dance artists today. The dualistic view is by far the most traditional, and choreographers generally still enjoy authorship rights to dances over/more so than their dancers (Butterworth "Choreographer"; "Cooks"). However, the notion of writers within dance literacy would include any and all composers and generators of dances, whether
choreographers or dancers. As seen in postmodern and contemporary dance practices, composition is frequently shared between the choreographer and dancers.

The concept of authorship of dance compositions is especially complex in dance where composition is shared among multiple authors, i.e. choreographers and their dancers. Multiple bodies create the text of the dance, which begs the question of who receives authorship privileges when generative roles are shared. Additional questions arise when dances are staged from notation scores and other written sources without the presence of the original choreographer. When the original company and dancers perform a dance, authorship and composition often dovetail. When someone other than the original authors (the choreographer and dancers) reconstructs dances, staging and performance decisions arise that may require the reconstructors (stagers, directors, dancers) to take creative responsibility that affects the dance. Are steps or group arrangements to be changed to suit the current performers? Has a gap in memory or missing notations left a hole in the choreography that needs to be re-created? How do reconstructors decide — as dance critic Jack Anderson asks about the infamous thirty-two fouettés in Swan Lake — whether to keep with the letter of the law as Materialist, or to follow the spirit of the law and choose a currently relevant and technically flashy dance step as an Idealist? In a sense, reconstructors act as authors of the dance as they are staging it.

Writing in dance literacy is also using notation systems or alphabetic scripts. When dancers notate movement, they are translating from visual to page, or from kinesthetic sense to page. Dancers may draw their own notation, such as pictograms or stick figures, or use an established system, such as Benesh or Labanotation. They may
also use word notes or prose journaling. Personal writing practices of dancers are varied. A final aspect of writing is documentation through notation systems and written scripts. The fixing of a text via a written script has historically been one benefit accorded to literacy. I include documentation within writing rather than reading because it is an act of generating a fixed form of the dance; documentation creates its own residual text that exists side-by-side with the living, moving dance text. These residual texts describe the dance steps, track the creative process, and preserve ephemeral traces of the body in written, fixed forms.28

Working critically with dance literacy, we can see how its expanded definition stands to create new knowledge about how dancers engage in meaning-making processes in the studio. We can also ask similar questions that literacy scholars have asked of written literacy, inviting a critical look at practices, definitions, and roles and relationships. In the following chapters, I will examine dance literacy events and dance literacy practices within the various forms of literacy used by the dancer-subjects in this research as aspects of dance literacy, and as aspects of dance and literacy.

Chapter 2, “Research Design and Subject Profiles” describes the research design and methodology of the research. Issues of data collection and analysis are discussed, as well as limitations, biases, and delimitations of the research. Finally, profiles for each of the research subjects is given, describing their dance training histories, cultural contexts, and the dance practices that were observed for the research.

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28 Dancers commonly use other forms of documentation, such as video. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I am primarily interested in written forms of documentation.
The next chapter, Chapter 3 “Dance Literacy: Multimodality in Reading and Writing,” focuses on dance literacy as multiliteracy to examine the multimodal literacy practices in the study. I search for commonalities across studio activities, and delineate differences in literacy practices among them. Dance literacies in Chapter 3 are discussed in terms of their contextualized practices, that is, how they function in a concrete way within their particular situations. Changing roles of reading/writing, making/viewing are also addressed as they arise.

Chapter 4, “Dance and Literacy: Intersections with Alphabetic and Notational Texts” is parallel to chapter 3, focusing on the alphabetic and notational literacy practices of the dancers, the ways in which dancers interact with written texts. This chapter also searches for commonalities and differences among these written literacy practices across studio activities. Sponsors of these literacies will be considered. As in chapter 3, dance literacies in chapter 4 are discussed as contextualized practices. Changing roles of reading/writing, making/viewing are addressed as they arise for each dance artist. Chapter 4 contributes to defining ways that written literacy intersects and informs non-written modes in dance, and vice versa.

The final chapter, Chapter 5 “Partnering Multimodal and Notational Dance Literacies,” summarizes commonalities and differences between the written and non-written dance literacies and dance literacy practices. This conclusion reconciles the separation of “written” and “non-written” literacies — the literate/oral divide — set up by the research. I explore how dance literacy and dance and literacy, multimodal and written/textual literacies overlap and work in tandem or at odds with one another within
the context of dance studio experiences. I note areas for further study that this research was unable to address at this time.
Chapter 2 Research Design and Subject Profiles

Research Design

This research uses a qualitative case study design to investigate “how are dancers literate” across several different kinds of studio activities. I ask how these dance literacies contribute to creating dance-specific knowledge. The scope of the research encompasses a diverse cross-section of sites for observing and analyzing dance interactions. These include studio-based activities of teaching and learning movement/technique; choreographing/making new work; and notating or documenting a work. Dancers play several roles in these contexts: teacher, student, choreographer, performer, dramaturg, and notator. By choosing these types of activities and roles, I purposely situated this research within studio-based practices, which often take place in formal or institutionalized settings (dance studios, dance companies, university dance programs), as opposed to social or informal dance practices that occur outside of such settings. The dance genres, by extension, are also delimited to those which are supported by formal and institutionalized studio-based practices, namely ballet and modern/contemporary dance and related fusions of theatrical/concert dance with other genres or styles of dance.

Subject Sample

The sample for this study includes a group of primary dance artists engaged in studio practices of teaching dance technique, making choreographic work, and
documenting dance. Criteria for participation in this study included: current engagement in a creative dance project or dance teaching situation in the United States; and interest in discussing dance literacy issues and in reflecting on his or her own creative and literacy practices. The group of primary dance artists was primarily selected from the Central Ohio region. However, artists involved in dance notation-based practices were recruited from Iowa and Israel\(^{29}\) due to the small and geographically dispersed availability of such dance artists. Additionally, dance students in a course taught by a primary dance artist, and secondary dance artists participating in making choreography were recruited as participants for the observation portion of this study only. This research did not study the dance students and secondary dance artists individually as subjects nor did it collect personally identifiable information about them. However, recordings of studio observations captured their dance movements, the questions they asked, and their verbal or movement responses to the teacher/choreographer about the movement, all of which was relevant to understanding how dance literacy creates and transmits dance-specific knowledge.

Subjects for my research were taken from a convenience sample that focused on currently practicing dance artists. They are dancers to whom I had direct access for interviewing and observing in the studio. They also represent a cross-section of dance literacy events and practices:

- Shlomit Ofer, a visiting Israeli dancer and expert in Eshkol-Wachmann Movement Notation

\(^{29}\) The Israeli dance artist was on a one year sabbatical at The Ohio State University to Learn Labanotation. Because I am a Labanotation expert and conducting my PhD research at Ohio State at the time of her sabbatical, we crossed paths, and I was able to recruit her as a primary dance artist.
• choreographer Bebe Miller, a professor of dance at the Ohio State University and choreographer of the Bebe Miller Company; Angie Hauser, an Ohio State graduate and dancer in the Bebe Miller Company; and Talvin Wilks, dramaturg for the Bebe Miller Company

• Meghan Durham-Wall, a contemporary dance professor at The Ohio State University, and Guyton Nee, a graduate student enrolled in her technique class

• Carol Maxwell Rezabek, a ballet teacher for the Dancer’s Edge, a youth dance studio with competition and ballet repertory companies in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

Study Procedures

Interviews are an excellent way to gain access to the thoughts and experiences of individuals or to a group of persons who share a common phenomenal experience. Oral history interviews especially do not seek to create the “generalizable knowledge” or predictive principles of the nature required for medicine or the hard sciences (Shopes 149-50). Ultimately, the strength in interviewing lies in the particularity and situated-ness of perspectives gained by studying individuals as cases.

The participating primary dance artists engaged in a series of two to three interviews, each lasting forty-five minutes to one hour. The initial interview focused on background/professional training, conceptions of dance literacy, and literacy practices. Subsequent interviews centered on the dance artists’ ideas about dance literacy based on the activities observed in the studio. Interviews and observations occurred during the Spring and Summer of 2012. All interviews were digitally audio- or video-recorded and transcribed, and artists were given the choice as to whether their interviews were audio- or video-recorded. The video-recording option was important since dancers often move as they discuss their creative work, and such visual movement information can be equally as important as verbal information.
Studio observations were conducted in classes and rehearsals led by each participating primary dance artist, as available. These observations focused on modes of transmission used in the studio (tactile, kinesthetic, visual, musical, symbolic) to convey movement information, choreographic concepts, and so on. In addition to observation notes, the observed rehearsals were videotaped, and selected sections transcribed, for further detailed analysis. Detailed field notes were made for each studio observation. Classes or rehearsals with children were not videotaped, and only observation notes were taken.

Fieldwork observations can range across levels of researcher involvement from complete participant (covert), participant as observer (overt “fan”), observer as participant, and complete observer (May 155-57). Observations in the studio are a special case. Studio life, generally speaking, occupies a unique place in a dancer’s life. It is a place of work and of physical practice with separate norms and connotations about use of space, bodily relationships, permissible actions, and so on. Adhering to studio etiquette limited the kind of observations possible per professional expectations. As an insider and outsider, I was able to navigate those expectations. I located myself on the periphery of the room so that I would not be in the way of the dancing space, and did not engage in disruptive conversation with dancers.

However, I did not ignore dancers when they chose to speak with me or ask questions. At times, primary dance artists would invite me into the space during a class discussion or ask my opinion about movement I was seeing. I had prior personal and professional relationships with a handful of the dance artists: Carol Maxwell Rezabek is a former teacher and studio colleague of mine; I was part of the Bebe Miller Company’s
2011 residency at the Krannert Center at the University of Illinois Urbana; I have taken classes from and with Meghan Durham-Wall; and Jill Guyton Nee and I were graduate student colleagues. The division between studio practice and social life were not absolute, as discussions about current projects often continue outside the studio. For example, Guyton Nee and I shared office space with the other graduate students, and when Miller’s company is in town, they often invite me out to eat with them. An expectation of complete separation outside of the interviews and studio observations would be unrealistic, but I was mindful about boundaries around interactions that were not relevant to the research.

Additional written and visual documentation from the primary dance artists, such as lesson plans, choreography notes, archives, scores, photographs, or performance and rehearsal video were used to study how interactions between written, verbal, and other visual forms contribute to dance literacy and create dance-specific knowledge. Gathering the additional written and visual forms of data allowed a more complete picture of the dance artists’ textual literacies, while studio observations primarily revealed non-textual literacies.

**Delimitations**

The research was delimited by several factors. Because the focus of the study was on literacy practices situated within their specific contexts, the sample size was purposely small. As stated earlier, the collection was a sample of convenience limited to dance artists to whom I had ready and easy access. Further, the research was delimited to Western concert dance practices (ballet, modern/contemporary dance, technique classes,
rehearsals for repertory and new work for the stage), which excluded social dance or participatory practices and non-Western dance historical forms. The scope of the research is therefore highly situated within the social, cultural, educational, and institutional contexts of the dance artist subjects, and does not attempt to lay claim to universality of the findings. Additionally, orienting the research to the dance practitioner’s point of view excludes dance literacies from an audience’s perspective, i.e. of concert-goers or dance critics.

Many of the dance artists in the research had an educational or professional connection with the Department of Dance at The Ohio State University. The influence of this program on dancers’ training, experiences, and values should be taken into consideration. The Ohio State connection may frame ideology about technique, choreography, and literacy of many of the dancers. However, prior and subsequent training, education, and career developments bring a level of diversity to the participants’ dance and literacy practices. The high educational level of all dance artists involved may also skew their practices toward particular modes. For example, frequent use of textual literacy may be present due to the large amount of academic and other types of writing involved in education, particularly in completing a degree in higher education and/or making a career as a dance professor or educator. Certain modes such as the language mode may be more prevalent as a result.

**Data Analysis and Internal Validity**

Data collection involved a series of semi-structured interviews and observations of the dance artists at work in the studio. These observations focused on the multimodal
means of communication the dancers utilized when teaching, learning, improvising, or choreographing. As a supplement to observation notes, classes and rehearsals were videotaped and excerpts were transcribed to support analysis. Additional written and visual documentation from the dancers, such as lesson plans, choreography notes, archives, scores, photographs, or performance and rehearsal video was used to study how interactions between written, verbal, and other visual forms, modes of transmission, and documents contribute to dance literacy and create dance-specific knowledge.

The data was analyzed using qualitative techniques of thematic analysis and grounded theory. Adele Clarke extends grounded theory into situational analysis by mapping situations, social worlds/arenas, and positional standpoints (xxii). Situational analysis takes into account narrative discourses, visual discourses, and historical discourses as they relate to and affect the phenomenon studied (Clarke xxxvi). Mapping offers a way to look at the complexity of interactions and relationships among elements, specifically to introduce discourses and contexts. Clarke proposes that situational analysis, with its emphasis on differences and positions rather than the “normal curve,” and with its goal of active and continual theorizing over developing finalized theories, brings grounded theory methods into the postmodern turn (294). Situational analysis places more emphasis on the constant comparison moniker of grounded theory — gather data, analyze, gather more data, analyze more, and so on — and makes room for the various postmodern concerns of power, discourse, context, complexity, and agency.

Situational analysis broadens the data field beyond the experiences of doing and of doers; it brings the phenomena, people, and experiences into social arenas, broader discourses and issues, and takes into account their “situatedness” in those contexts. For
example, I can connect the communication of kinesthetic experience and understanding within the studio to how that relates to discourses about embodied knowledge, dance making, technique, or dance notation uses. Maps can be used to position literacy events in relation to movement events and language events and can support theorizing about relationships between communicative practices and dance making, dance-specific knowledge, documentation, or authorship/ownership. Situational analysis argues for the situated nature of types of knowledge, “produced and consumed by particular groups of people, historically and geographically locatable” (Clarke xxv). Like the situational, contextual studies that are found within the New Literacy Studies\(^{30}\), the contexts and practices are particular to the situation and people studied. Lessons may be learned through similarities between situations, but they are understood as non-universal.

This mode of questioning included areas of so-called great debates in Literacy Studies, such as the literacy/orality divide, skills/knowledges/practices continuum, and constructs such as literacy events, literacy practices, and literacy sponsors. Additionally, notions such as multiliteracies and multimodality served as a theoretical grounding for making arguments about non-written dance literacies. These frameworks are somewhat flexible in the sense that they are structured around a mode of questioning about literacy and its various contexts (social, historical, cultural). Interview transcripts, field notes, and documents shared by artists were coded for concepts and themes seen in the data.

\(^{30}\) See Chapter 1 for explanation and discussion of the New Literacy Studies and the focus of scholars on situating literacy within historical, social, educational, or racial contexts.
Secondarily, my knowledge of movement analysis and aforementioned dance experience will inform how data is interpreted. Themes and categories of dance literacies emerged from the collected data, and then thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in the data relating to how the dance artist understands his or her own modes of transmission and uses of dance literacies in the studio.

Multiple sources of data, including interviews and observations and supplementary materials provided by the dancers, were used as a source for validity within the study. Together, they provided an avenue for triangulation and for gathering different perspectives on the topics discussed and dance literacies observed. Because I am also a dance artist with experience teaching, performing, choreographing, and notating and directing from scores, I am equipped with both insider knowledge and rapport with participants. This insider knowledge brings potential conflicts in data interpretation, regarding assumptions I may inadvertently have made during interviews and observations. To account for my potential bias, dancers were asked during interviews to clarify the meaning of terms used or experiences described in order to generate a richly detailed account from the participants’ point of view. Member checks were used, in which initial analyses were shared with participants, who were given the opportunity to clarify meanings.

31 I have studied Labanotation and Laban Movement Analysis. I hold advanced theory certification in Labanotation through the Dance Notation Bureau in New York. Although I studied Laban Movement Analysis, I have not gone through an official certification program to earn the CMA (Certified Movement Analyst) distinction. For additional description of Rudolf Laban and his associated theories/notation system, see note 1.
Subject Profiles

This section presents short profiles about the training, historical, educational, and social contexts of my research subjects. These profiles situate the dancers within their own dancing history as well as introduce their studio practices relevant to this research. The subject profiles section also addresses definitions of literacy/dance literacy given by the primary dance artists.

RikkudNetto — Shlomit Ofer

Shlomit Ofer Training History

I met Shlomit Ofer in the Fall of 2011 when she was a visiting dance scholar from Israel at The Ohio State University Department of Dance. She was visiting to study Labanotation and dance education while on sabbatical from Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv where she teaches dance education and Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation (EWMN).

Ofer grew up in Kibbutz Ma’anit, a rural, “small, closed community” (Ofer 1 May) in Israel outside of Tel Aviv. The rural, communal life was enjoyable to Ofer who describes her kibbutz education in the 1960s and 1970s as an attempt to create “new persons” (Ofer 1 May) after WWII, as preparing the children for community life, and as a progressive model of hands on, holistic, and practical education that included academic subjects as well as folk arts. Work, economic and material resources, and child rearing
were shared among all members of the kibbutz.\(^\text{32}\) As an adult, Ofer has chosen to live in the same kibbutz. She taught dance in its school for thirteen years before she became full-time faculty at Kibbutzim College.

Ofer’s education in kibbutz and her early dance training made a lasting impact on her view of dance and its place not just within her life but in the life of the community. Her dance studies began at age twelve in an after-school program when a local studio run by an American immigrant opened. According to Ofer, “dance is part of education, of educating the person. It’s not a matter of just performing, but it’s an art. It’s always connected to educating the wider person” (Ofer 1 May). Her dance training began with a modern dance style in which classes combined technique, improvisation, and composition. Ofer recalls the students, not only the teachers, choreographing dances. The studio director even brought in several guest artists of note from dance companies like Batsheva Dance Company to expose the students to professional-level dance. In the kibbutz high school, Ofer completed the dance-focused track, which meant additional dance classes along with her regular academic subjects. Dancing was integral to her education, her personal development, and to connecting with the community.

Following graduation from high school and her mandatory service in the Israeli army, Ofer returned to the same dance studio to take classes. Once again, Ofer found herself drawn to dancing because of the interpersonal connections she experienced with other dancers:

\(^{32}\) In Ofer’s kibbutz, all the children shared a house separately from their parents and were educated together in small groups incorporating everyday tasks and activities. Today some of these aspects have changed — children live with their own parents, students from outside the kibbutz may attend the schools, and members keep a percentage of their salary rather than giving it entirely to the community.
Some people were starting to come back being grown up, so they created a group of elder [adult, non-teenage] dancers.... We were working with a choreographer again and maybe performing some places, but it was nice being in a group that had some things in common. People were coming back from different places. The general feeling was [that] I had a place to be that connected me to dance. (Ofer 1 May)

In addition to taking classes and working with the adult performance group, Ofer began teaching classical ballet and introductory dancing classes for children. From there, she decided to make her career in dance education, so pursued her Bachelor’s degree at Kibbutzim College, and followed by an MA and a PhD at Haifa University. Her graduate research focused on dance literacy of children: on using Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation as a framework for evaluation in dance education, and on children creating their own notations to abstractly express movement concepts. With her teaching degree, she returned to her kibbutz school to teach dance to the elementary students and later became full-time faculty at Kibbutzim College.

While she was a student at Kibbutzim College, she met Tirza Sapir — a choreographer, teacher, and Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notator — an event that produced an important turn in Ofer’s dancing life. Ofer studied Eshkol-Wachman with Sapir and joined Sapir’s semi-professional dance company, RikudNetto. With RikudNetto, Ofer was able to continue dancing with a community group as “a professional hobby” (Ofer 9 May) and to develop her expertise in Eshkol-Wachman both as a conceptual, compositional system and as an abstract symbol system. Ofer also found an important evaluative tool and framework for teaching in Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation. For this research, Ofer shared the choreographic practices of RikudNetto.

*RikudNetto Compositional Process*
RikudNetto (ריקודנטו), which translates as DanceNet or clean dance, is a semi-professional dance company headed by Tirza Sapir. Ofer, like many of the dancers in the company, has danced with RikudNetto for nearly twenty years. Sapir uses the conceptual frameworks of Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation to compose her choreography with the company. Sapir creates movement instructions for the dancers working through cones, planes, and rotation, the building blocks of EWMN. The dancers then improvise using the structural guides given verbally by Sapir to generate manipulatable patterns of movement and systematic phrases that Sapir can arrange into choreography.

**FIGURE 2.1 BLANK EWMN STAFF SHOWING THE LOCATION OF BODY PARTS AND TIME UNITS**

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<td>Right Forearm</td>
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<td>Right Upper Arm</td>
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<td>Left Lower Leg</td>
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Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation (EWMN) was published in 1958 in Israel by dancer Noa Eshkol and architect Avraham Wachman. The staff for the notation is a grid arranged horizontally with a row for each body part; time moves from left to right across the page (See Fig. 2.1). Each vertical column denotes a unit of time. All movement is generally analyzed as one of three categories based on the trace forms it creates in space due to the relationship of the longitudinal axis of the limb to the axis of the movement: rotary movement, or rotation of a limb on its own longitudinal axis; plane movement, whereby the “longitudinal axis of the moving limb describes plane” as it moves at a 90° angle to the axis of movement; and curved surface or cone movement, in which the “longitudinal axis of the moving limb describes a curved surface... at an acute angle (less than 90 degrees)” to the axis of movement, i.e. a cone shape (Eshkol and Wachmann 6).
FIGURE 2.2 CATEGORIES OF ACTION: ROTATION, PLANE, CURVED/CONE

(Eshkol and Wachmann 9-11)
The three categories are akin to 1-dimensional, 2-dimensional, and 3-dimensional movement (See Fig. 2.2). EWMN takes 26 points in a sphere as its system of reference. Degree of movement and position in space are determined by the “zero position.” Each position is analyzed and read as a set of coordinates within this system of reference (See Fig. 2.3). For example, right arm begins by hanging straight down at zero position with

33 The twenty-six coordinates in the sphere relate to twenty-six of the twenty-seven spatial directions defined by Rudolf Laban’s system of movement analysis and notation.
coordinates (0/0), then rises forward along a plane until it is horizontal to the ground; it has moved 2 degrees to (2/0). Then the arm describes a cone-like movement ending to the side of the body to (2/2) (See Fig. 2.4).

FIGURE 2.4 EXAMPLE OF NOTATING ARM MOVEMENT

The Bebe Miller Company — *A History and Archive*

*Bebe Miller Training History, Bebe Miller Company*

Bebe Miller’s training is marked by eclecticism, improvisation, and art making. Recalling her training history, Miller shared, “there is a certain kind of eclectic middle that was really about training and [following my] interests that I think still serves me really well” (Miller 14 May). She began dancing as a child growing up during the 1950s and 1960s in New York, taking classes at the Henry Street Settlement in Alwin Nikolais-based movement from Murray Louis and Ruth Grauert. The Henry Street classes were
highly improvisational, exploring time, space, and energy, texture and volume. Miller recalls this as her first language of dance, that she “was there to learn how to imagine” (Miller 14 May). In high school and college, she learned West-African and Balkan dance. She had no “standing technique,” i.e. ballet or classical modern dance, until she attended a Cunningham workshop in Cincinnati in 1968. She was struck by Cunningham’s generosity in asking students to show compositions after the class, and offering questions and feedback, especially asking the students to “be willing to change your mind at any time” (Miller 14 May).

Miller graduated from Earlham College, a small, Quaker liberal arts school in Indiana, majoring in art rather than dance. After Earlham she returned to New York and worked in the library at Columbia University. During this time, she debated whether to attend graduate school in Library Science or Dance. Vera Blaine, then chair at The Ohio State University, offered her a fellowship, so she chose Dance. While at Ohio State, she took class from a variety of guest artists including Louise Burns, Gus Solomons, Lynn Dally, and Nina Weiner. Weiner’s technique classes at Ohio State stimulated another epiphany for Miller, “It was like a way of meeting hard work, meeting technique, of ‘don’t be satisfied, figure out how you’re not going to fall over.’ Very Tharp...Working with Nina [Weiner], I got really interested in that” (Miller 14 May). After earning her MA at Ohio State in 1975, she returned to New York and worked with Weiner. At this time, Miller also started teaching technique classes to fulfill her own interest in exploring movement.

In 1985, Miller officially founded the Bebe Miller Company. The first dancers stayed with the company for many years, bringing an eclectic mix of training and
physicality that influenced the development of the choreography. For example, Elizabeth Caron was very balletic, Nikki Castro was a former track athlete, Earnie Stevenson could lift anybody, and Renee Lemieux was expressive. In the beginning, Miller could create set phrase material to teach to the dancers and compose the choreography through manipulation of those phrases. With the addition of Scott Smith, who was trained primarily in contact improvisation, the company began more improvisational work. This felt like a return to Miller’s roots at Henry Street. However, during this phase, the improvisation led to set movement phrases. Eventually, as the company membership changed, the work evolved strategically: from dancers altering sequences created by Miller, to improvisation and partnering as an exchange between the dancers, to an increase of improvisation as a performative mode.

The change to an increasingly collaborative method of working was influenced by several factors. In 1998 during the making of Going to the Wall, Talvin Wilks joined the company as a dramaturg. His contributions changed the collaborative nature of the work. He introduced improvisational structures and games that became cornerstones of how the company generated movement and developed choreography. Around this time, there was a major shift in the make-up of the company with several members moving on to different opportunities or careers. Shortly after this shift in 2000, Miller became a faculty member at The Ohio State University, effectively ending the company’s tenure in New York.

The company evolved from a studio-based model of working where long rehearsals take place daily over time, to a more compact residency-based model. The company retained fewer dancers, changing personnel as dictated by each project and
dancers’ schedules. Working time was limited to short but intense residencies at universities, performance centers, and studios. With weeks or months between residencies, improvisation-as-a-performative-mode better served the company than developing and manipulating set phrase work that had to be relearned at each gathering. The eclecticism of Miller’s dance training mirrors how she works as a choreographer through following interests, asking questions, and exploring solutions with her collaborators.

_Talvin Wilks Training History_

Talvin Wilks is a playwright, dramaturg, and director. His theatre training is in movement-based methods such as those of Joseph Chaikin/Open Theatre and Talking Band. While at Princeton he studied with Jean-Claude van Itallie, learning playmaking, which Wilks describes as “an improvisational, movement-based kind of exploration” (Wilks 18 May) as opposed to playwriting in theatre. His time at Princeton gave him the primary grounding for his voice as a writer and theater-maker, working in “movement exploration, movement exploration with text, character improvisation, game techniques, a little [Augusto] Boal, which is a kind of movement-based theatre, Viola

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34 Joseph Chaikin founded the Open Theatre, an experimental theatre cooperative, in the 1960s whose performers worked collaboratively through improvisation to combine movement, text, and music to explore political and social issues. After the Open Theatre disbanded in the 1970s, former members founded the Talking Band in a similar spirit. Here, the traditional hierarchy of roles such as playwright, director, and actor, are blurred through the collaborative process.

35 Jean-Claude van Itallie was a playwright who worked with Joseph Chaikin in the Open Theatre whose works combine actor experiences, text, improvisation, movement, and music in non-linear storytelling.

36 Augusto Boal was a Brazilian theatre artist in the mid-20th-century noted for developing the Theatre of the Oppressed in the 1960s, a method for devising live theatre based on Paulo Freire’s _Pedagogy of the Oppressed_. In Boal’s methods, theatre was a means to promote social and political change and to interactively engage with the audience.
Spolin,\textsuperscript{37} game theory, and story theatre” (Wilks 18 May). The sum of Wilks’ training prepared him well for working in the improvisational, non-linear storytelling, physical, collaborative environment of the Bebe Miller Company.

Wilks joined the Bebe Miller Company circa 1998 with \textit{Going to the Wall}. The company was struggling with developing character and ensemble statements around race- and gender-identity themes. Wilks introduced several theatre/movement exploration games meant to develop ensemble movement and thematic characterizations. These games became a watershed in terms of structures the company would return to again and again in the future. The first was Dance Diamond, a type of mirroring and flocking exercise. The dancers are, at first, arranged in a diamond. Everyone follows and copies whoever is in the front of the diamond; when the diamond turns, a new person takes the lead as the front. With this structure, the diamonds can be larger or smaller, and the rules governing when and how leadership changes can be altered. With \textit{Going to the Wall}, the dancers were able to “put on” the movement of their fellow dancers and also to begin explorations with a sense of agency about how they were represented because they initiated the representations from their own movement choices.

A second structure called Tribe has an off-shoot, Hunter/Prey. Working again within a diamond, dancers create particular characters, such as caregiver, protector, leader. These characterizations color the performance of how they flock and follow the diamond leader. Each particular diamond then functions as a tribe. Inside Hunter/Prey,

\textsuperscript{37} Viola Spolin was an American theatre artist, active in the early to mid-20\textsuperscript{th}-century. Her methods and acting exercises, called theatre games, provided the foundation for the growth of improvisational theatre in the 1950s and 1960s. Theatre games focus on specific tasks and improvisation techniques through play to promote spontaneity and in-the-moment responses. Her work was highly influential to the founding group of Chicago’s Second City improvisation company.
the tribes/diamonds engage in pursuit and retreat. One diamond is the hunter, and one is
the prey. The roles can be switched. These structures are flexible enough to be used for
multiple dances because, depending on the characterizations and themes, different
relationships and images emerge. They are a means to developing ensemble dynamics
and choreography.

As dramaturg for the company, Wilks also plays a documentarian role. The Bebe
Miller Company has always generated a great deal of unique vocabulary as they create
work. Through language capture, Wilks records how the company names movements,
sequences or sections, and improvisational states.38 In addition to language capture,
Wilks’ documentation includes templating. In templating, Wilks documents the structure
of the choreography and the exercises used in exploration. His directorial eye, along with
his documentation, influences the way the work develops, and although his contributions
are largely invisible to the audience, they are vital to the collaborative process.

Angie Hauser Training History

Angie Hauser’s training began with classical ballet when she was 15, through a
regional ballet company in South Carolina. She received a strong classical technique
foundation, taught with clear alignment and somatic principles, and danced briefly with
the company. Hauser earned a BA in Art History and English at University of South
Carolina. She notes several major influences to her training: a contact improvisation
workshop with Nancy Stark Smith; learning Laban Movement Analysis; seeing a

38 Improvisational states are the Bebe Miller Company’s term for extended instances of improvisation
generated from collections of movement vocabulary, dynamics, imagery, and movement qualities used as
the basis for generating improvisation-as-performance.
performance of the Bebe Miller Company; working with Ishmael Houston Jones in performance improvisation at American Dance Festival; and working with Popo Shiriashi in Butoh.

After college, Hauser received “on the job training” (Hauser 18 July) in New York working with choreographers such as Elizabeth Streb, Liz Lerman, Bebe Miller, and Trisha Brown. She did not have, as she described it, formal training in dance history or composition until her graduate school experience at The Ohio State University. She credits her time at Ohio State as teaching her how “to talk about myself as a dancer. It's where I learned to write, it's where I learned to connect what was happening and what I was experiencing with language” (Hauser 18 July). Hauser joined the Bebe Miller Company in 2002 while performing in *Verge*. This was her first collaboration with fellow dancer and company member Darrell Jones. Their duet practice has evolved in the Bebe Miller Company over several pieces since then. Their voices are present in rehearsals as they work through their creative process with Miller and Wilks.

**A History and Archiving Process**

At the time of this research, the Bebe Miller Company was working on a new choreographic work, *A History*, and an interactive documentation project, DanceFort. DanceFort emerged through an interest in the idea of archive and in looking back at past dances and processes. It was eventually to be a digital space for revealing creative process as an archive, to make the invisible moments of creating a dance accessible to audiences. Along the way, the company decided to concurrently make a dance on this theme and began working on *A History* in 2011 during a residency at the Krannert Center
for the Performing Arts at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. The dance looks back at the company’s creative practice, its choreographic processes, and on Jones’s and Hauser’s duet practice over the past ten years. The shared artistic history of Miller, Wilks, Darrell Jones, and Hauser appear throughout the work via spoken and projected text, choreographic structures and improvisational states; the work also includes revived movement from *Verge* and *Landing/Place*.

A large table, boots, and headphones with audio feed that only the dancers can hear figure prominently in the dance. The headphones are used as a story-relating device called Talking Talking. Jones and Hauser hear Wilks’ pre-recorded voice as it is fed through the headphones in one of several energetic levels: a dry, straight reading; a slightly more animated reading; and a fast, frantic hyper-speak reading (Wilks 12 July 2012). The dancers vocally perform the text they hear by either approximating the energy and performance of the recording or riffing off of what they hear. They may leave out words, talk over one another, or change the pitch and speed of the text they speak. Talking Talking portrays story and character in *A History* and acts as a thread between sections.

In addition to *A History*, the DanceFort project continues to be developed in alternative ways. As an Archive Fellow with the Dance Heritage Coalition, I worked as an embedded archivist for the company during their Krannert residency. I catalogued movement, conversations, and other items from recordings of rehearsals and meetings, which the company hoped to mine for Talking Talking material. My cataloguing and...

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39 Darrell Jones is the second company member who created and performed in *A History*. Jones did consent to participate in this research, but due to multiple scheduling conflicts, I was unable to interview him.

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discoveries also gave Wilks and Miller information about the way in which the company works with language in their creative process. In the Fall of 2012, an OSU Urban Arts Space exhibit, *Bebe Miller: Tracing History*, opened in conjunction with the premiere of *A History* and displayed ephemera from the Bebe Miller Company archive at The Ohio State University and from the creation of *A History*. Finally, DanceFort began development as an e-book/iPad app and launched in 2012-13 during the tour of *A History*. In this iteration, DanceFort is an interactive digital archive of creative processes used by the company; the company is still working to develop DanceFort into the larger archival template they originally envisioned.

**OSU contemporary technique class – Meghan Durham Wall and Jill Guyton Nee**

*Meghan Durham Wall Training History*

At the time of this research, Meghan Durham Wall was an Assistant Professor of Dance at The Ohio State University.\(^40\) She describes her training as a mosaic with ballet as her primary language. Themes from Durham Wall’s training, teaching philosophy, and aesthetic profile encompass community, the honing of individuality, multimodality, and versatility with a clear, underlying technical foundation.

Durham Wall’s early training began in non-technique-based creative movement, and quickly changed to Cecchetti-based ballet with Miki Casalino and later jazz with Janet Gray in Salt Lake City, UT. Ballet appealed to Durham Wall because of the discipline, rules, and logic, which she says, work well with the way her mind processes...  

\(^{40}\) Since the research began, Durham Wall has left The Ohio State University to pursue other career initiatives in Utah.
information (Durham Wall 19 April). As the foundation of her training, ballet provided a language of reference when learning other techniques and one to push against when cultivating other aesthetic principles. Durham Wall continued her education at the Idyllwild Arts Academy through high school. Despite her facility, teachers recognized that Durham Wall’s body type with her long torso and tall stature was not ideally suited for ballet and pushed her toward modern dance, specifically the Martha Graham and Bella Lewitsky styles. They also encouraged Durham Wall, saying that she had the right kind of questioning attitude, curiosity, and determination to make a life in dance. However, she did not immediately pursue dance professionally.

Durham Wall attended Wellesley College, majoring in linguistics and pre-medicine. She attributes her individuality and strength as a woman to her education at Wellesley, which instilled those values in her as an artist and teacher. She continued her education at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, receiving an MS in applied linguistics and speech/language pathology, and worked in speech/language therapy for a few years. During this time, she began a performance and choreography career with pick-up companies both in North Carolina and later San Francisco.

Eventually, Durham Wall returned to her home state to earn an MFA in dance from University of Utah. Her time at Utah exposed her to softer and somatic-based techniques like José Limón technique,¹¹ Bartenieff Fundamentals¹² and Laban Movement.

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¹¹ José Limón was a Mexican-American artist and choreographer in the mid-20th-century, whose technique was grounded in his mentor Doris Humphrey’s movement style and theory of fall and recovery. Strength, spatial extension and form are an important aspect of Limón technique.

¹² See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Bartenieff Fundamentals.”
Analysis, and release-based styles. At Utah she also realized her passion and proclivity for teaching. Her MFA thesis explored bodily inscription and language through choreography and performance. She then held adjunct positions at Princeton, Temple University, and The Ohio State University, and founded her own company MergeDance. Her choreography with MergeDance centered on exploring individuality, and the personal and physical differences of her dancers.

Contemporary Technique Class with Kinesiology Themes

At Ohio State as a Visiting Artist and then an Assistant Professor, Durham Wall taught technique, kinesiology, pedagogy, composition, and repertory. Her contemporary technique courses generally revolve around a conceptual theme. For example, her class with freshman dance majors developed multiple definitions of “rigor” which changed from week to week, ranging from working hard/sweating, to intellectual curiosity, to accountability to the group. Through her teaching philosophy, she encourages students to explore how the movement works within individual bodies and often gives modification choices based on individual body structure and injury prevention.

The course I observed for this research was a contemporary technique class for majors that accompanied the sophomore Kinesiology course, which Durham Wall also taught. Both took place during Spring Quarter 2012. Students took kinesiology at 8:45 am and then shifted into contemporary technique classes at 10:30 am. More than half of the students were in both Durham Wall’s kinesiology and technique classes, although

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43 Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) is the collection and study of the movement theories of Rudolf von Laban into Body, Effort (dynamics), and Space categories.
44 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Release Technique.”
some went into different technique classes. A group of senior dance majors and graduate
dance students were also enrolled in Durham Wall’s technique class.

This class took cues from the themes of the kinesiology course, but explored them
artistically. The technique class followed the usual sequence of warm-up, skill-set
training, and artistic exploration through a final, culminating sequence. In Kinesiology,
the students worked on more pedantic movement examples, but in technique, they
explored movement combinations and improvisations that used given muscle groups and
skeletal structures as initiation points, movement impetus, and means for generating
aesthetic choices. Durham Wall’s goals for this cross-over class were multiple:

One, that they realize that we as dancers have this wealth of knowledge that the
world doesn't carry around, [and] that we don't often articulate or identify or give
honor to. That dance as an epistemological stance, its own way of knowing…

One of the end goals is ‘I'm never going to stop thinking about this on all these
different levels because it's going to help me in the future as a dancer if I'm
having trouble with something’…that they can map their bodies in a more specific
and relevant way for themselves…That’s one goal — opening up more
possibilities for them, a wider range of choices as dancers, teachers, and creators,
choreographers. Then there are byproducts of safety and longevity…

[And last is] the embodied research. That every time they step into a dance class
they are acting as researchers, and that it's a generative and productive process
that they're producing knowledge from. (Durham Wall 19 April)

In addition to the practical knowledge of how muscles and skeletal structures work within
one’s own body aesthetically, Durham Wall added her own pedagogical values as course
goals. She emphasizes how important it is for her students to approach dancing as an
epistemological stance, as embodied research, as a mode of questioning and physical-
aesthetic inquiry.
Jill Guyton Nee Training History

Jill Guyton Nee was a first-year graduate student at The Ohio State University at the time of this research. She began her early dance training at age 6 in ballet and tap, later adding jazz. She spent a sizable portion of her early training at Attitudes, a technique-only studio in North Carolina. At Attitudes, without the emphasis on a Spring recital found in most youth studios, Guyton Nee learned at an early age that dance is a discipline and a subject for serious study. From 7th to 12th grades, Guyton Nee attended Cary Dance Production, a competition-based youth studio.

At Cary Dance Productions, Guyton Nee was particularly influenced by two teachers: Heather Eberhardt and Elizabeth “Beth” Manning (formerly Therrell). Manning brought conditioning and kinesiology principles into her technique classes. She encouraged students to use their bodies according to their structure and to learn movement quickly. Many of the classes at Cary Dance Productions focused on learning and refining competition dances. This class emphasized technical training and conditioning as a foundation toward the performances through spending the majority of class time on technique and conditioning exercises instead of practicing choreography. Manning implemented a “just do” attitude in which for certain aspects of the class, students would follow along and pickup movement as quickly as possible without lengthy explanations or breakdown of the steps, and without worrying about accuracy, detail, or perfection. The “just do” phrases became longer as the year progressed and students gained the ability to take risks in learning movement quickly and confidently. Manning
also used Tabata-style\textsuperscript{45} conditioning with the students to increase their stamina and endurance. The second teacher who influenced Guyton Nee, Heather Eberhardt, was a dancer with the Carolina Ballet in Raleigh, NC. Through her ballet class, Guyton Nee learned to bring artistry into the classroom and view class as an opportunity to further refine performance skills.

Guyton Nee attended Meredith College, a small liberal arts school in North Carolina, where she studied under Joan Nicholas-Walker and Carol Finley.\textsuperscript{46} At the request of her parents, she majored in business as well as dance. College was Guyton Nee’s first exposure to modern dance and floor work, whereas Meredith College’s curriculum was weighted toward anatomy and pedagogy. With interests in teaching and training, Guyton Nee completed the private studio teaching major offered by the department. She began teaching technique and choreographing for competition groups at a handful of private studios while she was in college. Like her teacher at Cary Dance Productions, Guyton Nee brought kinesiology and improvisation into her classes with the young students. During her MFA dance studies at Ohio State, Guyton Nee continued to teach and choreograph as a guest for competition teams at Academy for the Performing Arts in Apex, NC, a studio where she previously taught.

Guyton Nee was invited into this research as a student in Durham Wall’s contemporary technique class. Her role in navigating the course and learning movement will provide a compliment to Durham Wall’s role as a teacher of the course. At the time

\textsuperscript{45} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Tabata.”
\textsuperscript{46} Joan Nicholas-Walker and Carol Finley are both graduates of the MFA dance program at The Ohio State University.
of the class, Guyton Nee was a first-year graduate student. In the interview with Guyton Nee about her training and experience in Durham Wall’s class, she described her own choreographic and documentary practices, which I discuss in chapter 4.

**Dancer’s Edge studio classes and repertory — Carol Maxwell Rezabek**

*Carol Maxwell Rezabek Training History*

Carol Maxwell Rezabek’s dance training is primarily in classical ballet. Her early training was of a pre-professional level with a strong technique focus. Maxwell Rezabek continued her training at the University of Iowa, studying ballet, modern dance, and Labanotation from Linda Crist. Her time at Iowa included a potpourri of other techniques as well. She eventually earned her MFA at The Ohio State University, where her research focused on Directing from Labanotation Scores. She staged several musical theatre excerpts as her capstone project.
Labanotation (see Fig. 2.5) interested Maxwell Rezabek for two reasons. The first was that notation held a key to the past. Using notation scores, she could actually see and dance musical theatre and ballet choreography from historical sources. She was also
interested in having the power to write down her own dances. The characteristics and style of her colleague emerged through embodying the symbols. She recalls the excitement she experienced when some movement she notated from one of her colleagues “came out [as] ‘my friend’ [Stephanie]” (21 March).

As a self-described “brain knowledge person” (22 March), she delighted in ways she could use notation writing choices to convey differences in movement thinking and to discern idiosyncratic differences between dancers performing the same movement.

I'd see how two different people were doing the same thing differently, and I'd try to write that. How would I write the idiosyncrasies... They were doing the same movement, but there was something different. How are they doing that? Just writing choice-wise, what would I use [to describe the differences], which then was useful when reading scores. Body knowledge from symbols. (22 March)

Maxwell Rezabek’s directing from score and notating proclivities led her through teaching certification and to professional notator training at the Dance Notation Bureau in New York City. Unfortunately for Maxwell Rezabek, the notator training program was not the supportive environment she experienced at University of Iowa and The Ohio State University. The frustrating experience left her feeling alienated from the field.

Maxwell Rezabek returned to Iowa to continue studio teaching and choreographing musicals for local theatres. Her studio-teaching career focused on pre-professional ballet programs with youth repertory companies. She was a faculty member for many years at the highly regarded but now defunct Ballet Academy in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, before transferring to The Dancer’s Edge, a competition-based studio founded in 2011. She also lectures in the Theatre Department at Coe College. Recently, Maxwell Rezabek graduated from the inaugural class of the American Ballet Theatre National
Training Curriculum\textsuperscript{47} and achieved certification in their curriculum for Primary through Level 7 and Partnering. The ABT curriculum is a Cecchetti-based open syllabus grounded in the history of ballet pedagogy. Using the “seven movements of dance” as outlined by Enrico Cecchetti,\textsuperscript{48} the syllabus suggests skills for each level, and teaching approaches for troubleshooting technique through the seven movements without prescribing set exercises.

\textit{Dancer’s Edge studio, Classical Edge repertory group}

The Dancer’s Edge studio was founded in Cedar Rapids, IA in 2011 by husband and wife dancer-entrepreneurs Charlie and Stephanie Vogl, graduates of the University of Iowa. The school currently has approximately 400 enrolled students including both the company (competition classes and rehearsals) and general classes. Charlie and Stephanie hired Maxwell Rezabek to boost their ballet program and begin a ballet performance group, the Classical Edge.

The Dancer’s Edge presented a different studio culture than where Maxwell Rezabek had previously been faculty. While her previous studio, the Ballet Academy, had a selective youth repertory performance company, the studio did not participate in competitions. Maxwell Rezabek’s previous students were training primarily at a pre-professional ballet level, whereas the students at The Dancer’s Edge have more varied

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{47} According to the ABT website: “ABT’s National Training Curriculum is a program for the development and training of young students that embraces sound ballet principles and incorporates elements of the French, Italian and Russian schools of training…. ABT Certified Teachers have completed intensive training in the ABT National Training Curriculum and successfully passed comprehensive examination(s).” See the ABT website http://www.abt.org/education/nationaltrainingcurr.asp}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{48} The seven movements of dance form the components of all classical ballet steps. They are: \textit{plier} (to bend), \textit{éntendre} (to stretch), \textit{relever} (to rise), \textit{glisser} (to glide), \textit{sauter} (to jump), \textit{élancer} (to dart), \textit{tournir} (to turn). See also Appendix A: Glossary entries “Seven Movements of Dance”, “Plié/Plier”, and “Relevé/Relever.”}
interests in dance. Some students take class for fun, some for competition purposes, and some to gain skills for cheer and pom-pom squads, or school musicals. Many are transplants from other local studios with an uneven quality of training.

Along with the Classical Edge and the ABT curriculum, Maxwell Rezabek has worked with owner-teacher Stephanie to improve the quality of the ballet training both for students with pre-professional and college dance aspirations, as well as students with competition or recreational dance interests. Students are required to take ballet to facilitate their foundational technical abilities to become better jazz or contemporary dancers, for example. The ballet classes include quizzes and appropriate lessons in ballet terminology, theory, and anatomy. Maxwell Rezabek explains:

[The studio has] these competition dancers who could be better, and they recognize that they could be better if they had some ballet technique as a foundation. So, in my advanced class, some of them are not as advanced [in ballet technique] as maybe some other students I have. But, they are the advanced “all around” dancers who [the studio owners] want to have ballet. (21 March)

For example, many of the advanced students know conceptually to plié⁴⁹ (bend their leg joints) when they land, but they don’t have a physical sense of joints bending and softening during the landing, so some are beginning to have strains and joint pains. Because of the requirement for ballet and the “newness” of Maxwell Rezabek’s relationship with the advanced dancers as their teacher, there has been some skepticism about the technical benefits of ballet. However, as the students have begun to make progress and see change, they are warming up to it.

⁴⁹ See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Plié/Plier.”
The youth ballet repertory company, the Classical Edge, is currently a non-auditioned group in order to grow interest in learning classical ballet repertory. They perform two shows each year. Maxwell Rezabek stages modified versions of classical repertory with the group:

It's perfectly fine with me if you're not the best dancer but you want the experience of performing a real ballet with [material] you're learning in class. I think that's part of your education whether you decide to be a [professional] dancer or not in the long run. (21 March)

One of the goals of the Classical Edge is to offer exposure to the dance history canon. Just as piano students play simplified versions of Mozart to learn their craft, Classical Edge dancers learn simplified variations and excerpts from ballets to learn their craft.

The dance artists in this research demonstrate a diversity of dance studio practices. The Bebe Miller Company and Shlomit Ofer with RikudNetto represent choreographic and compositional practices. Carol Maxwell Rezabek, Meghan Durham Wall, and Jill Guyton Nee represent teaching and learning dance technique but differing contexts of youth recreation and higher education. Documentation of choreography and choreographic process arose for the Bebe Miller Company and for Guyton Nee. Both Ofer and Maxwell Rezabek use notation systems in their work, but for very different ends. Uses of journals, scores, and other written texts were present to varying extents for each of the dance artists. The next section of this chapter will discuss similarities and differences in definitions and conceptualizations of literacy, reading, and writing given by the dance artists.

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50 Entrance to the competition company is by a competitive audition in different genres: jazz, hip hop, lyrical, and tap.
Subject Definitions of Dance Literacy

The dance artists in this research speak about their conceptions of dance literacy, fluency, and legibility. In most of the definitions, notation and written scripts were not a prominent aspect of literacy. Rather, multimodality and communicative competence figured more prominently. Even the two dance notation experts employed a broad view of literacy to include non-notation and non-textual modalities and ways of knowing. Interestingly, *reading* and *writing* did not emerge explicitly as aspects of dance literacy in the dance artists’ definitions. However, *legibility* and *fluency* did. In other portions of interviews and rehearsals in which literacy was not an explicitly stated topic, *reading* and *writing* did emerge as processes. The scope of the definitions provided by the dance artists incorporates written and multimodal aspects of dance, and are often compound definitions. I offer these here to demonstrate how the practices are grounded in the dance artists’ relationships to literacy in context and practice.

Shlomit Ofer gave a multi-part definition to dance literacy. Her definition is influenced by her work in dance education and in Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation. For Ofer, dance literacy revolves around movement concepts that are “transformed and represented in both the conceptual and the symbolic ways for communication in dance” (15 May). In her dissertation research, she taught a group of 4th grade girls a series of movement concepts through physical demonstration. This larger group was broken into smaller groups, and each dancer took turns being the “decipher.” While the decipher left the room, Ofer demonstrated a short movement sequence that emphasized the chosen movement concept. The remaining group members then had to devise notations or symbols to communicate the sequence to the decipher when she returned to the room.
The exact sequence was not important, only the communication of the movement concept. For example, the sequence may have been about directions: forward, backward, backward, sideward, forward. The solution could comprise arm gestures, steps, or even traveling jumps, as long as they followed the directional sequence.

Dance literacy for Ofer connects moving with symbols. Ofer discovered that the children were able to devise multiple types of symbols — abstract/conventional (eg. arrows), iconic (eg. drawing body parts), Hebrew letters and *gematria* (a code assigning numerical value to letters). Sometimes the notations were successful, but when they were not, the group was required to revise their scores and let the decipher try again. Ofer was interested in how the children would be able to create abstract representations of movement knowledge; notation in her research did not define what movement occurred, but communicated a conceptualization about movement. This abstract conceptualization is not unlike the use of Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation in RikudNetto. Although the company does not work directly from written scores to create the phrase material, they use the system as a means of conceptualizing how to shape the body in space. They manipulate the movement instructions to express them through various body parts in combination and actions. Like the children in Ofer’s dissertation research, the dancers in RikkudNetto work with abstract representations of movement to create choreography.

Carol Maxwell Rezabek also gave a multifaceted definition of dance literacy. As a Labanotation expert, her first inclination was to say that dance literacy consisted of reading and writing movement from a notation system. However, she decided against such a narrow definition because it would effectively exclude the majority of the field as illiterate. She views notation as a tool, used much as written scripts are used with other
languages. Like Ofer’s definition, Maxwell Rezabek’s definition expanded to include aspects of communicative competence. Dance literacy is “being fluent in the vocabulary, the physical vocabulary of your art” (21 March). This includes being able to know logical structures and forms of composition, as well as a wide range of positions and pathways in ballet (for her students), in order to make coherent and informed choices. Those choices may be valuable for performance or in creating choreography.

In her current studio, at the time of the class and rehearsal observations, Maxwell Rezabek chose to explicitly teach certain literacy goals in her classes. This part of her literacy definition encompasses domain knowledge. For example, Maxwell Rezabek makes sure that she exposes her students to classic ballets because “if they’re going to be a part of [ballet dance], they need to know where it came from. The stories are part of their culture” (21 March), and they have a right to know their connection to ballet history. She gives explicit directions about the conventions of ballet, such as which hand starts on the barre, and the correct way to change sides. Although she sometimes breaks these rules — for example, letting students all face toward the mirror, resulting in not all having the same hand on the barre — she also explicitly reminds them of how they are breaking the rules and why. Maxwell Rezabek infuses her exercises and études51 with Western classical compositional forms and uses them as points of discussion about form and performance skills. For example, when dancers have to repeat the same phrase three times and then end in a coda (a common form in classical ballet variations), she asks students what choices they have in changing timing, phrasing, or dynamics to keep the

51 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Étude.”
dance alive. Although much of Maxwell Rezabek’s teaching and choreographic practice use notation and written resources, her definition of dance literacy in her context also extends into communicative competence and domain knowledge.

To Meghan Durham Wall, literacy in dance requires first a “primary literacy,” or dance style in which a dancer gains fluency. It requires acquiring vocabulary and exposure over time in order to know how to use the rules, structures, and conventions of that style, or to decide to not use them — in other words, to make informed choices. Literacy in dance requires “rigor and development, so that [dancers] understand the set of rules and see how they can advance or deepen [their] skill-set inside them” (24 May). An example Durham Wall gives in ballet is with tendu. First a dancer must understand that tendu is the action of sliding the leg outward (forward, sideward, or backward) and back into a closed position. Then it becomes about how that tendu prepares one for other actions, such as dégagé, grand battement, and many jumping actions. The dancer develops kinesthetic knowledge about tendu and how to use it in various ways. Dancers can then use their primary literacy as a starting place to learning new dance styles, or expanding into new territory; it becomes a point of reference as Durham Wall’s early ballet training has become for her.

Legibility analogies emerge in relation to reading and writing dance. As a dance develops, choreographers re-assess their work, in terms of whether or not they are succeeding in their intentions for the dance at hand. Postmodern choreographer Liz

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52 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Tendu.”
53 See Appendix A: Glossary entries “Dégagé” and “Grand battement.”
Lerman writes at length about searching for “readability” while a dance is in development:

As I build a dance I am asking a whole host of questions that I might loosely categorize as literacy issues...What do audience members need to know, and when do they need to know it? Stated differently what do they need to learn or discover? Or how do I want them to see, and how fast can they attain mastery of the tools we are amassing for and with them? How we answer those questions affects what we lay out in front of the audience, when, and why. (Lerman 166)

Lerman is concerned with how her structure or content develops and whether it develops in such a way as to be readable to an audience. In this respect, she becomes a critical reader of her own work, placing herself in the mind’s eye of other readers of her dance. To her, it is the choreographer’s responsibility to give the right images and information in the choreography so that viewers can connect with it.

Literacy and legibility were not explicitly discussed in interviews with Bebe Miller Company members, although “reading” is a concept that often arises in rehearsal. Although explicit narrative is not part of Miller’s artistic style, she does infuse her work with narrative elements, which the company calls Storyness. For example, Miller notes the origins and development of the Darrell Drive and Angieness in the Reset section of *A History*. In this section, Jones and Hauser have two separate movement profiles from which they take turns improvising. Placing the two movement profiles side-by-side juxtaposes the characters of Jones and Hauser as contrasting duet partners. Miller describes discussions between herself, Jones, and Hauser:

[Darrell] would talk about reading the room, and [Angie] would talk about what we eventually called no-gap sourcing, which was not taking the time to [stop and

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54 Storyness does not convey a concrete or linear narrative. Rather, Storyness is the essence of narrative elements that convey a sense of story through abstraction. Storyness will be discussed further as part of the company’s multimodality and literacy practices in Chapter 3.
look around]. You make a decision about what you're seeing. You're just going to take in information of the physical room. You just keep on going. (11 June)

Both reading and its extension into no-gap sourcing translate visual information into movement responses. Reading in this context is interpreting visual cues from the room as physical impulses for movement that becomes Darrell Drive and Angieness.

As dramaturg, Wilks engages in his own movement/choreographic reading practices with each dance:

I have a way of reading dance in the context of the set of rules, or the set of formulations, or conceits even, lies we tell ourselves about what this is supposed to mean. So, if you give me a purpose and a meaning, I can read a particular dance through that lens. Without that purpose or meaning, if it's just a pure movement exercise, I don't care. My directorial aesthetic is a movement-based aesthetic, so I can read story through movement. (Wilks 12 July)

As the dramaturg, Wilks reads the choreography based on the themes of the choreography and the improvisational structures mentioned previously. He uses gestures, movement images, spatial relationships, or text as material for judging legibility of narrative elements. Wilks’ reading practice requires the context of the particular dance in order to be meaningful. As the dramaturg, his contribution is in the development of story, not in formal movement properties. Reading practices of the Bebe Miller Company are diverse, such as narrative interpretations of choreography for compositional development, or transforming visual and kinesthetic information into movement responses. These will be explored further in relationship to specific literacy events and literacy practices in Chapters 3 and 4.

Issues of fluency and legibility also bear on learning technique and dance training. In my interviews with Meghan Durham Wall, Carol Maxwell Rezabek, and Jill Guyton Nee, all three dancers revealed varied aspects of what fluency in a movement style can
mean, and how movement reads as legible and/or illegible. Fluency and legibility relate to a dancer’s knowledge of the movement vocabulary, form, and structures of a given dance style, and that dancer’s physical and kinesthetic understanding and mastery.

Durham Wall described the necessity for what she called a primary fluency — a first dance style in which a dancer trains and masters from which she can translate knowledge to new situations and find correlations. Durham Wall spoke of fluency in terms of “notic[ing] grammars,” of being able to “create new [movement] sentences,” and of “generat[ing] new statements or performative acts in that language [one’s primary literacy]” (24 May). For Maxwell Rezabek, fluency in her ballet students is attained when their neuropathways have become programmed (22 March). For example, one of her students had recently begun to automatically use the correct *port de bras* with consistency. For both teachers, fluency implies development of rigor and a deepened skill-set.

In terms of legibility, demonstrating clarity of timing, space, focus, and intention was a theme for all three dancers, like a lens coming into focus, according to Maxwell Rezabek (22 March). Guyton Nee described the difference between a gesture that purposely reaches tentatively to legibly communicate tentativeness, and the indirect and shifting focus of a dancer whose physicality communicates uncertainty about her movement execution (31 May). Durham Wall also noted that legibility in her dance students occurs when they can translate a movement concept into physical action or kinesthetic experience (24 May). As with handwriting or typescript, legibility in dance literacy is the amount of clarity needed to be readable to another person. Legibility in dance literacy is about clarity of movement execution and the effectiveness of kinesthetic
intentions as read by dancers, teachers, choreographers, and audiences. Legibility and fluency in these examples cross visual, kinesthetic, and language modes, reinforcing the multimodality inherent in dance literacy.

**Conclusion**

The definitions provided by the dance artists primarily correspond to concepts in an expanded view of literacy. They incorporate aspects of multimodality and modes of transmission. Many of the definitions regarded communicative competence as aspects of dance literacy — understanding the rules, structures, and inner-workings of a dance genre to communicate through informed artistic and technical choices. The underlying view of dance literacy was one of dance literacy as *facilitative* of improving technique, learning composition, or making new choreography. Each dance artist was also careful to note how their definition fit into their particular teaching, performance, or training context. While they postulated that dance literacy may work similarly in other situations, they made claims about dance literacy primarily in relation to their own practices. As we will see in the following chapters, dance practices will reveal multiple literacy events and literacy practices that fall on either side of the literacy/orality divide, and even skate across it. Literacy, reading, and writing will be further enunciated through the following analyses.
Chapter 3 Dance Literacy: Multimodal Reading and Writing

Introduction

Dance literacy is a multiliteracy\(^{55}\) due to its multimodal meaning-making practices and to its shifting character in specific social, cultural, and historical contexts. In this chapter, I explore literacy within multimodal reading and writing practices of dancers in the studio. The dance artists in this research revealed several reading and writing events and practices, occurring over single modes and across multiple modalities for communication. Some of these reading events include reading human bodies visually to comprehend dance technique, reading choreography visually for structure or imagery, and reading by translating between modes to do the above activities. Writing events primarily include composing and demonstrating movement phrases, generating and developing improvisational states, and arranging choreography. I leave some aspects of dance literacy and other events and practices for discussion in Chapter 4 because they represent the combining of reading and writing within a particular alphabetic/notational dance literacy practice.

\(^{55}\) See Chapter 1 for definition and discussion of multiliteracies and multimodality.
The following case studies illustrate how multimodality occurs within various reading and writing events and practices in dance literacy. Certain visual and kinesthetic modes hold primary importance in many instances. Visual and kinesthetic modes, as might be expected of dance, emerged most often due to long-standing traditions in concert dance training where dancers view demonstrations of movement in order to repeat them. However, additional modes, such as language/verbal, impart types of thinking and information that visual and kinesthetic modes do not.

In some instances, too many modes, or accessing the wrong mode, hinder reading, as we will see later in this chapter. In this research, visual, kinesthetic and tactile, language and verbal, aural/musical, and alphabetic/notational modes are prominent. The dance artists demonstrate different preferences in their selections of mode ensembles as directed by the contexts or purposes. These purposes include emphasizing a teaching/learning goal, coaching performance, and developing choreography. Further, the multimodal “texts” which the dance artists read are unstable, liquidly shifting as mode ensembles change and a single dancer alternates between roles of reader and writer. “Texts” in dance literacy include movement phrases, actions, bodies, and their multimodal accompaniments. Teaching and learning practices demonstrated more obvious uses of reading than did the choreographic practices, which demonstrated more obvious uses of writing.

As explored in this chapter, writing in dance literacy is primarily seen as composition and authorship. What do the dance artists actually do in the studio to compose? Who makes decisions and how? To explore creative relationships between choreographers and dancers, Jo Butterworth formulates a didactic-democratic continuum
of working processes in the studio ("Cooks"). In the first two processes that she identifies on the didactic end, choreographers control all or most of the decision-making about content, and structure, and generation of movement material. The final three processes on the democratic end she terms “dance-devising,” in which choreographers guide dancers through improvisation, direct them through tasks, facilitate discussion, provide stimuli for dancers to generate material, or share in decision-making processes. In dance-devising processes, creative responsibilities between choreographers and dancers are shared, and “the creation of dance as art is attempted by more than one person” (Butterworth "Cooks" 189). Butterworth's categories are not hard and fast, and in actual studio practice, choreographer-dancer relationships readily slip from one end of the continuum to the other.

Ownership of the dance is also re-defined along Butterworth’s didactic-democratic continuum, from “authoritarian” to “shared authorship” ("Cooks" 188). The choreographer-dancer relationship holds implications for who authors a dance. Who can be an author, what function does authorship serve, and how is it relevant to dance and literacy? Foucault argues that the designation of “author” serves an ideological function in discourses of ownership and meaning-making:

[The author] is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. ("What is an Author?" 119)

“Author” becomes a touchstone for discourses about fiction, art, or dances. Authors of literature generate, compose, manipulate, and re-make their work: the same activities as dance makers. Authorship combines ownership and creation. Authors assume a role of
prestige and power in the choreographer-dancer-collaborator hierarchy. In the didactic-democratic framework, there can exist multiple authors of a dance. Authorship as found among the dance artists in this research challenge traditionally perceived concepts of choreographers as singular authors of dances. We will see how dances may have multiple authors and to varying extents of shared authorship.

Teaching and Learning in a Contemporary Dance Technique Class: Meghan Durham Wall and Jill Guyton Nee

In Meghan Durham Wall’s contemporary dance technique class, multimodal reading dominated the literacy events. Reading was more pervasive than writing in the technique classes due to the nature of the instructional interaction. As the teacher, Durham Wall physically demonstrated the movement phrases — a form of writing. The students read the movement phrases as they were demonstrated, and then repeated them within their own it is necessary to delineate what is being read since it is not a book or alphabetic artifact, as well as how it is read.

Multimodality creates windows into reading comprehension, facilitating how a movement text is presented and in turn perceived and interpreted. Reading occurs in the crossing between modes as pieces of conceptual and physical information are imparted visually, physically, and musically, for example. Multimodal ensembles occur when more than one mode operates simultaneously and with relative importance (Kress Social Semiotic 28). The multiple modes work together, as an ensemble. Each mode communicates its own content and/or serves a specific meaningful function. Rarely do dancers read or write in a single mode, only offering visual demonstration or only providing verbal instruction, for example. In what may be the most common example, a
teacher or choreographer will demonstrate movement while speaking or singing step
names, counts, or rhythms. In this situation, dancers read the movement visually,
interpret the verbal cues, and hear the rhythm, often while marking or trying the
movement physically as it is demonstrated. With the combination of several modes,
however, one or two often play a dominant role in communicating information. Mode
ensembles characterize literacy events in which reading may begin in one mode and
finish in another or information in one mode triggers a response in another, such that both
modalities are necessary for successful reading.

The choice of mode for transmission of dance information is a concern for several
of the dance artists. As the teacher, Durham Wall gives ample consideration to the modes
she chooses to deliver her movement material, carefully orchestrating her use of
multimodality. Orchestrating modes goes one step beyond mode ensembles, emphasizing
conscious choices for combinations of particular modes in order to deliver meaningful
content (Kress Social Semiotic 145). All the information Durham Wall communicates
through the various modes focuses on the same idea, skill, or sense, but from a different
angle. In one instance, she may describe the anatomical structure of the movement, and
when repeating the physical demonstration she may verbalize a general image such as
“you’re a snake” with an aural illustration of the movement quality, “ssfftid!”

Dancers read the choreography of exercises, the patterns of actions. They also
read nuances within bodies, qualitative shifts that determine how the body moves. Visual
reading encompasses not just shapes and directions through space, but also muscular
engagement, weight, and relationship with gravity.
Relationships with the Movement "Text" and Multimodal Reading

Dance literacy in Durham Wall’s class centered on reading movement text and reading bodies. Movement texts are performed movement phrases, actions, and dances that constitute choreographic works or technique exercises. Reading in these literacy events presented novel relationships with movement texts because movement texts, unlike alphabetic texts such as books, require mediation through a body in motion. Durham Wall transcribed the movement texts with her body, annotated them for students through language and verbal descriptions, and re-read them in both her students’ bodies and her own body.

Durham Wall composed movement texts prior to her class time. Creating the class phrases was the primary writing event connected with technique teaching and learning in the context of this contemporary technique class. Because this technique class was connected to her kinesiology course, Durham Wall tied the movement phrases and exercises to the concurrent kinesiology theme. She begins improvising the weekend before class begins, focusing on the movement theme or concept.

I'll have particular, physical qualities, [and] qualitative, artistic goals in mind. Then I'll start researching and investigating movements that will address those. For example, this week is shoulder/scapula, so I knew there were going to be inversions. I wanted some really specific actions {moves her elbow up and down} as well, so gestures that were very specific and detailed at the arm, shoulder, and scapula. Then I just start playing. (Durham Wall 14 May)

Writing movement texts for Durham Wall is a generative activity. Composition happens through improvisation and is honed into the first draft Durham Wall uses with her

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56 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Inversion.”
57 Dancers frequently move when they speak about dancing. Instances of movement or physical actions while speaking during interviews are indicated with italicized description of the movement inside { } brackets.
students. She revises her phrases and exercises throughout the week so that they continue to be informed by the students’ progress with the material. The movement texts are fluid, in this regard, and responsive to the changing environment of the classroom.

Once inside the class, many of the movement texts are taught and learned through traditional technique class body-to-body transmission methods. Durham Wall’s body enacts the movement text for her students as she physically demonstrates the phrases and exercises. The students read the movement from her body in motion, from language she uses to describe or emphasize important points, and from aural cues about dynamics and rhythm. As the students watch Durham Wall show the phrases, many of them follow along, marking the movement. By marking along with Durham Wall, they outline the movement texts kinesthetically within their own bodies.

After demonstrations, students perform the phrases and exercises. I categorize this as reciting the movement texts rather than as writing. Typically, when students repeat the phrases, they are not composing new material or revising the existing material, but rather repeating the movement in a relatively verbatim manner. Performing the exercises is a form of reading and physical recitation of the movement texts. This is where dancers gain physical and technical skills, or create kinesthetic understandings within their bodies about movement. They also inscribe the movement into their bodies, which is akin to recitation or practicing the physical act of putting pen to paper. At times, Durham Wall did ask students to improvise or alter phrases that she demonstrated. In those instances, the students composed and revised the movement texts, rather than reciting and inscribing them in a verbatim manner.
When Durham Wall teaches, she communicates her point in as many ways as possible by using an abundance of language, and varying the kind of language such as imagery, anatomical words, Bartenieff Fundamentals vocabulary, common dance vocabulary from different genres, and generally descriptive words (Durham Wall 19 May). Having heard the information in several ways, she reasons, students are more likely to find the one that speaks to them, the one that will facilitate their learning in that particular moment. As part of the crossover with her kinesiology course, Durham Wall deliberately orchestrated language mode choices around kinesiology vocabulary when possible. During most physical demonstrations of new exercises, Durham Wall provided a running commentary about the movement. For example, she simultaneously narrates and demonstrates while clarifying a longer exercise about spinal articulation:

Starting with primary curve, imagining kyphosis⁵⁸ all the way through, and then exaggerating into lordosis⁵⁹ going into the secondary curve… [later on] …keep that left foot on the floor.

Left hip is going from outward rotation through neutral all the way to inward rotation. Then you have this beautiful concentric contraction of the extensors of the spine, and taking you into lateral flexion, a beautiful tri-planar activity going on there.

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⁵⁸ See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Kyphosis.”
⁵⁹ See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Lordosis.”
Durham Wall’s descriptors and verbal cues annotate the movement text for her students, underscoring particular movements with language information. Using kyphosis and lordosis as descriptors in the beginning of the exercise not only reminds the students of that kinesiological vocabulary, but it also links the moment to a precise visual image and movement concept. Instead of only imagining they are curled in a ball, they are reminded how the spine curls into these two curves. During the floor work, the cue to plant the left foot and use hip rotation became the missing piece for a student who asked how the rolling was initiated. Continuing with the description of the roll, the anatomical vocabulary cued students to identify specific muscle groups (extensors of the spine), how to initiate the second part of the roll (lateral flexion), and sense their bodies’ spatial shaping (tri-planar).

As a student in Durham Wall’s class, Jill Guyton Nee appreciated the frequent use of kinesiological and anatomical language. For Guyton Nee, whose training includes extensive work in anatomy and kinesiology, using this language modality provided her with conceptual and physical clarity; she is fluent in this language. She says:

> It brings a sense of precision in my mind to be able to just do what [Meghan is] saying. [For example,] if she says just bend the elbow, I’m just thinking of the joint, but then if she says flex the elbow or use the bicep to flex, then I’m thinking muscularity, a specific point on my arm…Inwardly, it does feel different as to direct and indirect spatial clarity. (Guyton Nee 21 May)

Guyton Nee’s fluency in anatomical language directs her movement focus and movement thinking. The specifics of the words used cue her into specific actions, locations within her body, muscular sensations, and sense of space.
Not only does Durham Wall use this sort of language in class, but the students also re-produce movement and verbal knowledge in reflection of it. During one correction in class, Durham Wall asked students to identify *where* they felt their spines twisting when they actively stabilized their pelvises. As they tried the twisting, they called out muscles: transversus, obliques, pelvic floor, rotators (23 May 2012). They used physical and conceptual knowledge from kinesiology to investigate and read the movement within their own bodies. Able to identify where the movement initiated, they likely performed the movement with a clearer sense of muscular engagement. As they repeated the exercise that used this movement, pelvic stability became much more legible in their bodies.

Kinesthetic reading often requires visual or tactile annotations to translate kinesthetically into one’s own body. Frequently while working on a particularly tricky action, Durham Wall would retry the action in her own body repeatedly as she watched her students.

Part of me is assessing, “Is this structural, or is this a movement choice?” I'll look [at what] I know about this person and their structure from what I can see. Then I can get more information to say, “No, it's about the undercurve happening first, or it's about whatever.” Or sometimes I'll be like, “Hey, I'm wrong.” It's not demonstrative, it's totally interpretive to get more information to go back [to the students]. It's a moment of research. (Durham Wall 14 May)

In these moments Durham Wall re-read movement texts within her own body to re-investigate what she experienced kinesthetically. She used this re-reading to compare what she felt kinesthetically with what she intended for the movement to explore, and with what she observed visually in her students’ recitation of the movement.
Illegibility, Reading (in)Comprehension – Reading Movement

Durham Wall views multimodality as language immersion: by being immersed in the various examples and modes, the right one will stick for each student in order to read and understand. Because multimodality is of value to her as a teacher, she purposely orchestrates mode ensembles in her teaching. The modes she chooses to present model the sort of movement thinking and multiliteracy she wishes her students to develop. In particular, Durham Wall privileges language modes in her classes because she wants to present movement material and conceptual material in many ways. In her demonstrations, she uses scat rhythms, counts, kinesiology vocabulary, qualitative descriptions of actions, tactile sensations, and visual or sensual images.

Multimodality succeeds when the right modes communicate in conjunction with one another. Conversely, multimodality can fail when too many modes are vying for primacy, or translation from one to the other goes awry. In her attempt to orchestrate multimodality, Durham Wall worries that the abundance of information — visual, kinesthetic, tactile, rhythmic, and several language threads — may overload her students. She says:

Sometimes I feel like it's too much because I say it this way, that way, this way, that way, this way, that way {hands pop in several directions for each way}. Maybe it just becomes a wash {right hand wipes in an arc across space}, they haven't heard the one that matters to them {finger of left hand pointing across wiped space} because it's just too much {left hand wipes through the space}. My theory was like language immersion. If you hear it enough, eventually you get it. (Durham Wall 19 April)

This next example looks at an instance where reading comprehension collapsed, including an examination of how disconnection between modes can result in illegibility of the movement text.
Durham Wall’s dance phrases tend to include several changes of facing and quick shifts of weight to change directions. She had created an accumulation phrase that totaled thirty-six counts: 1, 1-2, 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4, and so on, so several mini-phrases became successively longer, ending with an eight-count phrase. The students had great difficulty on this day keeping track of the sequence of actions, staying with the music, and finding the beginnings of each mini-phrase. Susan Chess, the musician that day, played quite clear downbeats for the “1” of each mini-phrase on the drums. However, the students were not adequately focused on aurally reading her cues, and became stuck. As Durham Wall recalled:

The drums were so clear with the 1, 1-2, 1-2-3. She [Susan Chess] was spoon-feeding them that ‘1’ {taps table} … [The students hit] a brick wall. They were not going to get there, so I put it into a six. They got it, no problem. (Durham Wall 24 May)

As Durham Wall saw their inability to understand the accumulation phrasing, she changed only the assigned counting sequence. Instead of hearing and counting “1, 1-2, 1-2-3,” they counted six phrases of six counts. Because this musical structure was more familiar and comfortable for the students, they no longer had to concentrate on reading the accumulation; the movement fell into place.

On that day, Guyton Nee recalls feeling that she failed in her kinesthetic mode and became stuck in her thinking. She felt disoriented by the counting of the accumulation and lost her sense of location within the larger dance phrase, which in turn disconnected her from feeling and sensing through the movement. She explains:

I got stuck with the counts. I was like, “Did I do 1 2 3, or am I on 4 now?” …. I think accumulations are fine. However, it was too much of it. So, 1 2 to 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8, that was just so much in between that then I was forgetting where we were. When it was 6, I was then able to remember what happened and then my brain
started to get into gear. I step to the left on this 5. I do this heel-toe thing on 3 4 5 6. I was able to start making physical connections through the numerical timing. (Guyton Nee 31 May)

Once the phrasing changed to sixes, Guyton Nee was able to hear and feel the timing and phrasing more clearly. She says, “At the very end of the combination I was just feeling it, hearing the music and connecting the pulse of my movement with the music. It was really just a wash of feeling {sweeps arms horizontally}, physical feeling” (Guyton Nee 31 May).

For Guyton Nee, finding the what of the movement text, a combination of the sequence of movement and the kinesthetic sense of doing the movement, comprises her optimal way of learning. While she operates first through the kinesthetic mode, she also easily connects to music and rhythm due to her background in tap dance and learning to play several instruments. As an accumulation of phrasing, Guyton Nee experienced the movement text as an overload of information, leading to a failure of reading in the aural and kinesthetic modes.

I felt so weird and outside of myself...I didn't feel very internalized in initiating my movement. It was kind of like this outside skin feeling of like, “what....”

I was out here somewhere, and I wasn't inside my body at all, which is where I normally am. I felt slow because I was coming from an outside initiation instead of “fffwh”

getting there in that moment. I was concerned instead of getting my brain to

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60 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Kinesphere.”
work right...I don't know what would have happened if I just focused on my body instead. I was trying to go brain first. (Guyton Nee 31 May)

The amount of rhythmic-numerical attention required in this accumulation phrase interfered with her ability to physically process the movement and even to hear the phrasing in the drums. Changing the phrase into sixes reconnected Guyton Nee to both modalities. In several moments of Guyton Nee’s interview, action occurred during thought-processing of how to describe the experience which language could not easily capture.

In addition to reading movement texts, dancers read each others’ bodies. As a technique teacher, Durham Wall visually attended to her students’ dancing bodies to see how well the students’ technique was or was not functioning. Reading technique in bodies requires nuanced visual attention to muscular tension and weight, movement initiation and sequencing, as well as skeletal-structural alignment and joint usage. Reading bodies relays external and kinetic information about how the body is acting in space and with gravity.

One example of reading qualitative nuance within the body occurred in an exercise featuring a torso-curl forward. This particular action occurred over several classes in the context of more than one exercise or dance phrase. Following a series of shoulder and arm circles, the torso curls forward with the arms coming forward, then completes a slow circle to the side, back, and opposite side, ending forward again, while the arms melt down to the sides. To execute the forward curling correctly, the lumbar spine first lengthens internally before the thoracic spine curls forward.
Durham Wall was trying to get the students to initiate the action by engaging their deepest core\textsuperscript{61} muscles, thereby lengthening their lumbar spines, in order to curl their torsos. Instead, many students were folding their upper torsos forward loosely. Durham Wall could read the difference in the thickness and “three-dimensional embracing of the spine” in the cores of the students who were executing it well (Durham Wall 24 May).

More nuanced visual aspects manifest themselves as sequencing of movement in and through the body. In looking for the sense of core initiation, Durham Wall needed to see qualitatively thicker muscularity in their lower spines. This qualitative difference was legible as a very subtle lengthening action indicating the muscular engagement she was asking from her students.

This technical nuance is an example of movement that is felt more than seen or noticed visually. In her demonstration during class, she described this moment as “nice big curve, try to get lumbar first and then thoracic” (23 May 2012). Later when giving the class correction notes, she said, “You can see the shape, but you can’t see what I’m feeling internally. I’m trying to get my lumbar as looooong as I can before I let anything go [forward].” For some students, this deeper engagement was illegible on Durham Wall’s body, so they missed the sequencing of the movement as two different actions: lumbar lengthening via core initiation engagement, and then thoracic curling forward.

The torso curling moment from Durham Wall’s class gives a rich example of kinesthetic modality in a dance classroom. In one of the first classes where this dance

\textsuperscript{61} Core has several meanings in dance, here, referring to the combination of abdominal and back muscles that flex, extend, and support the torso, particularly engaging the deeper as opposed to the superficial muscles.
phrase occurred, Durham Wall used tactile corrections with her students. During the May 4th class, dancers repeated an excerpt of this phrase facing multiple directions of the room as part of the initial warm-up. Durham Wall approached the first student while she was dancing, and placed one hand just under the student’s front ribs and the other on her back at the lumbar curve. As the student curled forward, Durham Wall gave gentle pressure with her hands at these two places to guide the student toward executing the action. Durham Wall repeated this tactile correction with a new student at each repeat of the dance phrase. Sometimes, the student would stop dancing and try the action again. Durham Wall’s tactile correction guided the students to feel both the deep core engagement and the location of the folding action, making the correct muscular engagement and sequencing legible within their kinesthetic senses.

When this dance phrase appeared the following week in the May 23rd class, Durham Wall once again returned to the tactile correction. However, this time, the students worked in partners on this single moment, removing it from the context of the dance phrase. As the students worked in pairs, Durham Wall provided verbal instruction about what to feel, how to read the sensation within their bodies – the lengthening of the lumbar spine before the curling in the thoracic spine. The students gave the touch guidance to one another: one hand placed just under ribs in front and the other hand on the back at the lumbar curve. Visibly, several students began to change how they executed the curl.

Speaking with Durham Wall later, I asked for clarification on this moment. The touch was very deliberate. The front hand forced the students to keep a sense of “front”
and prevent moving the upper vertebrae first, and the back hand gave a reminder to open
the lumbar in the back. She says:

This is a core initiation engagement. You may not even discernibly be able to see
[movement] on a student, but I can see sequentially what's happening. You can
wait and not do anything, and then do that {pushes her thoracic vertebrae
backward}, and I can still tell that it's not coming from {engages core and
contracts lumbar vertebrae}. (Durham Wall 24 May)

Although the action creates the visible shape of the forward curved torso, the kinesthetic
sense of engaging the deep core muscles is the impetus for the action. The difference is
just moving into the shape, versus feeling — and executing — the deep engagement and
lengthening first.

Youth Ballet Technique and Repertory: Carol Maxwell Rezabek

Carol Maxwell Rezabek’s technique classes and rehearsals illustrated many
reading events. Similarly to Meghan Durham Wall’s classes, Maxwell Rezabek used a
demonstration and recitation model of teaching/learning. Maxwell Rezabek demonstrated
and explained movement texts (exercises and dance phrases) to students who then
repeated those texts with their own bodies. Reading movement to learn exercises and
choreography constituted the majority of reading practices observed.

Maxwell Rezabek also engaged in explicit coaching of her students’ reading of
choreographic structure in exercises, videos, and rehearsal études. Maxwell Rezabek’s
classroom exhibited orchestrated multimodality, particularly vocabularies to support
student fluency in the kinesthetic lexicon of ballet. This section concludes with a
discussion of visual and kinesthetic mode ensembles, and how Maxwell Rezabek coaches
her students toward better reading comprehension through integration of the two.
Multimodality in Reading Comprehension

Dance educator Carol Maxwell Rezabek prioritizes multimodality in her classroom. She described how some of her students, especially her older students, begin to ask for particular modes in her demonstrations. Some will ask for the counts (aural/music mode), some will ask to hear the step names in rhythm (music and verbal modes), or to see her demonstrate the movement without words (visual modes). When there are comprehension issues with student reading of the movement, Maxwell Rezabek will consider which mode she has presented, who is present, and what they have responded to previously.

Maxwell Rezabek notes that the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) teacher training prefers teachers to use only one mode at a time in order to avoid muddying the information. However, in Maxwell Rezabek’s experience, particularly with her current students, multimodal presentation is beneficial. Many of her students are not fluent with the ballet positions or step names, but they have seen them as shapes and actions previously. Maxwell Rezabek notes that:

They know {moves her arms from first to second position}. They can predict what I'm going to do with my arm, so I'm going to [verbally] underline the names of them because later in the class I'll want to be able to say that and have them be able to go there without me [re-demonstrating the position or dance step].
(Maxwell Rezabek 21 March)

Information imparted in one mode can support another. Maxwell Rezabek “underlines” the movement during her demonstration by saying the position or step names aloud. Simultaneously seeing and hearing the ballet step names reinforces the vocabulary for Maxwell Rezabek’s students. Like Meghan’s language immersion theory, repeated
exposure to the visual, verbal, and aural aspects of the movement allows the students to connect the three, and eventually read them individually.

Language and gesture modes also interject into one another. We do not always possess oral vocabulary for a movement or physical sense, so gestures can take the place of spoken language, often in mid-sentence. Combining action with speech enhances communication in these cases. As in the example from the preceding paragraph, Maxwell Rezabek ended her verbal sentence with an action, and then continued her next thought in words: “They know {moves her arms from first to second position}. They can predict what I’m going to do with my arm…” In another example, a Classical Edge student was unsure which étude they were about to practice. She asked, “Is Giselle the one where we start like this?” and performed the opening port de bras to the Giselle étude (20 March 2012). Performed actions stood in for spoken words as a multimodal shortcuts to communication. Multimodal reading is constant for dancers in and out of the studio, and many of the dance artists in this research demonstrated language-gesture interjections during their interviews. Mode ensembles, such as language and gesture/action, are common enough that other dancers are able to read these mini-movement/language texts without questioning the multimodality.

In class and rehearsal, Maxwell Rezabek orchestrates language and kinesthetic modes for demonstration and clarification. One reason for her abundant use of language is a consequence of physical limitations Maxwell Rezabek experiences from the early stages of multiple sclerosis. She can provide clarity of images, intentions, concepts, and movement through language; she no longer feels capable of executing everything physically to the extent she would like. Another reason for heavy use of language in
several of her classes was due to the exceptional nature of the week I observed at the studio. Many of the classes were required to have a review session for the mid-year placement quiz, which shortened the time for dancing on this particular week. The shortened classes and the need for choreographic review of recital pieces created an unusual classroom circumstance. During other weeks there would have been more exercises taught and more of a focus on developing the students’ technique. However, Maxwell Rezabek does possess an aptitude and preference for language modalities, as she expressed during her interviews (21 March; 22 March). Language would have been a prominent mode at any other time, although perhaps to a lesser extent. The change to her physicality paired with an already highly developed preference and aptitude for language expression fosters the rich verbal environment in Maxwell Rezabek’s teaching.

Maxwell Rezabek gives physical demonstrations teaching *barre* and *centre* exercises to her upper level ballet classes in addition to using language modalities. During *tendu*, she performs the movement of the exercise, narrating both the step names and the choreographic patterns. While the students dance, she continues to give directional cues and reminders about alignment. In *centre*, Maxwell Rezabek fully demonstrates the *port de bras* and *épaulement* while marking the leg movement. She annotates the movement text of the exercises by mixing step names, choreographic patterns, and cues for execution.

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62 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “*Barre* and *Centre.*”
63 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “*Tendu/Entendre.*”
64 See Appendix A: Glossary entries “*Port de bras*”, and “*Épaulement*.”
The Classical Edge rehearsal focused primarily on reviewing several of the solo and group pieces for the upcoming Spring show. Maxwell Rezabek walked the students through the choreography, reminding the dancers of the section, saying step names in and out of rhythm, clarifying questions about spacing, and narrating mime motivations. When new material was introduced with this group, Maxwell Rezabek demonstrated physically with much verbal explanation, while the students followed along. They worked on musical timing after the walk-through of the new steps.

Maxwell Rezabek uses several vocabularies teaching ballet to children — anatomy words, French ballet terminology, and generally descriptive words. Like Durham Wall, Maxwell Rezabek chooses different types of language to communicate different information with her students. In an early level class, all three types are used across two activities dealing with warming up their ankles and pointing their feet. With the children sitting in a circle with their legs outstretched, they flex and point their ankles. First they put pretend marshmallows on their toes (flexed ankles) and then carefully put the marshmallows into the fire (roll through the feet to pointe\textsuperscript{65}). The second time, Maxwell Rezabek calls out the parts of the feet they are moving through — tarsals, metatarsals, and phalanges.\textsuperscript{66} Standing in centre, they continue practicing rolling through their feet, singing along with their music three different ways: imagining shoes — high heels, pointe shoes, high heels, flats; using description — half-toe, full-toe, half-toe, flat; and en français — demi-pointe, pointe, demi-point, talon.\textsuperscript{67} The various versions call

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{65} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “\textit{En pointe, Demi-pointe, Talon}.”
\textsuperscript{66} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “\textit{Tarsals, Metatarsals, Phalanges}.”
\textsuperscript{67} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “\textit{En pointe, Demi-pointe, Talon}.”
\end{footnotesize}
attention to and consider different conceptualizations about their feet and about the action. Anatomical words point out the bones inside their bodies where the action happens, and several children have delightedly come to class declaring how they also learned these words in science class. The shoe images support developing their sense of imagination. Using descriptive and French terminology reinforces dance and ballet-specific vocabulary they will need as they continue their dance studies.

In general when choosing to use French ballet terminology or English description, Maxwell Rezabek considers whether it is an appropriate time to reinforce the ballet words, or if simply saying what it is will be most helpful. In the particular year of my study she had found that for the grand allegro\textsuperscript{68} portion of the class, students were confusing steps when she primarily relied on ballet terminology; their budding but as yet inadequate fluency with the French terminology was interfering with the translation into movement. Maxwell Rezabek turned her focus to explaining that many of the big jumps in grand allegro are skips and gallops, taking it down to a simpler level of common actions before building the style back onto it. For example, she told one student she could “…just skip, but do it in 3\textsuperscript{rd} arabesque.”\textsuperscript{69}

With the older dancers, Maxwell Rezabek also integrated more anatomical language, particularly in relation to adjusting their alignment and balance. For example, during an extended balance, she reminded the students “belly button up and back, sternum up and forward,” and “nose, belly button, hip over support,” and then to

\textsuperscript{68} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Grand allegro.”

\textsuperscript{69} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Arabesque.”
come down from relevé\textsuperscript{70} to “relax hips, knees, ankles.” The anatomical language in Maxwell Rezabek’s context of teaching K-12 students was less technical than the kinesiological language Durham Wall used. Durham Wall’s students were specifically studying kinesiology, so the language crossover served to reinforce those concepts in technique class. Maxwell Rezabek’s students were also grappling with learning French ballet terminology, so the kinesiological and anatomical language was peppered in appropriate doses when it could specifically address a correction or question.

**Coaching Reading: Choreographic Movement Texts**

Dancers also read choreography for patterns and recognizable movement content. In her repertory class, Maxwell Rezabek curates video viewings of repertory for the students and coaches their reading. She uses video viewings of repertory as another presentation of movement content and choreographic form as well, supporting her goal of exposing the students to canon, culture, history, and quality performances. As the students watch, Maxwell Rezabek notes step names and positions the students already know, as well as the compositional forms of the dances, in order to facilitate the students’ reading.

During the *Giselle* rehearsal, the class viewed a solo performance that they would be working on that day (20 March 2012). As they watched the screen, Maxwell Rezabek narrated the step names the dancer performed. The students chimed in at moments when they readily recognized a specific position. Maxwell Rezabek also noted moments for the students in which the choreography on the video differed from the choreography they

\textsuperscript{70} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Relevé/Relever.”
would be performing. The student soloist became excited when she saw a new step the class had not learned, a racourci, and asked if they would be able to learn and incorporate the “kicky step” into their choreography. As the dance on the video progressed, Maxwell Rezabek called attention to dance phrases that repeated. At times, one or more of the students would blurt out if they recognized the return of a certain dance phrase or position. Pedagogically, guiding the students’ reading of the video teaches how and what to visually read in the choreography. After the viewing, Maxwell Rezabek related positions and compositional form from the video in order to coach the students’ learning and performance, reinforcing the relationship between what they saw and what they were now doing.

The coaching of reading is common in Maxwell Rezabek’s teaching of technique as well. Sometimes her students struggle with memorizing exercises while watching them being demonstrated. Maxwell Rezabek will coach her students to look for forms and to read patterns of individual actions and of larger phrases. She outlined some of the ways she coaches her students to read choreographic structure of movement texts:

Is it en croix? Is it short-short-long or long-short-short? Is it three and a break, like tap [dance]? Then once you’ve established that, does it have a [larger] pattern, which for me [as a teacher] it’s going to because that’s part of learning more complex exercises. Then with the arms, are they typical or atypical? If you know the pathways that are normal, and you memorize with that, then you just look at it and say, “Is it what I expected? Or is there a variation that I need to remember?”…What are the familiar things, and what is the unfamiliar thing that you might have to work with? (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March)

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71 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Racourci.”
72 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “En croix.”
When dancers easily read patterns and repetition, they can learn exercises and choreography more quickly and efficiently. By coaching her students with reading strategies for ballet exercises, Maxwell Rezabek supports their ability to move beyond sequencing and memorization stages of learning into deeper technical attention or concerns of artistry. For example, when her students understand the choreographic patterns, Maxwell Rezabek asks questions about how they will develop the phrasing by increasing or decreasing various Effort elements or use of space, varying timing, adding accents or other dynamics. Reading choreography teaches the students how to see and understand shapes, lines of action, and larger choreographic structures. Attending to intrinsic properties such as form and content builds a base from which other dance skills can grow (Preston-Dunlop; Koroscik), including reading technique enacted by other bodies.

Maxwell Rezabek also coaches her students to listen for cues and patterns within the musical accompaniment. In a private lesson with an intermediate pointe student that I observed, Maxwell Rezabek had the student stop and listen to the pirouette\textsuperscript{73} track on the CD. The student, Adriana, was overanalyzing her pirouette and getting stuck before she could turn. She was listening to the beat just to set her tempo, but then stopped listening to the music to concentrate on preparation for her pirouette. Maxwell Rezabek said to her:

\footnote{73 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Pirouette.”}
Doug wants to sell this album. He calls this one pirouette, so he is writing something that he thinks sounds like you're going to turn. Let's listen to it and find out why. He was doing turns \{hand draws carving shape\}, literally in the music. Okay, back away from the mirror. Dance. When you get to the pirouette [in the music], spin.” (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March)

By having Adriana aurally read “turning” in the music, she redirected her mental attention and her physical attention. Musical reading can also reveal information about timing and phrasing. In the Classical Edge repertory group, Maxwell Rezabek often has the students sing the “lyrics” of the dance, meaning singing dance steps or dramatic motivation to the melody in the music. For example, during a Paquita solo, they listened and then sang to the melody, “This is the part where I present \{arms open outward\}, and then I become a little shy \{turn away and place hand on cheek\}” (Maxwell Rezabek 21 March). Phrasing of the movement comes through as the students hear, feel, and sing along with the music.

**Coaching Reading: Tensions in Kinesthetic-Visual Mode Ensembles**

Dancers translate from movement they see into movement they kinesthetically sense and physically enact. Sometimes in technique learning, tension arises between visual and kinesthetic modes. As dance students read the movement they see demonstrated, they may interpret its intentions or initiations differently than intended. In terms of reading comprehension, they may see and understand the surface levels of the movement, like external shapes, and miss the deeper levels of the movement such as use of weight and momentum, precise muscular engagement, or mechanical functioning.74

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74 NB: I did not personally interview the dance students, with the exception of Jill Guyton Nee. The analysis for this section stems from my observations of the technique classes and from Maxwell Rezabek’s observations and interactions with them as their teacher, which we discussed in her interviews.
Although Maxwell Rezabek physically demonstrates aspects of exercises and dance phrases to her students, she purposely tries to limit her physical demonstrations. In her teaching philosophy, she wants to guide students to figure out technique from their own physical understanding and artistic interpretation, rather than relying on mimicking her performance. She explains:

I wish I could [demonstrate] more, but that's my ego. I find that when I don't, I get better results. I was inspired years ago by an article by David Howard\(^{75}\) that talked about how he used to demonstrate a lot. Then he was injured, and he couldn't. When he got out of himself, it made him attuned to the dancers, and it made him a better teacher, so I hang my hat on that thinking if I don't demonstrate, I can get to them better because then they're not imitating, which I don't believe in. I don't want them to imitate. (Maxwell Rezabek 21 March)

Maxwell Rezabek values her students learning to read their own bodies kinesthetically as opposed to relying on mimicking their teachers. For this same reason, she does not often use tactile feedback such as placing students’ arms or legs in the correct position or adjusting their alignment for them so that students do not become dependent on her external feedback. Instead, with limited use of touch-feedback, students have to learn how to independently sense and correct their technique.

When students become too dependent on external feedback, they do not develop a strong kinesthetic sense; what the students see and what they feel do not seem commensurate. This represents a fine line because viewing demonstration and repeating it

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\(^{75}\) David Howard (1937-2013) was an internationally acclaimed English-born ballet dancer and teacher. His pedagogy emphasized developing the kinesthetic sense over heavily relying on external feedback, such a mirrors. See Howard 32-33.
is normally a keystone to dance training. Sometimes viewing or sensing results in confusion, especially in learning moments when new neuropathways or movement patterning is being established. Early 20th-century movement theorist F.M. Alexander called this “debauched kinesthesia,” when the kinesthetic sense as a person has mapped inside her body is incorrect, incomplete, or inaccurate. The misreading of one’s body in space, or motion, could be the result of not seeing the demonstration clearly, or not looking for the right element.

As mentioned above, I had the privilege of observing a private lesson with one of Maxwell Rezabek’s intermediate ballet students, Adriana. During barre, Adriana typically faces the mirror to see if she is “right,” instead of trying to feel or sense her alignment. She wants the external assurance, and prefers to read her visual image rather than use her kinesthetic sense. One area they were focusing on was maintaining turnout.76

During one retiré77 action, Adriana hiked78 her working leg hip upward causing her standing leg to lose turnout and rotate to parallel.79 She paused to ask Maxwell Rezabek if it looked right or not, rather than feeling her body during the action and afterward. Maxwell Rezabek responded that “another way to fix it is to stop and feel…” (21 March 2012). Holding her position, Adriana noticed that one hip felt higher than the other (the hip-hike), and that she did not feel as though her standing leg was turned outward. They took this opportunity to re-try the retiré, with Maxwell Rezabek reminding Adriana to

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76 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Turnout and Parallel Leg Rotation.”
77 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Retiré.”
78 Hip-hiking during the retiré action occurs when the dancer lifts the hip in order to raise the leg, rather than folding in the hip joint and keeping the pelvis horizontally level.
79 Standing leg and working leg differentiate between which leg the dancer is standing on (standing leg), and which leg is executing gestural actions (working leg) such as retiré, tendu, developpé.
focus on the feeling of folding in her hip joint of her working leg (to prevent hiking her hip) and of continuing to rotate her standing leg.

In an interview after the class, Maxwell Rezabek discussed this moment. Over the school year, Maxwell Rezabek had learned that Adriana wants to be sure that corrections she receives from her teachers are externally legible to them. She wants them to read the feedback in her body. Maxwell Rezabek has also observed that Adriana has a leg length discrepancy — one leg is slightly longer than the other — and hyperextension in her knees (Maxwell Rezabek 21 March). These bodily structures cause kinesthetic misreading for her; what feels “straight” in her legs is actually hyperextended, and uneven legs make subtle weight shifting more difficult. Therefore, kinesthetic reading (feeling/sensing in her body) has not been as reliable as visual reading. However, at this point in her training in order to continue advancing, Adriana needs to start developing a stronger internal understanding of movement, which Maxwell Rezabek is working with her to do.

Misreading movement by seeing-over-sensing is a theme Maxwell Rezabek was working on with many of her intermediate and advanced students. Several of Maxwell Rezabek’s advanced students suffer from hip flexor tendonitis and knee joint pain as a result of the way they have previously trained. The competition “lyrical” style of dance popular with these students focuses on external shape of the movement over the flow or sequencing of the movement within the body. Especially when landing from jumps or _pirouette_ turns, the dancers misuse their _plié_, the softening and bending of the leg joints. The dancers read the bent shape of the _plié_, but they do not experience the action of the softening and sequence of the bending. As Maxwell Rezabek describes it:
They were plié-ing, but it was plié-ing a shape because they were told that they need to plié a shape to save their knees. It was like, ‘I’m going to land {slams hand on table with a stiff, straight arm}, and then I must plié {stiffly bends elbow}.’” (21 March)

Rather than softening through the leg joints as they came into contact with the floor and using resilient weight to cushion their landings, the dancers read the bent shape of the plié, and only copied that.

In turning and jumping, these students are good at seeing and quickly getting to the shape. They know they have to land from the shape, but they do not see how it works within the body. While trying to land with a straight, stiff leg and then bend, they do not see the crucial swing and drop of the weight that is part of the landing. Maxwell Rezabek has had success with using ribbon sticks with chassé and sauté (gallop and hop), so the students can see and sense gravity and swing through the movement of the ribbon, and then within the body. With some of the dancers, swinging and circling long ribbons has helped them to read more deeply into the mechanical function of processing their momentum — to see and to feel the resiliency of landing in plié.

Reading/Writing Overlaps and Multi-authored Dances: Bebe Miller Company

**Composition: Simultaneous Reading and Writing**

Composition is one aspect of writing: the generating, creating, and re/arranging of movement into a larger piece of choreography. Composition in dance can be the product of both reading and writing dance literacy events. When choreographers rely on dancers — bodies outside of themselves — to compose the dance, they must read the phrases, tasks, or improvisations the dancers present in order to write the dance-at-large. In the
Bebe Miller Company, simultaneous and alternating reading/writing activities are abundant. Between Miller’s role as choreographer, Talvin Wilks’ role as dramaturg, and Angie Hauser’s and Darrell Jones’s collaborative roles as dancers, a number of reading and writing events take place in any given moment. For example, Hauser and Jones may compose an improvisation while Miller and Wilks watch and read their movement. This section primarily looks at reading and writing during rehearsals for the Reset/Set-up section of *A History*.

We can visualize composition as layers of simultaneous and alternating reading and writing. The outermost layer is writing or composing the dance-at-large, that is, the choreographic work — in this case *A History*. Then, there are inner layers where movement is generated (writing), and then arranged, revised, or edited (writing). Reading intertwines with writing in these inner layers to facilitate writing of the choreography. Miller must see and make decisions about what her dancers, their movement and bodies, are doing (reading and writing). Miller and Wilks also read how the larger choreographic structure meets their conceptual and narrative goals for the dance. Miller also reads the movement Hauser and Jones generate as they improvise. Then, discussion follows to direct Hauser and Jones on how to change or develop their improvisation in order to get at the ideas Miller is looking for (writing). Additionally, Hauser and Jones read each other and the room as they improvise (simultaneous reading and writing).

In April 2012, Reset was called Set-up because Miller, Jones, and Hauser were working on it as a transition to set up the Fable section of the dance. Reset eventually became a section in *A History* in which Hauser and Jones take turns improvising. They began standing side-by-side upstage, and proceeded with alternating improvisations that
traveled downstage. As one danced, the other watched, and then they traded roles as watcher (reader) and mover (writer). Eventually they danced together, and Reset morphed into partnering, sharing weight, and leaving behind their upstage/downstage tracks as they transitioned toward the finale section of the dance.

The Reset section in *A History* required differing types of reading on the parts of Miller, Jones, and Hauser. First, there was reading for improvisational impetus, Hauser and Jones reading both their own and each others’ movement and bodies as scores. Second, Miller read the dancers’ improvisations in order to direct and coach them, and to compose the structure of this section of the choreography. These reading events alternated with discussion about the preceding exploration.

During the discussions, Miller, Hauser, and Jones focused on defining the parameters of the movement and refining the improvisational scores. At the start of the rehearsal, Miller described her understanding of the Set-up/Reset section, “When I think of Set-up, I think of time and phrasing…Darrell’s Drive is spatial, and the floor work is body-oriented, but [Angie] can use time and dynamic phrasing within those. There is a difference in the sourcing [of the movement]” (rehearsal April 14 2012). In the initial discussion, Miller set the main goal of the day’s work: figuring out how the Set-up section works and how they will develop the improvisatory movement vocabulary and

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80 During the April 14-15, 2012 residency at The Ohio State University Department of Dance, Wilks was unable to be present.
81 The improvisational scores used in Set-up/Reset were unwritten until rehearsals near the premiere. The improvisational scores were developed orally and kinesthetically through discussion and trial and error.
82 Drive or Darrell Drive refers to the improvisational movement state that characterized Jones’s movement persona in *A History*. It signified his movement fingerprint: continuous driving through space, whole-body whipping, initiated by pelvis and downward weight, and punctuated by sudden and fleeting arrests.
scores for it. Miller wanted two themes in Set-up: movement characterized by timing and attention to space.

One morning as they tried several sets of explorations with Set-up, Jones and Hauser struggled to understand Miller’s perception of this section. When they asked for further clarification, Miller responded that she was seeing something about timing and use of space by Jones. Often the discussions between company members involved searching for language to communicate and understand one other. As Miller spoke, she imitated Jones, moving and suddenly stopping several times, rippling through her center, and then landing her hands and feet in precise locations in space. Moving while talking helped to place visual movement examples where words could not provide the needed clarity.

Miller added that she was interested in the qualitative differences in their movement that communicated “Darrell” and “Angie,” but which she was not able to name. The Set-up section became a juxtaposition and then fusion of the two dancers’ contrasting movement qualities. Miller could read the inherent Angie-ness and Darrell-ness of the improvised movement that she wanted. Miller’s directing is writing as composing and structuring the choreography of the dance-at-large, but Jones and Hauser must understand the parameters of their improvised compositions within the dance. Because the movement in Set-up was improvised and not set into specific actions and phrases, the struggle in rehearsal consisted in Miller’s ability to verbally articulate to the dancers which qualities of movement, timing and rhythmic phrasing, and spatial and dynamic relationships she wanted. What specifically was Miller reading as “Angie” and “Darrell” — not in specific actions, but in their abstract characteristics?
Eventually, Miller decided to have Jones try his Drive movement, and have Hauser use that as a source for her improvisation. As Jones danced, he narrated his process:

I’m seeing things in the space, trying to locate scripts in my body…. \{with a horizontal torso, flips right arm and leg sideward and down\} That’s the wall…. \{flicks arms forward while propelling the rest of his body backward\} that’s the back of the room. It takes me a second to register [the visual and the scripts].

Miller and Hauser watched his narrated demonstration. Miller interjected, “As you’re describing what it is you’re [Darrell] seeing, you’re [Angie] reading what he’s doing before he says it.” Jones responded, “There’s the piano there \{sudden drop into a squat and twist to stand up and fling one arm outward\}, and that’s the pelvis that remembers what that was.” Miller interjected again, “But I’m also watching your pelvis move opposite of where your arms are. Without knowing what that is, it looks like reading, you’re telling this story at the end, and we’re seeing a physicality.” As Miller described what she noticed, she imitated Jones’s examples, exaggerating the sudden directions of the arms and the pelvis moving in opposition to them. Hauser stated that it seemed there was a time delay between what the eyes saw and how the body responded while the eyes are already moving on. She, in turn, physically demonstrated her point as she spoke.

To clarify her intention for both dancers, Miller responded, “I’m less interested in what you’re reading, and more interested in [the difference] between what are you [Darrell] are doing and what are you [Angie] are doing. That’s my job. Is there something different that you [Angie] can articulate with your weight that is complementary to what Darrell is doing?”
Hauser took her turn improvising, moving similarly to Jones, but with less force in her suddenness. She mimicked the sudden tosses and weight dropping, but her body reverberated from them rather than coming to complete stillnesses. Miller remarked to Hauser, “Cool, write that down,” as Hauser ran to her notebook to jot down her thoughts and experience about that iteration. She wrote a list of thoughts “visual/physical,” “time delay,” “Angie doing D Drive,” “*stay connected to the score!! No gaps”83 (Hauser Notebook).

Miller, Hauser, and Jones continued discussing and demonstrating for one another. Miller recognized the hit-and-dissolve impulse phrasing in Hauser’s movement, which Hauser noted came from a Forsythe improvisation technique84 of feeling a plane and then dissolving away from it. This source generated the spatial precision in Hauser’s movement. Miller observed that the dissolve was:

very you [Angie], because it wasn’t a throwing away of the previous point in space {Miller indiscriminately throws her arms outward}, but a transition into something new {punches arms precisely but then torso and legs ripple as the arms dissolve into their trajectory}.

While Miller demonstrated, Hauser and Jones moved and listened, trying on Miller’s descriptions in their bodies, as though they are having an oral-physical conversation.

Hauser described the difficulty of the simultaneous reading and writing in Set-up/Reset. Each round was a solo, but each round also required connection points. She noted that they were reading each other (bodies and movement) in order to find the “ins” for their writing/composition in order to keep re-setting each round. It felt like being

83 See Chapter 4 for more discussion on the use of journals in rehearsal.
84 Developed by contemporary ballet choreographer William Forsythe, Forsythe improvisation techniques are a collection of strategies, prompts, images, and uses of space, dynamics, and time to generate movement vocabulary.
“pushed off a cliff” (Hauser 18 July). She explains, “As an improviser, you start to find something [for impetus], and then you build that based on your skills as a composer,” but in Set-up/Reset, there was “no ramp into it” to begin building and composing each round (Hauser 18 July). In order to write each improvisation in Set-up/Reset, Hauser required a score from which to read and respond in movement.

**Reading "Storyness," Interpreting for composition – Wilks as dramaturg**

As a dance dramaturg with the Bebe Miller Company, Talvin Wilks collaborates on reading the choreography within the contexts of content, story, and other structures the company develops for a particular dance. Wilks’ reading of the movement is always within the specific contexts of the dance in order to track and guide narrative and choreographic through lines. Near the end of developing *A History*, the Bebe Miller Company was invited to work with digital artists at the MotionBank project, an online multi-media documentation project spearheaded by William Forsythe and the Forsythe Company in Frankfurt, Germany. One aspect of this project is to collect and create online digital scores of movement by contemporary choreographers to make their choreographic approaches accessible through multi-media interfaces. The result of the collaboration with MotionBank was an off-shoot of *A History*, titled *TWO*, that would use motion capture to create visualizations, information graphics, and texts of movement tendencies of the dancers.

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85 See [www.motionbank.org/en](http://www.motionbank.org/en) for further explanation of Motion Bank mission and projects.
The digital collaborators for MotionBank asked dancers Hauser and Jones to generate some contact improvisation\(^86\) while Miller commented, so that they could video-record and motion-capture\(^87\) the movement. They then turned to Wilks, as the dramaturg, and asked him what his contribution was to the movement. Wilks explained that he does not contribute individual actions, line, or angularity, but rather he reads the movement for his impressions within the context of the specific dance. Because each dance arises from different impetuses, intentions, rules and formulations, Wilks’ reading and dramaturgical contributions depend upon the presence of these contexts. In *A History*, this includes the developed duet relationship of Jones and Hauser, the Bebe Miller Company’s working process, notions of carrying history through one’s body, and how all of that relates to developing a narrative for this dance. If Wilks is looking at a “pure movement” exercise without a context, such as the contact improvisation activity set up at MotionBank, he has no lens through which to read the movement (Wilks 12 July). Wilks’ reading, then, requires the knowledge of the thematic concepts and choreographic trajectory of the dance. In this anecdote, Hauser and Jones performed decontextualized improvisation for the sake of generating movement data for the motion capture technology. This type of pure movement exercise gave Wilks no meaningful content to read.

The concept of “Storyness” arises from Wilks’ reading practice with the Bebe Miller Company. Storyness reads relationship, meaning, and a sense of story from the

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\(^{86}\) Contact improvisation is a style of dance that developed in the 1960s in America. Dancers improvise with one another coming into and out of physical contact, by touching, sharing the weight of each other’s bodies, and lifting one another.

\(^{87}\) In motion-capture, the dancers wear specialized leotards with dots on their joints that a camera records to a computer. The motion data of each dot then creates digital representations of the dancers bodies in motion in the computer.
juxtaposition and development of phrases within a given dance. When working with a
particular movement phrase, the company, particularly Wilks, may read a purpose or
meaning from tension or spatial relationships between the dancers, “what is compell[ing]
from that phrase of movement” (12 July 2012). With that sense in mind, the company
collaborates in juxtaposing that phrase with others to see how the meaning might shift or
change, or develop a journey or sense of character. According to Wilks:

Storyness is more than just layering meaning on top of something. It's really
trying to pull meaning out of something that's already happening. Is there
something there to grab to on to? Then if we shift it or manipulate it, can we build
a greater sense of story? (Wilks 12 July)

Wilks’ reading through Storyness develops from impressions emanating from the context
of the present movement. Storyness draws from the movement in its context rather than
imposing meaning on top of a pure movement exercise. He would not be able to apply or
develop Storyness out of a pure movement exercise, as was the apparent intention of the
TWO project, because there would be no core conceptual material from which to draw his
impressions. As dramaturg, Wilks’ reading practice serves to collaborate in developing
narrative and character-based content within the choreography, rather than creating
specific actions or movement phrases.

Wilks cultivated a particular interest in refining the Storyness of Set-up/Reset. As
seen previously, Set-up/Reset was a difficult section to define, develop and revise. For
Wilks, Reset became a critical section in the dance-at-large, especially in its abstract
portrayal of Jones’s and Hauser’s duet relationship within the Bebe Miller Company.
Wilks describes the Storyness of Reset:

There was this dynamic between Darrell and Angie that at times seemed to be
working at odds but arrived at this familiar place. For me, the sense of Storyness
there is kind of a spiraling in. It's almost a repeat of the way the piece begins, but it spirals in more deeply to this idea of relationship. It's not a story that you could retell [in words], but it has a sense of Storyness because it's about relationship.

(Wilks 12 July)

Wilks read Reset within the context of Jones and Hauser developing their duet practice in the Bebe Miller Company. *A History* begins with a juxtaposition of Jones with Jones Drive and Hauser with Angieness in movement and words projected onto a screen. This sets up a narrative expectation about the dancers and their movement fingerprints as primary subjects of the dance. The viewer sees them separately at first, and comes to know them through their various relationships to one another in terms of movement, text, dynamics, timing, or space. The later appearance of Reset creates a cyclic structure in the dance-at-large: Hauser and Darrel are separate in the beginning, then come together through each round at the end. In the final months of rehearsal before the premiere, Wilks wanted to continue pushing Reset towards an increased sense of dynamic relationship between Jones and Hauser.

**Shared Authorship**

Authorship, like composition, is a facet of writing in dance literacy. Composition is the act of generating, creating, and revising, whereas authorship conveys a role of power and authority over a dance work. Authorship implies ownership of a dance.

Composition in the Bebe Miller Company was highly collaborative for *A History*: Miller directed and re-directed the dancers and oversaw the composition of the dance-at-large; Hauser and Jones created the actual improvisational sequences and set movement phrases for the dance; Wilks tracked the narrative of the dance and guided compositional choices toward content and narrative goals. In terms of the didactic-democratic continuum
proposed by Butterworth,\textsuperscript{88} the choreographic methods of the Bebe Miller Company fall on the democratic end of the spectrum, with dancers working as collaborative authors of the work.

As the Bebe Miller Company transitioned away from the studio model to the residency model of working,\textsuperscript{89} improvisation and collaboration increased in their importance in the group’s creative process. The process of making has become its own presence in the Bebe Miller Company, so much so that it is a central subject in \textit{A History}. Miller dances less in rehearsal now, composes fewer actual dance phrases, and relies more on the dancers to act as collaborators, as dancer-authors.

I really rely on them [the dancers] to bring that physical difference to the studio. Though we talk a lot about stuff, it's like I'm just watching. I feel like I'm watching them solve a problem and then try to redirect it. I try to redirect or get in the way. The getting in the way, that's kind of a choreographer’s [job], that's what we do. (Miller 11 June)

As the choreographer, Miller acts as a director who provides an internal voice to ask the dancers questions. She tries to “get in their way” through questions and suggestions, disrupting the dancers’ movement habits in order to spur them into developing phrases or improvisational states. “I feel like at this point in my life as a choreographer I’m also [giving a] method for [the dancers] to use on their own, or to [be] a voice like Nina [Weiner] was for me” (Miller 11 June). Beyond the dances her company makes, Miller offers her collaborators methods and processes for improvising, generating movement, and devising dances.

\textsuperscript{88} See Chapter 1 and introduction to Chapter 3 for further explanation and discussion of Butterworth’s didactic-democratic dance-making continuum. 
\textsuperscript{89} See Bebe Miller training history in Chapter 2 for description of the company’s change from a studio-based model to a residency-based model.
Throughout Hauser’s experiences working with several choreographers, she has enjoyed developing her artistic voice as a collaborator. Particularly with the Bebe Miller Company, Hauser contributes expertise with improvisation-as-performance, generating and contributing considerable amounts of movement material to the work.

[Bebe is] a master collaborator, and she draws people to her that are [also collaborators]. She can be in the room with really smart, talented, opinionated people, and she wants that. She cultivates that in us. Inside of the process itself, I always feel that I have found my home. (18 July)

The dance-devising process of the Bebe Miller Company allows collaborators like Hauser, Jones, and Wilks shared authorship. The roles of choreographer/dancer and of reader/writer in the choreographic process of the Bebe Miller Company are complexly layered and intermixed. Hauser’s visibility as an author of the work is limited by cultural perceptions of the choreographer-dancer relationship despite her status as a collaborator/dancer-author with choreographers as noted as Miller. Furthermore, the company title, the Bebe Miller Company, signifies primary authorship to Miller, regardless of the collaborative nature of their choreographic process.

Part of the spoken text for A History comes from Hauser’s experience as a dancer who has difficulty articulating her role within the perceptions of strict choreographer-dancer boundaries. A discussion early in the process among collaborators Hauser, Jones, Wilks, and Lily Skove⁹⁰ about defining their roles within the company generated spoken/audio text for A History. Here, Hauser describes her questioning about what is a dancer, based on her own experience:

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⁹⁰ Lily Skove is a video artist and dancer. She collaborated with the Bebe Miller Company as the video artist for A History.
I am a dancer. That’s what I am. I would like for people to understand, I think, with the company — it was willful to call myself a dancer. I thought it was not enough, but I didn’t want to call myself a choreographer, and I still feel like this. I don’t want to be a choreographer because I’m a dancer, and that’s really what I am. But I want people to understand *what a dancer is.* I think with the company…and with the collaboration, [I’m] a collaborator, a generative artist, creator, also a conduit, and interpreter…

In Hauser’s experience, audiences and media are unaware of the dancers’ highly collaborative roles as co-authors. Perceptions about choreographer-dancer relationships assume didactic rather than democratic compositional processes, positioning Miller as the major, if not sole, composer of the choreography. Hauser wants people outside the company to know “the breadth of a dancer as a generative artist [who is] meeting the choreographer equally,” which reflects her Bebe Miller Company experience (18 July). She eschews the moniker choreographer, although she is generating and composing much of the dance work, because she is dancing and performing the dance work. To be a dancer is to fill a complex role of interpreter and conduit, as well as generator and composer. Shared authorship is reflected in the simultaneous reading/writing practices used by the company to compose their dances because Hauser and Jones contribute such a great amount of material for the choreography.

As dramaturg, Wilks’ collaborative role as co-author is largely invisible in the finished dance. His work is all “behind the table,” as he describes it, as he guides the development of the dance (Wilks 18 May). During a residency, Miller and Wilks, and at times additional collaborators, meet for a “download,” in which they discuss the progress of the day and the development of the choreography. During downloads, Wilks uses his directorial and dramaturgical sensibilities to make a case for how the structure of the choreography may or may not be working. He also has an active role during rehearsals at
the table with Miller. Wilks notes that he took on a more active role than usual in
directing as dramaturg for *A History* (Wilks 12 July).

Wilks had a clear vision of how the climax and dénouement of *A History* could
form across the sections Facing Facing, Raw Wild, and Calaban. The sequence of these
three sections at the end of the dance could, in his artistic view, bring the Storyness of
Hauser and Jones, of Darrell Drive and Angieness, into a full story arc with a fulfilling
sense of completeness and arrival.

It's some of our best Storyness because it is alive with meanings and relationship
and dynamic between the two of them. It is the purest idea of Storyness inside of
*A History*, I feel. It's just vibrant with all of their vulnerability and dynamic and
interrelationship and truth-telling because of their real live truth-speak that's
inserted inside of it. (Wilks 12 July)

Hauser and Jones had begun to generate completely new dance material, after having
compositionally referencing duet material from several previous dances. Wilks wanted
them to go into the new dance with the fully raw, wild energy they had started
developing, layered with audio of a rehearsal conversation, but Miller had them stop
prematurely. However, Wilks pushed for them to continue with it in order to reach the
fulfillment of Storyness Miller was seeking.

Miller’s and Wilks’ long-term artistic relationship undergirds the democratic
dance-devising model they use. Miller respects and trusts Wilks as a collaborator,
allowing him a great deal of input into the development of the choreography, particularly
when character and narrative are involved. Wilks’ persistence drove the development of
the final Calaban section. With his eye for narrative development, Wilks saw that the
Calaban section could spiral outward energetically, leading into the final release of the
dance.
My heart pushes. Here is maybe a good thing or maybe not because I keep pushing it to that goal or purpose that I see…and this is collaboratively where we are…It is potentially delicious. I so want it, I so see it, I so want it, but I get it that I'm there, and Bebe's like {mimes glancing over his shoulder} … I'm over her shoulder. {pretending to be Miller} “Get back!” (Wilks 12 July)

As the dramaturg co-author of the dance and long-time collaborator with Miller, Wilks is able to assert his ideas about the structure and narrative. He acknowledges that Calaban was something he was able to read, but Miller did not agree at first with his reading. After coaxing, the climax of A History developed as he imagined, to both their satisfactions. Wilks’ contribution as dramaturg gives him an authorial voice that supports Miller’s choreographic vision and her role as the final authority of the choreography.

**Systematic Composition, Systematic Fluency: Shlomit Ofer and RikudNetto**

**Composition vs. Choreography**

Writing dances within the RikudNetto dance group occurs in three phases: a two-part compositional practice of creating choreographed dances, and writing Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation (EWMN) scores of the dances. As with the Bebe Miller Company, choreographing dances involves alternating reading and writing events. With RikudNetto, composition is shared between choreographer Tirza Sapir and the dancers, although through a different dance-devising model than that of the Bebe Miller Company. The company choreographs their dances using a two-part process. The first part focuses on movement generation. The dancers experiment with movement instructions given by Sapir in order to generate a stock of movement phrases. In the

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91 Writing notation scores will be discussed in Chapter 4.
second part, Sapir arranges those movement phrases into the choreographed dance. This section discusses the shared composition practices of RikudNetto and their entwined reading and writing events.

Tirza Sapir’s choreographic interests with RikudNetto focus on systematic and structural variations of movement phrases based on particular movement concept motifs. She does not begin with imagery or develop narrative meanings. In performance, the company uses only a metronome and simple monotone costumes, reflecting their name RikudNetto (ריקודנטו), which translates as DanceNet or clean dance. RikudNetto dancer, Shlomit Ofer, describes Sapir’s artistic intentions:

[Tirza Sapir] is basically a dance teacher, a movement teacher. Her intention is to develop movement awareness, movement abilities, either physical or mental. She always looks for an idea that she can work on in various ways, but in some aspect it's the same idea. In the patterns [of Birds], which is one of her quite earlier works, the basic idea was to get more aware of how the [motif] system is there. How can you work with this special system of reference? (Ofer 9 May)

By focusing the choreography on patterns and motif systems, Sapir’s dances act as physical and conceptual training. Ofer describes the resulting work as hypnotic and meditative to watch.

Ofer describes Sapir’s process as “composing ‘from the head’ — deciding on a certain movement principle or motif as it is defined in the system [Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation], and then experimenting with the physical outcomes (for example, giving the same movement instructions for the arm, the leg, the torso),” then choosing from the resulting physical outcomes (Ofer "Composition"). Sapir verbally relays the movement instructions to her dancers, who then use them as the basis for improvisation. Improvisation in RikudNetto is different than improvisation in the Bebe Miller Company.
In RikudNetto, improvisation is a means to an end; it serves as mediation between the dancers and the movement instructions in order to generate phrases, rather than acting as a performative catalyst.

Writing and reading alternate throughout the process of creating RikudNetto’s dances. Sapir writes by composing systematic motifs (movement instructions); the dancers physically write solutions; Sapir reads their solutions for aesthetic sensibility and directs them to try particular body part combinations; and then she writes the whole dance by arranging the resulting phrases (Ofer 9 May). During this phase, the dancers spend much time learning physical coordination for the phrases Sapir chooses; this will be discussed further below in “System Fluency: EWMN and Honing Coordination.”

The bulk of the work is in creating phrases from sets of Eshkol-Wachmann Movement Notation-based movement instructions, and then finding visually interesting ways to manipulate those phrases. Sapir develops and arranges the phrases into dances, such as “Flamingo” or “Hoopoe” that are then compiled into collections, such as Birds or Moving Landscape. The dances in each collection share common movement instructions and manipulations. According to dancer Ofer, most of the movement instructions among dances in the collections will be the same or similar with changes for example, from cone to plane movements. However, the same abstract patterns travel across the dances:

[Sapir’s] way of thinking and developing dances or exercises as a model for composition will be present when you just see the dances, mostly you cannot see they’re related in some aspect [even though] they have almost the same movement instructions. (Ofer 9 May)

Despite their compositional relationships due to shared movement instructions, the dances appear visually unrelated. Alterations in limbs used, differing layering of limbs, or
changes between conical and planar movement render the shared movement instructions difficult to read by the audience from dance to dance.

The verbal movement instructions are an abstract framework. Sapir and the dancers fill them with different physical movement choices that meet the requirements of the instructions. The shared movement instructions may not be immediately apparent to an audience due to the compositional manipulations. The score for *Birds* includes:

...a cycle of nine variations structured on the basis of a numerical pattern. This pattern serves as the scaffolding for the combinations of movement that appear in the various dances. The values comprising this array are manifested through the notation either as amounts of movement \(1=45^\circ\), as positions, as whole body rotations (change of front), as directions of transport, or as definitions of the diameters of curved (conical) movement paths; and especially in the patterning of the movements in time through the whole cycle, the durations being determined in accordance with the numbers of time units indicated by the values that comprise the array. (Sapir and Reshef-Armony 3)

The dances are like puzzles in this sense, which appeals to Ofer as a dancer in the company. An audience member would likely need to know movement instructions and possess fluency in both EWMN and Sapir’s methods in order to read the similarities between the dances in performance.

The EWMN movement instructions are translated into various body parts and can be altered by time durations. In the dance “Onwards and Backwards” from the collection *Moving Landscape*, one of the main movement instructions describes arcs that move peripherally across a plane in opposing directions (Sapir and Al-Dor). For example, the instruction goes 1-unit clockwise/4-units counterclockwise,\(^\text{92}\) 2-units clockwise/4-units counterclockwise, 3-units clockwise/4-units counterclockwise, and so on until the series

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\(^{92}\) Clockwise and counterclockwise were chosen for description to aid in the visualization of arcs and reversals. Imagine beginning at 12 o’clock. Then picture hour hand circling forward to 1 o’clock then backward to 7 o’clock, forward to 9 then backward to 3, forward to 6 then backward to 12, and so on.
reaching 8-units clockwise/4-units counterclockwise. Any plane could be chosen — such as one of the major three sagittal/wheel, horizontal/table, or coronal/door plans or one based on a tilted, diagonal plane. Likewise, any body part could be chosen, such as an arm, leg, head, torso, thigh, although anatomical structure may determine certain modifications to the movement instructions.

RikudNetto’s dances exist within an austere aural landscape. In keeping with the company’s minimalist, formal aesthetic, music is not typically used in the choreography. Only an electronic metronome that keeps time accompanies most of their dances so that the dancers may keep a common pulse. Instead of relying on music to supply timing and phrasing, the dancers internally navigate numerical “melodies.” In Ofer’s words, “What we do is actually count in our hearts” (Ofer 9 May). The numerical “melodies” are the timing of the actions within the dance phrase, supplied by the movement instructions. Each dance has its own pattern, and as the performers transition from dance to dance, they change their internal melodies, “like switching from song to song [or] rhythmic pattern” (Ofer 9 May). For example, the melody from “Onwards and Backwards” begins “1, 1-2-3-4. 1-2, 1-2-3-4. 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4,” but a melody from Birds begins “1, 1, 1, 1, 1-2-3. 1.” Each series of counting denotes the duration of each action. In “Onwards and Backwards,” the rhythm is a quick 1-count action, then a longer 4-count action, then a 2-count action, and another 4-count action, and so on. In Birds, the rhythm is four quick 1-count actions, then a 3-count action, followed by another quick 1-count action, and so on.

93 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Planes of Movement.”
In these dances, the counting melody, read internally by the dancers, is the only key to the phrasing and timing of the movement.

Once a collection of phrases is established and learned by the company, Sapir arranges them into choreography: positioning the dancers in the stage space, and incorporating compositional structures such as unison or canon moments or juxtaposing soloists and groups. This second phase, choreography, only takes place if the company will have a performance. Otherwise, the choreographic process ends after finishing the set phrases that would comprise the dances within a particular collection. If they go on to create choreography, Sapir reads the dancers’ movement solutions in order to make compositional choices about body part combinations and their arrangement into a collection of choreographed dances. Each collection of dances becomes a collection of images and is published as EWMN scores.

While arranging the dances into choreography, images may arise, which Sapir chooses to highlight or emphasize. Ofer described to me the development of birds imagery for the *Birds* collection of dances. For these dances, Sapir wanted to find a series of cones that could transfer from one limb to another while keeping the same sequence. Through the company’s explorations during a rehearsal, the quality of the arms became like the graceful, flapping wings of birds. During her interview, Ofer demonstrated this moment by lifting her arms to the sides, swooping them forward and backward as they rose, then carving a large arc from behind at their apex (Ofer 9 May). This wing-flapping image emerged halfway through creating the collection. Once a thematic image emerges from the phrases the dancers create, Sapir uses this image to guide further compositional decisions. After the wing-flapping image surfaced, she looked for more opportunities to
bring out further bird-like imagery. Significantly, these images arose from within the movement instructions rather than from adding movement from outside the scope of the movement instructions.

On a rare occasion, Sapir may add a gesture from outside the movement instructions or alter a phrase to support a particular image that has emerged from the movement instructions. One of these exceptions can be found in the “Hoopoe” (pronounced hoo-poo) dance from *Birds*. The hoopoe is Israel’s state bird. It has a crest on top of its head that is often slicked backward, but opens upward and forward like a fan. When flying, its wings undulate similarly to those of a butterfly. Throughout “Hoopoe,” the dancers splay the fingers of one hand and flutter them, similar to a jazz hand. This hand gesture flutters near to and away from the top of the dancers’ heads. In the final moment, the dancers stand completely still with the fluttering hand gesture near their faces, connoting the hoopoe bird’s crest. However, the majority of the movement throughout the dance does not resemble the undulating flight or other actions of the hoopoe. The fluttering hand/crest is the only conspicuous gestural image in the dance. Without the context of the title “Hoopoe,” and knowledge of the Israeli national bird, this gesture would not be read with the same connoted meanings.

Composing roles are split between Sapir and the dancers. The movement material of RikudNetto’s dances lives within the bodies of the dancers; phrase development, and manipulations between body part combinations are their responsibility. Sapir acts as the choreographic arranger and director, curating her dance collections (Ofer 9 May). Authorship is primarily ascribed to Sapir as the generator of the movement instructions and choreographic arranger, though the compositional process of RikudNetto falls nearer
the democratic than didactic end of the dance-devising continuum. The dancers generate movement solutions and produce the actual movement phrases, but choreographic decisions — movement instructions, body part combinations, spatial arrangement of dancers, choreographic arrangement of phrases, and thematic development — fall to Sapir.

**System Fluency: EWMN and Honing Coordination**

The dancers of RikudNetto navigate two major fluencies to create their dances. First is the conceptual literacy of the notation system, and the second is the physical coordination in executing the movement instructions. The former aids in developing the latter. Dancers must first have sufficient fluency in Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation to understand and work creatively with Tirza Sapir’s movement instructions, as this fluency enables dancers to coordinate their bodies with their time and space parameters.

Conceptual knowledge of EWMN can be accessed separately from expertise in its notational script. A 1979 LABAN Centre symposium on dance literacy in London, which featured notators from Benesh and Laban notation systems, describes from notators’ perspectives how notation systems influence movement thinking:

Inevitably, one’s [notational] system influences how one looks and thinks about movement. It is quite impossible to divide oneself from something, which, as a literate dancer, is second nature. One communicates the factors of movement in the system of notation embedded in one’s unconscious. A Labanotator does not think in terms of conical shapes, but of directions related to a center. A Benesh notator does not think in terms of crosses of axes but of the lines drawn in space by the extremities of limbs and body. The Eshkol notator does not think in terms of bent and stretched limbs but of planal movements of two limb parts around axes, which may be the same or may not be the same. (Howell, Preston-Dunlop and al. 57)
This is to say, once a dancer has trained in a particular notation system, she adopts the method of movement analysis inherent to that system and incorporates it into her own conceptual and physical understanding of movement. Such conceptual and physical understandings are carried within dancers’ minds and bodies, even when they do not have paper and pencil on hand to write notation symbols. Literacy in a dance notation system is, therefore, more than symbolic. It is physical and conceptual, and it affects how one thinks and moves, as the compositional practices of RikudNetto will demonstrate.

The dancers of RikudNetto, such as Ofer, are literate in the organization and grammar of EWMN as a system of organizing movement and the limbs of the body into combinations or sequences. The dancers must understand the structural conventions of EWMN as a choreographic system — how EWMN conceptualizes space and pathways, and produces a particular method of choreographic invention through specific patterns. Of great interest to this research is despite the fact that all of the RikudNetto dancers are literate in EWMN as a notational script, they do not use the notational script for the development of their choreography. The recording of movement in notation occurs after the dance has been completed. EWMN provides the conceptual framework for the dancers to conceive of various movement aspects and generate phrase material. Ofer describes the concept behind one collection of dances:

…[Birds] has to do with a lot of spatial ability and different movement abilities in this one plane, and then adapting the idea towards other planes… I think the first stage is that this idea [of spatial ability] is being developed and [we] get variations of it, and then [we] see that each variation… is physical and conceptual. (9 May)

As the dancers work through Sapir’s movement instructions, they use their conceptual knowledge of EWMN. As they begin to develop the movement instructions in various
body parts, and experiment with several body parts in combination, they begin to experience their conceptual knowledge kinesthetically through movement. For *Birds*, this meant developing complex spatial coordinations.

Once Sapir chooses the phrases to arrange choreographically, all of the dancers start the process of learning all the phrases. This process involves cultivating and honing the coordination among complexly layered body parts. According to Ofer, this process takes a great deal of time, since arms, legs, torso, and head can each have their own version of the phrase happening simultaneously or in sequence.

It takes time because you learn every limb or every group of limbs on its own, its own movement pattern. Then, getting the coordination is only the first stage because then you start to feel something of what's going on. Only then can she start to do the choreography, staging, and decide who does what. (Ofer 9 May)

The dancers learn each others’ phrases body-part-by-body-part before layering on the coordination. For example, they might learn the legs first, the arms separately, and finally the torso actions last before coordinating all the body parts together. This is not unlike a piano student learning the right hand and left hand for a song separately, then learning to put them together.

Through repetition and focus on individual body parts, the dancers program specific motor neuropathways they can later recall through muscle memory. By honing the kinesthetic mode, they are able to store the movement within their bodies. When Ofer taught some of the movement phrases to me, she described the lasting effect of the neuromuscular patterning:

The interesting thing about practicing this way is sometimes if you don't work on a piece for a year or something you may lose the flexibility, you may lose the stamina for jumping, but not coordination once you've learned a dance this way. Well, I only have experience of about 20 years, but you don't lose it. As I showed
you these dances, I haven't danced them for 10 years, I think…The thing with coordination is, once you have it, it's probably like they say about bicycle riding…you need just a bit of practice, and it's there. (9 May)

Repetition creates neuromuscular patterning in the body, building physical movement habits. Working through the systematic exactitude of RikudNetto’s compositional process takes repetition and coordination to an extreme. Within the body, proprioceptors “monitor the perpetual internal changes” during movement, so that “once movement is learned [it] proceeds automatically, their impulses rarely penetrate our consciousness” (Sweigard 161). Kinesthetic responses in turn become “automatic”; we form habits based on physical experiences, i.e. muscle memory. Ofer considers herself one of the slower dancers to process physically the complex layers of body parts. However, her thorough understanding of the movement instructions and deep practice in coordination have inscribed the dances permanently into her body. She can readily recall the kinesthetic sensibility of the ways each of her limbs fit into the movement.

Conclusion

Across the dance artists, several similarities emerged in literacy events. During studio teaching and learning, multimodal readings of patterns, phrasing, and movement qualities are common. Reading was more prevalent in the classroom/studio than was writing. Perhaps the focus of technique teaching and learning in these contexts leads to this balance. In Maxwell Rezabek’s and Durham Wall’s classes, students were more often responsible for taking in information and interpreting it in their bodies. They read movement texts (dance phrases), and recited them physically to develop dance technique skills. Observation in different class settings would likely give different results. For
example, contact improvisation, tap, and hip hop forms use more improvisation and require more practice in generating movement oneself than do ballet and contemporary dance as genres. However, Durham Wall and Maxwell Rezabek are purposeful curators of dance literacy as a multiliteracy, constructing mode ensembles to support how their students created dance-specific knowledge about movement. In terms of writing, composition primarily happens outside of class time as Durham Wall and Maxwell Rezabek created exercises and choreography to prepare for class.

In the choreographic situations, writing and combined reading/writing processes were abundant, as might be expected. Creating a dance is an enterprise of composition as writing. Layers of literacy events became entangled. In the Bebe Miller Company, collaborative composition reigns in at least two ways: generating material (Miller, Hauser, Jones), and arranging the choreography (Miller and Wilks). As a result of collaborative composition processes, simultaneity of reading and writing emerged. Composing via improvisation by dancers was read in the moment by choreographer and dramaturg, who then directed the composition of improvisational sequences towards the structure of the dance-at-large. In addition to composition as writing, the Bebe Miller Company raises the issue of writing as authorship. As perhaps best described by Angie Hauser, the dancers (and dramaturg) are trusted collaborators. They enjoyed a measure of creative input in the development of *A History* and experienced a sense of shared authorship of the work.

The dancers of RikudNetto shared responsibility for generating movement material, but the core ideas and arrangement were the domain of choreographer Tirza Sapir. Though collaborative, the sense of choreographic authorship lies with Sapir, as
related by dancer Shlomit Ofer. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the company’s choreographic process is its relationship to Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation. The conceptual and system frameworks of the dance notation are ever-present during the writing/composition of their dances, even when scores and symbols are not employed directly. Literacy in EWMN is a pre-requisite for this group of dancers because of their chosen working method within the system’s constructs. Ofer’s experience in RikudNetto brings us then to a bridge from dance literacy to dance and literacy. Here we transition from defining dance literacy events and practices in the realm of multiliteracies and the ways in which dance artists construct and navigate movement texts, into the ways dancers interact with alphabetic and notational scripts in tandem with their work in the studio.
Chapter 4 Dance and Literacy: Intersections with Alphabetic and Notational Texts

Introduction

In this chapter, I consider reading and writing dance literacy practices that involve alphabetic and notational texts. Perhaps another way of framing these practices is to consider how written literacy intersects with physical practice. Where and how do alphabetic and notational modes of literacy come into play, whether inside or outside the studio? How do the dance artists in this research use, read, and write various written texts?

Alphabetic and notational modes both employ written scripts that translate spoken words and actions into letters and symbols. The alphabetic mode encompasses the use of a language-centered written script, such as the Romanized alphabet. Dancers and writers use this mode to describe movement and write about movement and dance practices. The notational mode encompasses the use of a notational symbol system, whether that is a formal system such as Labanotation or Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation or an idiosyncratic personally developed system. Systems within the notational mode can include instances of written language, although they primarily represent movement through symbols.

Both alphabetic and notational modes create residual texts to accompany movement texts in the form of scores, journals, choreographic notes, or teaching
resources. This chapter foregrounds learning aids such as motif cards and student assessments, as well as acts of documentation in floor plans, choreography notes, journals, and notation scores. Additionally, this study records planning for class by reading and writing dance exercises and notes, as well as some consulting notes in class. Many of the dance artists are avid readers, consuming books for professional development. Intersections between physical practice and written texts cover many parts of literacy, from reading and its relationships to bodies, to writing aspects of documentation, authorship, and composition. This chapter is organized into the following sections by dance artist: RikudNetto’s reading and writing practices documenting, learning from, and publishing with scores; accumulation and use of teaching resources and authorship within Carol Maxwell Rezabek’s youth ballet repertory group and studio contexts; Jill Guyton Nee’s composing and writing choreography; Meghan Durham Wall’s journaling and ductus⁹⁴ practices to prepare for technique teaching and trigger physical memory; and documentation of process, scoring improvisation, journaling to trigger physical memory within the Bebe Miller Company.

RikudNetto: Publishing Scores and Page-Body Relationships

**Documenting and Publishing with Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation Scores**

RikudNetto has published a handful of Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation (EWMN) scores. Choreographer and dance educator Tirza Sapir had completed several collections of dances with RikudNetto, such as *Birds, Bows, Sea Scape,* and *Moving*

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⁹⁴ *Ductus* is a term from Linguistics in which the characteristic of a written script refers back to the characteristic of the action that produced it, such as speed, pressure, or direction.
Landscape, before any were notated in EWMN. Shlomit Ofer notes that Sapir wanted the work to be documented “before it was lost” (Ofer 9 May). Publishing for academic advancement was an additional and secondary rationale for creating the score collections. The published scores⁹⁵ typically consist of the movement instructions and movement phrases but not the choreography. According to Ofer, the scores are intended to be used for movement study and training rather than choreographic preservation and reconstruction. Dancers who read the scores would use them to study both intellectually and kinesthetically the particular movement concepts.

According to Ofer, during the process of composing the movement phrases and choreography, the dancers do not actively work on writing the EWMN scores. Because they can all read and write in EWMN, they do some minor notating while building the choreography. For example, they will draw floor plans indicating where the dancers stand and note group formations and traveling pathways, or they will write orders for canon structures or facing changes. These minor acts of notation serve as memory aids for the dancers between rehearsals, and their note-taking practices are largely personal. The majority of phrases and scores are written after the dances and dance collections are complete. When the company members write the scores, they add explanatory materials, such as describing the ideas behind overall movement concepts or patterns explored in the collection of dances.

While the company members develop the movement phrases and choreography, they do not simultaneously write the notation scores. The company waits until the

⁹⁵ RikudNetto’s scores have been published by notation institutions in Israel such as the Movement Notation Society and the Research Center for Movement Notation and Dance.
movement phrases and dances are complete before they begin writing the EWMN scores. They go through many experiments, trial and error, as they compose with Sapir’s movement instructions, and they discard or revise a great amount of movement material before arriving at their finished movement phrases. Ofer describes the notation process as slow in comparison to the speed of working conceptually and physically with the movement instructions. The company does not want to spend the time analyzing and writing material that may be discarded, so they prefer to wait to notate until after they have finished composing (Ofer 9 May).

In creating the notation scores, there is often tension in deciding between writing what the dancers did in performance as opposed to writing the original intention of the movement instructions. The scores do not serve as a record of the finished choreography, per se, but as an educational collection, i.e. études, of movement instructions, phrases, and explorations. Therefore, the company most often writes the intentions rather than the actual choreography. However, transcribing the movement instructions onto various body parts sometimes yields a physically impossible action. In these cases, they alter the movement to an action that the body can actually perform, and in the score, they choose to write the movement that they actually performed. For example, in *Birds*, one set of movement instructions called for alternating cones from high level to low level, which worked well for arm gestures. However, when the dancers transcribed the movement instructions into their torsos, they found the movement physically impossible to perform “correctly.” They could not place their torsos truly upside-down with straight backs. Ofer recounts:
We decided to turn it into a round back, to go as low as we can but round our backs. Then if we write “passive” there, or axis movement like \{rotates arm at side middle level\}, we lose the movement pattern of the amounts of movement \{draws serpentine pathway of the alternating cones with her finger\}. (Ofer 9 May)

In order to accommodate the physical reality of the body’s structure, they had to let go of the purity of the movement instructions. In the Birds score, they also notated the torso action as it was performed to reflect the physical reality instead of the conceptual intention. The pure intention of the movement instructions were explained elsewhere in the Birds score.

FIGURE 4.1 BASIC MOVEMENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR BIRDS

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(Sapir and Reshef-Armony 3)

In the published Birds score, there is a clear difference between the intended movement instructions, and the composed choreography. The introduction to Birds (Sapir and Reshef-Armony 3) shows basic movement instructions in terms of time units and movement units, and it became the basis for the phrases within the choreographed dances (see Fig. 4.1). The first four dances — “Dove,” “Ostrich,” “Hoopoe,” “Swallows” — are notated as solo or unison group movement. This writing choice allows the movement instructions to exist apart from any compositional choices made. The last five — “Heron,” “Seagulls ABC,” “Owl,” “Flamingo,” “Starlings” — are written as trios or duets in canon form. The introduction describes the final five dance scores as “examples
of different ‘choreographic’ arrangements of the material” (Sapir and Reshef-Armony 1).

Even though the score includes choreographic solutions, these are explicitly described as examples of how the material might be arranged. Potential choreographic arrangements are secondary to the phrases created from the movement instructions.

To demonstrate the secondary importance of choreographic arrangement, I look more closely at two sections of Birds — “Hoopoe” and “Flamingo.” The “Hoopoe” score is written as a solo or group unison. The dance is in two parts (I and II), each with phrases a-e. In a video of RikudNetto performing “Hoopoe” (RikudNetto "Video Gallery"), four dancers dance the phrases primarily in unison. They begin with true unison; all actions, facings, and stationary or traveling aspects are the same. Then they continue with their upper bodies in unison while one dancer remains stationary and the other three travel on distinct paths around the stage. In the middle section, the dancers break into pairs that travel on separate pathways before the duos break into canon. The choreography ends with the entire group in unison. Phrases I and II are repeated more than once in the choreography for this performance. This performance clearly shows the compositional elements of pathways, canon, group arrangements (pairs across stage, duets traveling through each other, duets lining up), and facings. In contrast, the score for solo/unison writes Phrases I and II once only and does not indicate examples of facings or any of the other choreographic arrangements.
The “Flamingo” section of *Birds* further demonstrates the primacy of the movement instructions and resulting phrases over choreographic arrangements (see Fig. 4.2). The “Flamingo” score gives the notation only for Phrases I and II as if for a unison trio and does not indicate the dancers’ canon relationships, or other choreographic choices for arranging the group (see Fig. 4.3). Examples of different facings are given in the score. Two different performances of this section show widely different
choreographic arrangements for an octet and for a trio (RikudNetto *Visually*; RikudNetto "Video Gallery").

**FIGURE 4.3 "FLAMINGO" SCORE PAGE SHOWING PHRASE IIB WITH UNISON MOVEMENT AND CONTRASTING STAGE FACINGS**

![Score page showing phrase IIB with unison movement and contrasting stage facings](image)

(Sapir and Reshef-Armony 65)

The octet version begins with unison arm gestures while the dancers rise and sink. They continue with unison arm gestures but with some of the dancers changing to face different directions. The trio begins with all the dancers facing different directions while standing in a triangle formation, and performing the movement in an atypical canon structure, as follows. The two outer dancers have the same timing, with the center dancer following afterward. At times all three dancers come together for a moment, but then the
center dancer begins a new canon ahead of the two outside dancers. Even in moments where they move together, the center dancer may be sinking/rising on one leg with the other leg in retiré, while the outer dancers are on two legs; or the outer dancers add a tilting/untilting action in the torso while the center dancer stays vertical.

RikudNetto’s scoring practice demonstrates one relationship between literate and oral associations in dance. Alphabetic literacy, as discussed in Chapter 1, has historically been associated with: suggesting a distance between author/writer and audience/reader; accuracy; history; record keeping; and the absence of context. In contrast, orality has been associated with: a lack of distance between author/writer/performer and audience/reader; fluidity or flexibility to change; and dependence on context by in-person or body-to-body interaction. RikudNetto’s scores — a form of notational and alphabetic literacy — combine aspects of both associations. The scores capture only the core of the dances as per the movement instructions and their resulting phrases. The choreography — what is typically considered a large part of “the dance” in concert dance traditions — is omitted. The scores capture the phrase material developed from the movement instructions, often in the form of a solo with the phrases performed one after another. They do not record a finished choreographed product because the company uses different choreographic devices with the phrases each time they perform the dances.

The choreographed versions of RikudNetto’s dances rely on the context-specificity of preparing for performances. As seen with “Flamingo,” the choreography may and does change across performances. The number of dancers, their facings, use of canon/timing relationships, and group spatial formations can be re-choreographed to suit the number of dancers available for the performance, or the venue, for example.
Transitions between dances are not notated because they are contextually dependent on factors such as which dances precede and which dances follow, or the number of dancers performing in the particular performance. However, the core of the dance is what is documented and preserved for the company or for other readers of the score.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Ruth Finnegan’s work draws distinctions between what is typically transmitted in oral and literate performance traditions (Finnegan Literacy and Orality). Oral performances, as studied by Finnegan, pass on rules of the form or sets of basic material with variable final outcomes. Literate cultures pass along fixed, written texts that act as a “yardstick of accuracy” (Literacy and Orality 81). RikudNetto’s dances require a high level of accuracy, reflecting the highly precise recording of the core movement phrases written in the score, yet are variable in terms of choreography. When restaging the dances, the dancers rely on both their kinesthetic memory and on the scores for regaining the physical mastery of the movement material. The relationship between kinesthetic memory and scores is discussed further in this chapter.

When creating movement phrases for the dances, the members of the company do measure their explorations against the intentional ideal of the movement instructions. As a separate text from the composed dance phrases, the movement instructions in turn act to some degree as a “yardstick of accuracy.” The integrity of the movement phrases and the dancers’ performance of those phrases are measured against Sapir’s original movement instructions. Written notation scores are not created, however, until after the movement phrases are set and completed, so the creation and development of the dances are 100% through body-to-body transmission. However, the movement instructions and the
measure of integrity in meeting them are born out of EWMN frameworks of conceptualizing and ordering movement.

**Nearness/Distance in Page-Body Relationships**

When RikudNetto reconstructs and re-choreographs its dances for performance, the dancers rely on kinesthetic memory of the coordination as well as their EWMN scores. There are now newer, younger dancers in the group who were not part of the original explorations and creation of the dance collections. When the company returns to a collection of dances, new dancers read the notation scores to learn the movement instructions and the movement phrases. Learning from score crosses symbolic and kinesthetic modes. Ofer finds Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation to be a useful framework that bridges cognitive and conceptual modes with notational and physical ones.

The newer members of RikudNetto, who were not part of the original explorations with the movement instructions, read the notation scores to learn the dance phrases instead of using a body-to-body, demonstrate-and-imitate method. According to Ofer, the idea is that the new dancers learn the movement instructions, which communicate the patterns and coordinations “purely.” Ofer explains:

> If you need to coordinate the exact time of hands crossing *(enacts polyrhythmic arm circles from “Days Pass and Years Go By”)*, then there’s no use of imitating. [Imitating another dancer] helps in learning something or in the wider resolution of movement, but when you need to come to details, you need to give yourself the right instructions for the right body parts in the right time, to give muscles the instructions of what movement to perform. It’s the inner process. (Ofer 9 May)

If the new dancers learned the phrases by imitation, they would catch the broad picture of the movement. They would not necessarily see/learn/understand all the details of the
original movement instructions from it, or how the dancing relates back to the intentional patterns of the movement instructions. Using the scores creates a specific way of studying and learning the underlying aspects of the movement. Sequential and spatial relationships between body parts can be examined out of a real-time performance. The layout of the movement on the page and the writing choices for the symbols can also emphasize when and how each body part enacts specific aspects of the original movement instructions.

In conjunction with the *Moving Landscape* collection of dances and EWMN score, Sapir co-authored and published an analytical study of the collection with Nira Al-Dor, titled *Voices of Moving Landscape*. In this study, the authors break down the “voices” within the movement instructions and dance phrases, such as combinations of body parts, timing, or facings, which are layered in several configurations. These layerings reveal the complexity of relationships between the “voices” and their relationship to the patterns of the original movement instructions.

The awareness obtained from the reading of each voice separately, and its placing within the whole complexity, develops and supports coordinative abilities of different kinds and enables the dancers to become conscious of the diverse compositional processes. This process of deconstruction and construction makes the studied material live and breathe, renewed every time in the process of active performance. All of this takes place in the course of practising [sic] each new movement combination until it becomes automatic and flowing. To this end a different psychomotor organisation [sic] is required every time, and the development of attentiveness, reawakening and focus” (Sapir and Al-Dor 37)

*Voices of Moving Landscape* is intended for use as an educational supplement to the dance collection. The use of notation in order to break down the “voices” of the movement supports kinesthetic learning via the score (see Fig. 4.4).
In “Onward and Back” the arms and the legs demonstrate two contrasting manipulations of the movement instructions. The movement instructions consist of an alternating variable motif and a constant motif (see Table 4.1): the variable motif increases by 1 degree or amount of movement with each repetition (1, 2, 3, 4, and so on); and the constant motif remains 4 degrees or amounts of movement with each repetition (4, 4, 4, 4, and so on). For both sets of limbs, the movement instructions split into two alternating motifs: the variable motif, which increases by 1 degree or amount with each
repetition; and the constant motif, which is a steady 4 degrees or amounts with each
repetition. While both arms travel through the vertical (door) plane, the left arm only
moves in one direction around the plane, and the right arm reverses direction with each
alternating motif. The pattern of the legs is much more complex:

In the legs, the variable motif is represented by horizontal conical movement, and
the constant motif is represented by a step. The step creates a straight path from
the position of the completion of the cone to the opposite direction of the circle, at
an interval of four units of movement, so that the relations of the amount are
preserved between the two motifs of the subject…” (Sapir and Al-Dor 10).

For example, the Left Leg gestures from the 3 point of the circle to the 4 point of the
circle (cone action moving 1 degree/45°), then moves forward to step at the 0 point of the
circle (straight line action moving 4 degrees/180°). Right (RT) and Left Thighs (LT)
alternate gesturing the accumulating degrees of movement (variable motif) as cones (^):
LT ^1, RT ^2, LT ^3, RT ^4, and so on. The constant motif is always a step in the
“absolute” direction opposite of where the leg gesture ends: Left Leg Step0, Right Leg
Step6, Left Leg Step5, Right Leg Step5, and so on. (see Table 4.2). The Right Arm
circles through the vertical (door) plane with the degrees of movement: +1/-4, +2/-4, +3/-
4,+4/-4, and so on. The Left Arm circles through the degrees of movement without
reversing the direction during the constant motif: +1/+4. +2/+4, +3/+4, +4/+4, and so on.
(see Table 4.2 and Table 4.3)
TABLE 4.1 "ONWARD AND BACK" VARIABLE AND CONSTANT MOTIF PATTERNS FROM THE MOVEMENT INSTRUCTIONS, SHOWN BY TIME UNITS AND AMOUNT OF MOVEMENT IN ° (DEGREES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Units</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Mvt. in °</td>
<td>45°</td>
<td>180°</td>
<td>90°</td>
<td>180°</td>
<td>135°</td>
<td>180°</td>
<td>180°</td>
<td>180°</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cont’d

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Units</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of Mvt. in °</td>
<td>225°</td>
<td>180°</td>
<td>270°</td>
<td>180°</td>
<td>315°</td>
<td>180°</td>
<td>360°</td>
<td>180°</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.2 "ONWARD AND BACK" THIGH MOVEMENT (^) AND FOOT STEPPING DIRECTION (S) MANIPULATIONS OF THE VARIABLE AND CONSTANT MOTIFS FROM THE MOVEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right Thigh</th>
<th>^2 {0-2}</th>
<th>^4 {5-1}</th>
<th>^6 {6-4}</th>
<th>^8 {3-3}</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foot</td>
<td>S6</td>
<td>S5</td>
<td>S0</td>
<td>S7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Thigh</td>
<td>^1 {3-4}</td>
<td>^3 {6-1}</td>
<td>^5 {5-2}</td>
<td>^7 {0-7}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot</td>
<td>S0</td>
<td>S5</td>
<td>S6</td>
<td>S3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 4.3 "ONWARD AND BACK" RIGHT AND LEFT ARM MANIPULATIONS OF THE VARIABLE AND CONSTANT MOTIFS FROM THE MOVEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Right Arm</th>
<th>+1, -4</th>
<th>+2, -4</th>
<th>+3, -4</th>
<th>+4, -4</th>
<th>+5, -4</th>
<th>+6, -4</th>
<th>+7, -4</th>
<th>+8, -4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left Arm</td>
<td>+1, +4</td>
<td>+2, +4</td>
<td>+3, +4</td>
<td>+4, +4</td>
<td>+5, +4</td>
<td>+6, +4</td>
<td>+7, +4</td>
<td>+8, +4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By placing chosen layers of the voices in a notational form, parts of the body and choreographic elements can be studied in new relational contexts without the pressure of witnessing the movement in “real time.” Time is essentially frozen for analysis. Reading and dancing reinforces the compositional building of the phrases, and opens the
neuropathways for acquiring coordination. Thus, the notational mode here acts as a reinforcement of the kinesthetic mode within dance literacy as multiliteracy.

Veteran RikudNetto company members check and coach the performance of the newer RikudNetto dancers after they learn the movement instructions from EWMN score. Ofer describes a gap between the process of reading the notational text and dancing that she has noticed through coaching the younger dancers to fine-tune the movement instructions. According to Ofer, the younger dancers are unable to sense this gap within their own performance and cannot yet grasp how they could execute the movement more correctly. The dancers learned the basic sequence of the movement from reading the scores of the instructions and some demonstration, but they still need much coaching from the experienced dancers in the group. In order to develop their internal sense of space, body part coordination, and timing, Ofer says they need more experience combining EWMN with dancing. In the meantime, they rely on external feedback from older dancers who have created the dance phrases and already invested time into perfecting the physical coordination.

Ofer prefers writing to performing. She is good at seeing the “gap” in others and in herself, but does not have the physical facility to perform to the standard she wishes. When writing the notation scores, she relies on her understanding of both the kinesthetic sense of the movement and the conceptual understanding of the movement instructions. To her, movement literacy is the combination of the two modes. She says, “When I speak of movement literacy, these experiences are connected. I need to perform the dance in order to [notate it]. I can’t just translate the movement into the written movement instruction. I need to perform them” (Ofer 9 May). The kinesthetic understanding makes
the notational understanding possible. In the next section, we will see how a different notation system and its scoring practices are used in teaching ballet technique and restaging repertory.

Carol Maxwell Rezabek: Notational Relationships to Teaching and Staging Repertory

**Teaching Preparation and Accumulating Resources**

Textual materials and documentation play a large role in Carol Maxwell Rezabek’s teaching and staging practices. She is an avid reader of books and articles about dance and dancers for both personal and professional development. While she does not read these materials inside the studio, they do influence her work there, guiding her teaching philosophy and providing inspiration for movement content.

In terms of professional development resources, Maxwell Rezabek frequently reads biographies of dancers and dance teachers. At the time of her interviews for this research, she was reading a biography for a little-known but important Russian ballet teacher, Vera Volkova. She draws pedagogical inspiration from many of the biographies, translating the general knowledge she gains from reading them in applications specific to her classes. For example, Maxwell Rezabek found resonance with aspects of Volkova’s methodology while working with her advanced ballet dancers. She has noticed that her advanced dancers tend to use excess tension in their extremities, such as over-pointing their feet. She explains:

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96 Vera Volkova trained with renowned dancer Agrippina Vaganova, becoming a master teacher with internationally recognized ballet schools such as La Scala in Milan, the Royal Danish Ballet School, and the Sadler’s Wells Ballet in London.
[Volkova] talks a lot about moving from your center and that the core is your strong place {moves her hands into her center} and the other body parts should be much more relaxed {arms softly reach outward, palms flip upward, and arms melt downward}, and responsive to the core. Pointing your foot hard disrupts that [responsiveness]. I'm finding that to be quite true. These students will {“points” hand with tension} point really hard and then they can’t sense {hands and shoulders ripple back and forth as though searching for sensation}, and then they can't use flexibility {arm slides forward as if doing a tendu, hand lifts at wrist as if a flexible ankle}. (Maxwell Rezabek 21 March)

By pointing their feet with excessive force, they bind their movement flow, blocking the connection between their centers and their extremities. Taking inspiration from Volkova’s philosophy about core-extremity relationships, Maxwell Rezabek helped her students’ focus their attention toward this relationship. Several of her corrections to her students recalled this concept, which reminded them to focus their strength into their centers and allowed their limbs to be softer and more responsive to their centers.

In addition, Maxwell Rezabek turns to books as teaching resources, such as Asaf Messerer’s Classes in Classical Ballet. She subscribes to periodicals Dance Magazine, Dance Teacher, Pointe, and Dance Spirit, reading each one for different reasons. Dance Magazine is mostly pleasure reading to see “…what's going on in the world, who's putting on what, reviews of performances”; the other three she reads for teaching purposes (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March). Pointe magazine may offer an analysis of a particular classical variation, or include different ballerinas discussing how they attack certain roles. Maxwell Rezabek will mark the interview or analysis with notation or word notes she has for that variation (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March). Dance Teacher features articles about teaching and running a studio business. Dance Spirit keeps Maxwell Rezabek up-to-date about competition dance trends that are pertinent to her advanced students and offers occasional articles that are relevant to her teaching. She keeps several
large notebooks full of exercises, choreography, and classical variations from websites, books, trade magazines, or master classes, in addition to material she has created herself. She pulls from the notebooks when planning classes, or when teaching and coaching repertory with her students.

**FIGURE 4.5 MAXWELL REZABEK'S ROUGH DRAFT SCORES USING LABANOTATION**

(Maxwell Rezabek Ronds; Degage; Pirouette)

Through her training as professional notator, Maxwell Rezabek has acquired the habit of documentation and possesses the skills to do so. However, her uses of notation and documentation are not the typical “professionalized” use of Labanotation; they are her own personalized uses. She often annotates her articles and notations with what worked, or how she might alter it in the future. Maxwell Rezabek also uses Labanotation
to notate phrases that she decides are worth keeping. However, she does not create full Labanotation scores. She typically writes the skeleton of key movement phrases with additional word notes to describe choreographic structure (see Fig. 4.5).

“Improving” Petipa – Authorship in staging educational repertory

Maxwell Rezabek often uses written texts in her ballet and repertory classes. For her repertory group, Classical Edge, Maxwell Rezabek stages étude versions\(^{97}\) of classical repertory from notation scores, word notes, and other written sources of documentation in addition to multimedia such as videos and audio recordings. For the Classical Edge, she prepares a winter showing and a spring showing with her students. In the spring of 2012, Maxwell Rezabek was arranging “Classical Friends,” which included étude variations and excerpts from several ballets: a scene with Giselle’s friends; the fairy variations from Sleeping Beauty; a scene with Kitri’s friends from Raymonda; and the workshop dolls scene from Coppélia.

Maxwell Rezabek’s goal with Classical Edge is to give students a performative and participatory experience of the ballet dance canon, as appropriate to their current age and technique levels. Her students learn about their art form through exposure to classical repertory. She explains her philosophy:

I don't think the classics should be withheld from the students. I know that a lot of people think you need to earn your way to some of these solos, like you shouldn't be given them until you're at pre-professional stature. I find that a little paper-chasey. I equate it to learning piano. Piano is a fabulous instrument. Piano has grand interpreters yet, [my daughter], who is not a grand interpreter, plays Mozart, and it contributes to her education. (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March)

\(^{97}\) See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Étude.”
Through performing étude versions of repertory, students meet Maxwell Rezabek’s literacy goal for them to be knowledgeable about classical dance literature. Her use of revised repertory is in the same spirit as music students learning études and “student” versions of classical, canonical masterpieces. In this way, she arranges and revises canonical ballet repertory for her students at their level as technically and educationally appropriate.

When Maxwell Rezabek alters the choreography to suit her staging context, she jokingly calls it “improving Petipa.”98 This literacy practice, revising repertory, calls attention to the role of composition and authorship in restaging dances in educational settings. Maxwell Rezabek notes that there is a long tradition of ballet masters and performers changing the dance steps of variations in order to augment particular performers’ strengths. By creating études of variations and repertory appropriate to the level of her students, Maxwell Rezabek is participating in this tradition. She describes her arrangement of Sleeping Beauty excerpts for her students:

There's a huge historical precedent in ballet for [changing steps, switching to a performer’s preferred variation], so I feel totally fine about interpolation in ballet. Like the Sleeping Beauty section we're compressing. We're taking out Rose Adagio, we’re taking out her adagio variation, and we’re just compressing the story. We're bringing the fairies as guests and as friends too. That works for me. They do the friends' steps, they're still dressed as fairies, we're good. My

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98 Marius Petipa is considered one of the most influential ballet masters and choreographers of classical ballet. Holding a long career with the Imperial Ballet of Russia as ballet master, he choreographed over fifty original ballets and revived many works by previous ballet masters, many of which are still regarded as mainstays of ballet repertory, such as Swan Lake and Sleeping Beauty. Maxwell Rezabek’s description of her practice as “improving Petipa” refers to several stagings by professional ballet dancer and stager Pierre Lacotte. Throughout his career, Lacotte has staged multiple works from the ballet canon, including those by Marius Petipa, using original Stepanov notation scores. However, he often made significant alterations to the choreography to “improve” it to today’s technique standards and aesthetics. The Lacotte stagings are discussed later in this chapter in relation to authorship in re-staging repertory.
permission comes from it being ballet and that there's a history of that. (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March)

In the “Classical Friends” showing she was currently working on, the chosen variations and excerpts came from group dances and scenes, the moments in the ballets where the “friends” or supporting characters have their shining moments as performers.

Several of Maxwell Rezabek’s stagings use Labanotation scores as the source material. When using a notation score, there are two layers of dance texts: the layer of written choreographic records, and the layer of reading the notation to facilitate the performance of the dance-as-text. Maxwell Rezabek reads the notation score to learn the movement, which she then teaches to her students using traditional body-to-body demonstration methods. In the rehearsal studio, Maxwell Rezabek also makes compositional decisions about how to arrange the movement into an étude form appropriate to her students. For example, she may replace certain dance steps with similar and simpler ones that her students know or have been working on in their technique classes. She may use different numbers of dancers for groups or add or subtract characters to accommodate the number of students dancing. In her “Classical Friends” showing, no male students were enrolled, so they did not do the portions of Giselle that featured the Albrecht character (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March).

Maxwell Rezabek makes explicit statements to her students about the performance tradition of ballet of making choreographic revisions tailored to the performers. She discusses how choreographers would keep the narratives the same and replicate expected moments of choreography, which she also does with her student arrangements. There is no question that the students are learning a “student” version of
the repertory, and she makes no attempt to pass the altered choreography as the “original.” Maxwell Rezabek also shows video of several different dancers performing the repertory. Video viewing reinforces the tradition of multiple versions since many ballet companies do not perform classical repertory with exactly the same versions of steps and choreography. Students also get to experience seeing multiple dancers handling the same role and discuss artistic decision-making in their performances.

Maxwell Rezabek’s staging presents opportunity for new authorship of the dances. The nickname for her stagings, “Improving Petipa,” was inspired by several Pierre Lacotte stagings of Petipa dances from their original Stepanov notation scores99 for the Paris Opera. Maxwell Rezabek explains that Lacotte read the Stepanov notation but found the original Petipa choreography to be too boring by contemporary standards, “so he does his own thing in ‘Petipa style.’ He ‘improves’ Petipa. The stagings are Petipa’s version as choreographed by Lacotte” (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March). Maxwell Rezabek acknowledges that the repertory is not explicitly her creation, but rather her arrangement of the dancing. “Improving Petipa” makes the repertory accessible to her students, and allows them to experience a particular sense of dance history.

To what extent can a dance be “re-authored,” either through interpretation or new performances, and remain authentic? The question of “author” and discourse over ownership becomes particularly salient in circumstances of staging dances made in the past, when new bodies in new contexts perform the dance text. As discussed in Chapter 3,

99 Stepanov notation is a dance notation system created by Russian Imperial Ballet dancer Vladimir Stepanov in the late 19th-century, using the five-line musical staff and altered music notes to record dance movement. Many ballets choreographed by influential choreographer and ballet master Marius Petipa were recorded in Stepanov Notation.
authorship serves an ideological function in discourses about artistic ownership. Foucault describes an extreme view of an author’s ownership as “one [that] impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition” (Foucault 119). Authors do own and control their work along a spectrum that ranges from retaining absolute control to completely relinquishing their work into the public domain. Authorship acts as an agent of control within literacy practices when it recognizes choreographers over dancers, encourages or discourages the amendment of repertory, or allows or disallows the proliferation of meaning through diverse understandings of various readers of dances.

Maxwell Rezabek’s revision of classical repertory re-authors the dances within the context of an educational experience, reflecting the ballet tradition of revising dances for performers. Even into the 20th-century, ballet stagers such as Pierre Lacotte and Richard Holden choose to alter the choreography of canonical repertory to suit the dancers with whom they are working. In an interview for Attitude magazine, Holden describes making “choreographic adjustments” in staging works on smaller companies and to suit dancers’ technical abilities.

It’s helpful for a choreologist to be a choreographer. Sometimes the notations are incomplete like in Michel Fokine’s Le Carnival. I had to choreograph my own version of the opening tableau. You have to put yourself in that period and match your work so it all looks like one piece….You can’t expect young dancers to have the technique and personality of the great dancers of the past. Sure, ballet has come a long way but sometimes you have to make changes to accommodate the dancers. Better two good pirouettes than four lousy ones. But at least audiences of today get a chance to see these great works of the past even if it’s not always a perfect step-by-step translation. (Holden)

100 See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Choreology/Choreologist.”
The interviewer prods Holden into admitting that he is, essentially, re-choreographing the repertory, and Holden acknowledges the choreographic nature of his practice in staging ballet repertory. Like Maxwell Rezabek and Lacotte, Holden insists that reliable source material (written scores) is important for the authenticity of his decisions. If the source material has original intentions and ideal choreography recorded, then the stager can purposely work towards that intention or create a reasonable alternative. Holden would want his changes to blend in with the rest of the staging and choreography, so that additions or alterations would read as authentic and in the right spirit, rather than standing out as out-of-character with the rest of the dance.

Maxwell Rezabek’s étude versions of classical repertory increase the accessibility of the classical ballet canon to students and their families, who might not otherwise experience them. As the director of the student group Classical Edge, Maxwell Rezabek is able to make educationally appropriate directorial decisions. Maxwell Rezabek gives thoughtful, artistic consideration to her étude versions: “There are things where I would [say] no you can't change that. That is part of its essence. But I get to decide. That's the difference” (Maxwell Rezabek 22 March). Maxwell Rezabek’s decision-making processes are pedagogical, aesthetic, and autonomous. Authorship in this context extends to Maxwell Rezabek when she “improves Petipa.” According to her own standards, Maxwell Rezabek would not do this sort of “improving” within a different dance tradition, such as modern dance or 20th-century ballet, which have a firmer identification of choreographic works as off-limits for revision due in part to stronger choreographer-author-owner associations and an increased awareness of copyright applicability to dance. Several contextual understandings are requisite for Maxwell Rezabek’s
“improving Petipa” literacy practice: the use of ballet performance traditions; movement style; and choreographic form, movement vocabulary/lexicon, and syntax. Additionally, a great distance in time — over a century — sits between the original ballet repertory and Maxwell Rezabek’s students, adding to the ease of brokering shared ownership of those dances. Petipa’s dances have long since passed into the public domain, and Maxwell Rezabek’s purposes and permission for restaging fall under fair use. In modern dance, there is stronger identification of a work with the choreographer-author, a stronger sense of that choreographer’s ownership of the dance, and a stronger sense of the work as non-changeable. This difference stems from modern dance’s roots in individual expression and idiosyncratic movement as the basis for dance technique, in contrast to the nature of ballet as a classical form. Due to those differing contextual conditions, Maxwell Rezabek feels it would not be appropriate to revise a canonical modern dance work.

In order to re-write the choreography, Maxwell Rezabek adopts a sense of ownership of the movement text, in “improving Petipa.” Her playful moniker for her literacy practice pokes fun at the seriousness that often surrounds staging repertory, and especially when staging repertory from Labanotation score where concerns regarding legitimacy and accuracy of the source material are a valid concern. By simplifying the movement to suit her students’ educational setting, she is hardly making Petipa’s choreography more technically stunning, more up-to-date, or more aesthetically pleasing, as was the intention of the Lacotte re-stagings. She instead acknowledges her relationship to the compositional traditions of ballet, and the distance between her current context and that of the original performances.
Student interactions with texts: motif scores and review packets

In Maxwell Rezabek’s classes, students primarily interacted with alphabetic and notational texts during reading events. They used texts to learn new information from symbols, to study choreography and stage spacing, and to review information about ballet theory and terminology from study packets. Maxwell Rezabek reads her alphabetic and notation materials to prepare for class and rehearsal outside the studio, and then brings the movement into the studio. When using notations of exercises or variations, she transforms the written text of movement into a “physical text” of movement in her body for students to read in turn. Here, students engage with aspects of writing less frequently. The most prominent example of student writing happened with motif notation in a class of younger dancers, when they used the symbols to compose actions with their bodies.

During the week I observed Maxwell Rezabek at the Dancer’s Edge, she emphasized alphabetic texts because this week was an exception in their calendar. In March 2012, the studio was preparing for a mid-year assessment of technical and artistic growth and a written exam for ballet theory and terminology.¹⁰¹ A portion of time at the start of each class was devoted to reviewing a packet for the written exam that was tailored to the level designation of that class. In almost every class, the students took turns reading vocabulary from the packet and volunteering physical demonstrations. For example, some of the students had difficulty connecting the French words that constitute

¹⁰¹ The theory and vocabulary are based on the American Ballet Theatre curriculum in which Maxwell Rezabek and studio owner Stephanie Vogl are certified. Examples of theory include the seven building blocks of ballet (plier/bend, étendre/stretch, relever/rise, glisser/glide, sauter/jump, élancer/travel, tourner/turn), naming the corners of the room and classical body positions, or the rule of opposition and complement in épaulement.
the danse d’école\textsuperscript{102} to the physical action. For temps de cuisse,\textsuperscript{103} one student demonstrated the movement for her classmate, who still could not connect it to her physical memory. The first dancer then coached her classmate through its parts in her own words, “Fondu cou-de-pié…plié and pick up your back foot; now switch, sissonne, and close.”\textsuperscript{104} Interestingly, her breakdown utilized vocabulary from the review as well as her own descriptive language.

As the advanced class worked through the packet, there was a marked difference between the students who had had ample previous exposure to the theory and vocabulary, and those who had not. One student proudly proclaimed that she had gotten nineteen of the questions right the previous year, while another admitted to only getting three right. The study time replaced the beginning of barre, and the students were restless to start dancing. One asked why it was important to learn all of the vocabulary and to identify the body positions. Maxwell Rezabek replied that exposure to the vocabulary is important for learning combinations more quickly and easily, and that knowing the “alphabet” of ballet gave the basis for all of the steps which start, pass through, and end in classical positions. She added that understanding the building blocks would make breaking down more complex steps easier in the future. This would be one of the only times the students would see the vocabulary and theory written out. The majority of the time verbal/aural and kinesthetic modes are active in passing along the information in the context of each barre or centre exercise.

\textsuperscript{102} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Danse d’école.”
\textsuperscript{103} See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Temps de cuisse.”
\textsuperscript{104} See Appendix A: Glossary entries “Fondu”, “Cou-de-pié”, and “Sissonne.”
As a Labanotation expert, Maxwell Rezabek used many alphabetic/notational reading events in her classes. Because she finds importance in written scripts for teaching, learning, and documentation, one could expect to witness Maxwell Rezabek integrating both alphabetic and notational texts into her work. Throughout the week I observed several of Maxwell Rezabek’s classes and rehearsals, alphabetic/notational reading events occurred in abundance. The classes with younger ballet students (Ballet 2) were working through a “notation blitz” theme for the month of March. Returning to several gross motor skills and movement concepts they hand explored in the first semester allowed them to revisit the material through motif notation symbols. For example, the students had already learned symbols for traveling/pathways, action, pause, levels, and directions, and were familiar with some body parts symbols.

FIGURE 4.6 MOTIF SYMBOLS - FIVE TYPES OF SPRINGS

1 foot-same foot 1 foot-other foot 2 feet-2 feet
HOP LEAP JUMP

1 foot-2 feet 2 feet-1 foot
ASSEMBLÉ SISSONNE
This particular week, Maxwell Rezabek introduced symbols for jumping (see Fig. 4.6). Using the five symbols for the five types of jumps allowed the class to review the jumps categories physically and graphically, as well as through ballet vocabulary. With the students grouped at the front of the room, Maxwell Rezabek drew the symbols on large sticky notes and stuck them to the mirror. Explaining how many feet were active in the preparation/plié and landing, Maxwell Rezabek asked for volunteers to demonstrate an example of each type. She began with “jump” — taking off from and landing on two feet. The first few students gave a simple jump in place. Another gave a jump in second position. Then Maxwell Rezabek asked for “leg embellishments,” and one student volunteered the echappé jumps from their recital dance.

At one point in the review process, a student gave a hop (one foot-same foot) without any plié in her landing onto a rather stiff and straight leg. Maxwell Rezabek drew the symbol for low level and asked her to try again with her landing “like this.” The students had previously learned high level as relevé (on the balls of their feet) and low level as plié (bent standing legs) for the context of their ballet class. Receiving the correction to use her low level/plié symbol with her hop, the student repeated her example, this time landing with a proper, and knee-saving plié. The motif symbols thus generated not only opportunity for students to try out new movements, but also opportunity for visual-notational reading of technique corrections. The student had to remember both the symbol and its movement meaning in order to apply it to her hop. In this instance, she was excited to read her correction as part of the symbol reading game, as an alternative to receiving a verbal admonishment about not using her plié.
Maxwell Rezabek allowed their symbol reading to become more complex as they used the sticky notes to travel across the floor. In order to accomplish two feet-to-two feet jumping, most of the students bunny-hopped across the floor. Then, drawing the symbol for backward, Maxwell Rezabek asked, “Can you do this exercise this way? What would that look like?” The young dancers gleefully responded verbally and physically by springing backwards, and asked to be quizzed with other directions and types of jumps. One student asked how they could read skipping, a skill they had been trying to master. Maxwell Rezabek held up the leap symbol (taking off one leg and landing on the same leg) replying, “This,” then turning it upside down, “and this.” Another student verbally called out that the symbol switched starting legs when the symbol was upside down, to which another student replied, “Because skipping switches sides!” Maxwell Rezabek drew the alternating hops for skipping on a set of sticky notes for the dancers to read and perform (see Fig. 4.7). She then drew a two foot-to-one foot combined with a one foot-two foot jump and asked what movement that made (see Fig. 4.7). Some dancers verbally dissected the parts of the combined symbols, while others physically did the same, until one cried out, “Hopscotch!”
Although Maxwell Rezabek did not use Labanotation or motif symbols with her other classes or rehearsals during my observation period, she did use floor plans and written notes of choreography with the student dancers (see Fig. 4.8). The floor plans for the *Giselle* rehearsal were projected from the classroom iPad onto the TV monitor. The studio space was drawn like an open box, with the back wall of the studio acting as both the open part of the box and the “front” of the stage, and the students’ initials showed their locations in each formation. The students located their own initials on the floor plans to re-create the group pattern in the studio space. As they reviewed their group choreography, Maxwell Rezabek referred to the project floor plans to help students find their places in the formations.
Similarly, floor plans were present in the advanced class as they reviewed their recital choreography. The choreography for the more advanced dancers included intricate groupings and re-groupings that circled and weaved through the space. They moved in counterpoint by distributing different dance phrases among groups as opposed to dancing in unison. On the floor plans, in addition to dancer initials, groups were color-coded to show which dancers performed the same phrases together. The particular circling section they reviewed on this day had recently been revised, and some dancers had changed groups. As they walked through their new groupings, and followed along learning new phrases, the floor plans stayed on the video monitor for the dancers to reference.

The presence of the floor plans created a multimodal learning environment: notational drawings with color-coding, visual projection on the video monitor, and kinesthetic translations of floor plan formations into formations of the live bodies of the dancers. At the end of class, students had the opportunity to take a paper version of the choreography and the floor plans for their review. Maxwell Rezabek highly recommended that anyone who had changed groups take the paper. The written
choreography would not be used in class, but students could read and review the plans mentally and/or physically in the weeks leading up to the recital. In the next section, dancers Jill Guyton Nee and Meghan Durham Wall demonstrate different literacy practices in relation to documenting choreography and teacher preparation for dance technique class.

Jill Guyton Nee and Meghan Durham Wall – Kinesthetic Responses with Notational and Alphabetic Texts

Meghan Durham Wall and Jill Guyton Nee use written texts to support their physical studio practices. The overarching theme that emerged for these dance artists was the interrelationship between reading alphabetic or notational texts and physical or kinesthetic responses. I place Guyton Nee and Durham Wall side-by-side for two reasons. First, Durham Wall and Guyton Nee had a student-teacher relationship in the contemporary technique class at the time of the research. Second, they offer contrasting examples of writing and composing movement. Alphabetic/notational writing plays a distinct role in the ways Guyton Nee and Durham Wall generate and document movement as an initial part of the process, or as a trigger for kinesthetic memory responses. Both dancers use writing as a physical conduit for thinking.

Guyton Nee’s “Fake Person” Visualization — Mental Choreography and Documentation

At the time of this research, Jill Guyton Nee was a graduate student in Meghan Durham Wall’s contemporary technique class at The Ohio State University. During Guyton Nee’s interviews, her composition process emerged as an example of dance literacy that is wholly unique to her. Guyton Nee’s choreographic literacy practice is
multimodal, combining visual/visualization, musical, and notational modes. She enacts a multi-step process: listening to music, visualizing-reading of a dancing person who composes the movement in her mind’s eye, and then physically practicing the movement in the studio. After Guyton Nee visualizes her dancer, whom she calls “Fake Person,” she writes down the choreography in her notebooks. Fake Person does not apply to every situation in which Guyton Nee choreographs, but she is a consistent part of Guyton Nee’s process.

Guyton Nee usually begins her choreographic process with music. She comes from a family of musicians and played piano, clarinet, and oboe growing up; music is an important partner in her dancing. Guyton Nee’s music background encourages her to imagine and react to music. Early in her dance training, Guyton Nee found musical resonance in tap dance for its rhythmic components and movement-music fusion. Listening to music in turn triggers the visualization of Fake Person. Guyton Nee explains that the music she listens to has to motivate her to conjure Fake Person. Conversely, “There will be music that I’m listening to, but if she doesn’t appear, then this isn’t music I can find inspiration to create movement to” (21 May). The initial stages of composing arise from the multimodal experience of hearing music and feeling a kinesthetic response to the music that take shape in a visualized form.

Fake Person is an internal visual representation of movement and choreography. When Guyton Nee conjures Fake Person, she sees the choreography and movement in her head like a film. Next, she “catches” what Fake Person does through visual memory or marking. Later, Guyton Nee goes into a studio to put the pieces together. She experiences
the visualization as well as physical shadow movements, making choreographing with Fake Person an interesting mix of multimodalities. According to Guyton Nee:

[Fake Person] can do anything, and she is the body I choreograph on. A lot of times I choreograph sitting down and writing, or listening to music. She does it for me \{finger twirls in front of forehead\}, and then I do a little bit of this \{small wiggling of shoulders and head\} myself. Then I go in the studio, and here it is. (10 May)

Rather than a fully physicalized action, she does produce “shadow” movements or marking\(^{105}\) type actions. These marking actions are not unlike Guyton Nee’s own marking as she watches movement demonstrated in technique class. She “catches” what Fake person does in a similar way to how she learns movement in class. She imagines Fake Person as a soloist and as a group. When working with group choreography, Guyton Nee “sees” a group of dancers. They do not wear specific costumes or have specific faces. However, if Guyton Nee is developing choreography for a specific dancer, the Fake Person can take on characteristics of that dancer.

Although Fake Person is a creation of Guyton Nee’s mind, she takes on a pseudo-collaborative role in Guyton Nee’s compositional process. Because Guyton Nee has to “see” and learn the movement Fake Person creates, this surrogate acts in the place of a live improvising collaborator. Guyton Nee explains, “When [Fake Person] shows up, she just starts dancing \{waves hand in front of forehead\} without my permission. I have to catch what she does, and then sometimes I’ll need to get into a space to put it together” (Guyton Nee 21 May). Fake Person improvises, and Guyton Nee reacts first with shadow movements, and later in a full-bodied fashion in the studio. However, Fake Person comes

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\(^{105}\) See Appendix A: Glossary entry “Marking.”
from Guyton Nee’s choreographic imagination, thereby turning the collaboration into one with her self; when Fake Person creates, it is Guyton Nee who is creating. Instead of enacting fully physicalized improvisations in the studio, Guyton Nee experiences her initial composition exploration as a visual-imaginative-kinesthetic combination.

Guyton Nee writes Fake Person’s choreography in notebooks as an intermediate stage in her compositional process. She documents Fake Person’s movement in order to physically enact the material later on in the studio. Guyton Nee then uses the written documentation to reconstruct the choreography later in the studio, mostly writing in blocks of text. Time runs across the page, with actions written one after the other. She indicates moves with either typical dance step names or invented names specific to the choreography. Some examples include: body roll (a sequential action through the torso); single drag (a single turn with the gesturing leg dragging on the floor); battement (a kicking action, taken from ballet terminology); and moon man (a body shape specific to one dance that evokes the description) (Guyton Nee Notebook). Guyton Nee also uses stick figures to show body shapes and positions quickly as opposed to describing each body part.
FIGURE 4.9 GUYTON NEE CHOREOGRAPHIC NOTES

(Guyton Nee Notebook)
Guyton Nee’s personal notations intermittently include timing and rhythm, and coaching or execution notes. The following examples demonstrate the information she documents in her notebooks\(^\text{106}\) (see Fig. 4.9 and Fig. 4.10):

\[
\text{beginning of words \{} \text{arrow} \text{ through Pam kick}^3 \text{ // cross}^L \text{ step}^R \text{ around}^6 \text{ step back R}^7, L^8 \text{ // 1 kick (battement), cross}2 \text{ up}^3 \text{ (suspend) down} 4. \text{ Circle wrists (maybe unwind) \{} \text{arrow} \text{ arms outward // run to perch on partner w/leg (only 2 or 3 partners) to rhon de jamb [sic]}^\text{107} \text{ leg off, down (MAJOR HEAD-TAIL AFTER)}
\]

\[
\text{Second grande // swoop L, R, L // center // flex rhond [sic], single drag // accent out // cross 4}^{th} \text{ 1}^{st} \text{ w/ body roll land w/ arms + drop to lunge, swing thru // 2}^{nd} \text{ to \{} \text{stick figure} \text{ suspend // moon man to tall // to front, replace feet // to side, drop shoulder, elbow, torso, roll // flick arms + legs // walk around to lunge (t.o.), shake up}
\]

(Guyton Nee Notebook)

In the first example, timing is given in the form of rhythmic-musical counts: a cue that the movement corresponds with the beginning of the lyrics. In the second example, timing is not indicated. Coaching/execution notes such as “suspend” or “MAJOR HEAD-TAIL AFTER” indicate qualities of movement. Actions and positions include “second grande,” “flex rhond,” “run to perch on partner.”

\(^{106}\) Some elements of Guyton Nee’s notation are difficult to show using word processing software. Please note the following symbols for managing transcription: // = new line on notebook; \{} = drawings; superscript numbers indicate counts written in superscript in the notebook; ( ) = notes written in parentheses in the notebook.

\(^{107}\) \text{Rond de jambe} is French ballet terminology for “circle of the leg,” also shortened in Guyton Nee’s notes to “rhon,” for \text{rond}. 
To document the movement, Guyton Nee uses words that are similar to those she would use while teaching or to verbally cue students about the movement. Her notes are
not intended to preserve the choreography in an exacting manner; rather, they stimulate
visualized memories of Fake Person or physical memories of enacting the movement in
the studio. The choreography notes act as a temporary memory placeholder while making
the choreography and preparing for the performances. Further, Guyton Nee created them
for personal use rather than the dancers’ use. Guyton Nee brings her notebooks to
rehearsal for her own reference, but she teaches her dancers the movement through a
traditional body-to-body method.

**Durham Wall’s Journals — Kinesthetic Triggers from Alphabetic Writing**

Durham Wall also enjoys reading books that feed her creative and professional
development; she particularly enjoys books about writing such as Natalie Goldberg’s
*Writing Down the Bones*, and Anne Lamott’s *Bird by Bird*. Several times in her artistic
career, Durham Wall has returned to the daily journaling practice from *The Artist’s Way*
by Julia Cameron. She is drawn to these books because they stimulate writing,
particularly the physical act of writing. Physically scribbling, drawing, and inscribing as
acts of processing thinking and creativity are an important aspect of her artistic upkeep,
and these books encourage venues for that kind of activity.

As part of her teaching and artistic practices, Durham Wall frequently writes in
journals: for recording her thoughts about current projects and for preparing for classes
and rehearsals. She also uses journals to document exercises for class, and for noting
areas to return to in the next class. Durham Wall prepares the material kinesthetically
through improvisation and exploration in the studio. Once she has generated the material
for class, she creates list-like descriptions in her journal that serve as lesson plans.

Durham Wall explains:

I'll get into the studio on Sunday or Monday, or whenever, and prepare some material. Then it develops throughout the week. Ok, this was working, this wasn't working, how can I re-inform it. I always take notes after class in the roll book about, “try this, do this.” (Durham Wall 14 May)

Furthermore, Durham Wall alters and adds to the written documentation throughout the week as her class progresses through the movement material. The written aid is as fluid as the movement exercises are in order to adjust to the needs of the students during class.

Durham Wall uses her journals to document her lesson plans, and as a mode of processing her ideas through the kinesthetic sensations brought about by writing.

Inscription, whether writing, scribbling or doodling, is an important aspect of Durham Wall’s artistic work. She always keeps pastels or drawing material on hand and uses them to counteract too much time spent typing when she misses her daily writing exercises (Durham Wall 24 May). Durham Wall values the concept of *ductus*,

> “This inscription [draws on paper] that I made, this idea of inscribing the page, that is a place holder for a physical existence” (Durham Wall 24 May). She has used *ductus* and “sentient writing” in her artistic research and teaching. To Durham Wall, sentient writing is sensing the physical aspect of what is being inscribed onto the page.

For Durham Wall, the physical act of writing down the cues marks kinesthetic memories about the movement. “It’s [as if the journal notes are] like a generative grammar” for her — part of her building and planning of the class (Durham Wall 14

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*108* *Ductus* is a term from Linguistics in which characteristics of a written script refer back to characteristic of the action that produced it such as speed, pressure, or direction.
May). Instead of writing the action sequences of movement phrases, Durham Wall lists the major movement ideas for each exercise. For example, her journal describes, “Week 7 {arrow} Wed // ankle/foot” (Durham Wall Notebook). This notation marks the day and the conceptual connection to her kinesiology class, which is also the focus of the movement for that lesson. Under the heading “Week 7 Wed” a list of exercise cues follows (see Fig. 4.11).

FIGURE 4.11 DURHAM WALL TEACHING NOTES WITH TRANSCRIPTION

(Durham Wall Notebook)

Week 7 {arrow} WED ankle/foot

- floor series – start ₡109 sweeping hands over head
- upside down big
- push ₡ feet to find someone else
- dome & release ₡ arms tu/par enx
- through the foot
- swings – 3 8’s (7+8) falling from Tib Ant.
- plies switching weight
- walking cross
- traveling 6 ₡ Lisa Race move

109 “with” from Latin cum.
Durham Wall’s journals, written texts of words, numbers, and descriptions, trigger physical memory. Her journal notes are not documentary in the sense that the entire movement phrase can be recreated from them; they are not prescriptive instructions for moment-by-moment actions. At times, the movement itself is lost. For example, for one class Durham Wall wrote, “4 8’s triple feel,” and “shoulder maybe a 7?” When she shared the journals with me, Durham Wall could not remember what was going on in those phrases. She explains, “It's [what she wrote in the journal] a real kinesthetic memory, and I'll reinvent it. I'm not always interested in replicating movement material…there's something about this that's not precious to me” (Durham Wall 14 May). They instead act as scores of the feeling, sense, image, movement concept or pedagogical focus of the exercise/phrase.

Through the act of writing in her journal, Durham Wall engages in ductus as she creates cues, images, and entry points as inscriptions on the page that act as placeholders for the physical existence of the movement within her body. Entry points and cues include: “swings – 3 8’s (7 & 8) falling from Tib Ant [tibialis anterior110].” According to Durham Wall, “I can exactly replicate what it [the exercise] was because I gave just that one cue [stands up, leans forward to fall into lunge] that gets me started into it” (Durham Wall 14 May). The writing directs her to follow her tibialis/shin bone; falling forward into it cues the physical memory and then she can recreate either the sequence or at least the main physical thrust of the sequence. Sometimes Durham Wall’s writing is a description of the exercise with specific vocabulary. In one example, she wrote “traveling

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110 Tibialis anterior is anatomical terminology for the front of the shin bone.
Lisa Race add on” for a phrase that uses a movement she learned from choreographer Lisa Race (Durham Wall Notebook). When Durham Wall taught the “traveling 6” in class, she verbally cited this movement as one she was borrowing from Race. “There are reminders that will get me back into a kinesthetic place. They’re verbal but they get me back into a kinesthetic place” (Durham Wall 14 May).

Durham Wall also writes cues for herself to give her students. For example, a note accompanying a warm-up read “push č feet to find someone new” (Durham Wall Notebook). This cue was meant to direct the students to engage visually with one another during the exercise by traveling somewhere else in the room. When they arrived, students were to notice who was in their new immediate surroundings and to be aware of a visual and energetic sense of their new surroundings as they repeated the warm-up phrase.

The inscription is the representation of the kinesthetic memory of the movement. Guyton Nee’s journals document the sequential content of the dance phrases — a recreation of the movement with enough detail to reconstruct it. In contrast, Durham Wall’s journals recall the kinesthetic memory of the movement. They depend contextually on her physical experience generating the exercises when she plans her classes. Without the link to that memory, the physical existence disappears, as it did for the “4 8’s triple feel” and the “shoulder maybe a 7?” The writing within the journals does not necessarily have a life beyond the immediate context of class preparation and teaching the exercises.

Neither Durham Wall’s nor Guyton Nee’s journal is meant for the students or dancers to read or use; they are referenced only marginally during class or rehearsal. Both

\[\text{111} \; č \; \text{is shorthand for} \; \text{cum}, \; \text{Latin for} \; \text{“with.”} \; \text{Durham Wall uses this symbol often in her journal, a result of her pre-medicine studies in college.}\]
dance artists rely on their kinesthetic memories and physical execution of the material to go through the choreography or exercises. Durham Wall may re-create the exercises as though they are a “generative grammar” (Durham Wall 14 May). She rarely returns to her journals for reusing phrases or exercises, and she does not have a stock of “Meghan phrases” that she revisits as Maxwell Rezabek does. Durham Wall does, however, have movement vocabulary she frequently uses. When she returns to the journals, she relies on the kinesthetic memory to reinvent the exercises from the movement concepts they were based on, rather than trying to recapture the original sequences. In the next section, the Bebe Miller Company uses journals to trigger kinesthetic memory and archive creative process.

Bebe Miller Company

**Documentation: Journals as Kinesthetic Triggers and Processing Creative Information**

Many members of Bebe Miller Company use journals during rehearsals. Bebe Miller’s and Angie Hauser’s notebooks are present at every rehearsal for *A History*. At the start of rehearsal on April 14, 2012 for Set-up/Reset, Hauser and Darrell Jones warmed-up independently, waking up their internal sensing and attention to their bodies. Miller sat at the side of the studio near the fireplace.\(^{112}\) Just before they began to work, Hauser stationed her notebook and pencil under the portable ballet *barres* that lined the west windows, ready to record her thoughts, key moments, images, language, and other

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\(^{112}\) This residency was at The Ohio State University Department of Dance, during a time when it was housed in “swing space” during the renovation of their building, Sullivant Hall. The particular studio where this rehearsal took place was converted from a campus restaurant, so there was a free-standing fireplace near one end of the large room outside the dancing area.
triggers that would help them recreate their progress later. Amid improvisation and discussion, Miller and Hauser jotted down key points, ideas, or epiphanies into their notebooks. Although Talvin Wilks as the dramaturg has largely taken on the role of documentarian, Miller and Hauser still keep journals for their own purposes.

Miller’s journals serve multiple purposes. Her journal is in the room during rehearsal and afterward during “downloads” — post-rehearsal discussions between Miller, Wilks, and other collaborators about the day’s progress and where they will go next. Notes taken during the downloads recap the work done that day, and discuss where they will continue the next day or in the future when they return to a particular section. Miller uses her journal for note-keeping of choreographic structures, processing her thoughts about her work, drawings of sets, for example. During a full run of a dance, or of a section of a dance, Miller takes notes in her journal (See Fig. 4.12 and Fig. 4.13). She writes the notes/corrections she wants to give dancers, or the moments she will try to fix after the run. The act of writing catches Miller’s immediate responses to the dance-in-time. She does not stop the dance to address an issue while the dancers are moving, but the page will hold onto those thoughts so she can return to them afterward.
5/14/10 Historiography
TV, LL, AH, BM, MR
[collaborator initials]

All these intentions that are navigating together, not “choosing” per se.

Creating something for people to experience rather than to know.

There are answers in the difficulties and challenges of N Beaut [Necessary Beauty] are relevant. There are things that didn’t happen in that process – that did in Verge – that tells us what we have done in the past, and what we haven’t done.

How we control the audience’s time is important. When it’s interactive, they have control. If we want to decide when do you go forward or not, can we do that?

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113 Journal examples were taken from scans that were used as material for the DanceFort interactive archive eBook. Miller and Wilks shared several of the raw materials/digital files for DanceFort with me.
What does community mean?

harmony, instead of everyone agreeing, means everybody being heard
community connotes warmth, but it also includes the cut throats.

Dancers & Choreographers
- ability to communicate about comfort
- Listen to each other
- recognition of seniority
- What’s your comfort level (from 1-8) with collaboration?

(Miller Community)

Like Miller, Hauser uses her journals during rehearsal to note creative process, choreographic or improvisational structures, and to develop specialized terms. Writing helps Hauser process her thoughts about what they are doing in rehearsal. She also uses her journal to create memory triggers. Hauser has a spatially oriented memory, so she writes location of rehearsal such as “Ohio,” “Colorado,” “Studio 6” (Hauser 18 July). The spatial memory triggers the context for what they had been working on, which Hauser can then re-visit physically. She explains:

I often remember where we made it, or what room we were in when we had that experience and what facing we had, so it's almost like I align myself in the cardinal directions like on the planet and feel myself, ok, and get it back… In terms of what I do, I do have a notebook and I write down. I don't go back to it that much, but I do write it down. Sometimes I go back to it. (18 July)
The descriptions and locations Hauser records in her journal act as placeholders for spatial and physical memories. Her journals are not a “documentary” of the choreography, but a processing of her thoughts at the time of the rehearsal. Like Durham Wall, Hauser uses the physical act of writing as the mode of processing movement information and as well as thoughts. She can return to her notes at a later time during the choreographic process to aid in producing an entry point for continuing to work.

Movement and text source material for A History included a reconstruction of Hauser’s and Jones’s first duet with the Bebe Miller Company from Verge (2001). For A History, Wilks asked Hauser to write her memory of dancing the duet; the resulting text became known as Fable. The process of Hauser and Jones re-making the Verge Duet/Fable was similar to how Hauser uses her journal. In re-making the duet, Jones and Hauser used physical cues from each other. She explains:

We do this thing called Verge Redux, which is this duet we did twelve years ago. We never really went back and learned it on purpose, but it's just fascinating. When the music happens [for the duet], I'm just doing it, and it's so clear. There's a lot of information in my body. If [Darrell] touches me in a certain place, that triggers whoomp, I'm into that [physical action]. Darrell and I have a lot of those [moments], so we rely on each other a lot for that kind of material. We'll set it up and that will trigger us that “OK, that's this.” (18 July)

Hauser and Jones created an outline of what the duet was/is, but they chose not to perform an exact recreation of it. Looking at the performance and choreographic development of A History over time, they do begin to pin down and “set” several moments of the duet. There is some variability, but it is not a completely different movement vocabulary each time. Like the written descriptions in Hauser’s journal, the physical interactions with Jones trigger Hauser’s physical memory of the movement.
During the Fable section of *A History*, Hauser verbally repeats a monologue she hears through the headphones. Hauser originally wrote this monologue to describe and process her experience of dancing the original *Verge* Duet with Jones. She hears Wilks’ recorded voice reading the text to her through the headphones, which she repeats as an instance of the Talking Talking construct. Choreographically, Hauser and Jones used this text to re-create aspects of the experience of dancing the original duet. For example, Hauser describes in the monologue how Jones places his forearm along her spine:

> Before I can answer, I feel the touch. His [Jones’] forearm lining up along the length of my spine, elbow toward my tail and little finger just touching the base of my neck. It is time to begin together. (Wilks *Text*)

Shortly after Hauser verbally delivers her Fable monologue, this forearm-to-spine moment is recreated in a new duet. Another moment recalls the way in which Hauser and Jones created a spatial relationship of alignment, “We continue this way, simultaneously imagining interior and exterior worlds, aligning ourselves physically… remembering” (Wilks *Text*). In the new duet, Hauser and Jones create a new aligning relationship they called “spoon.” Hauser is behind Jones, sensing his body shape and energy, trying to remain close to his back, as though “spooning” without touching each other. The Fable text captures Hauser’s kinesthetic memory and lived experience of her *Verge* Duet. The role of the text is to act as a documentation of experience that later becomes a generative source for making the choreography. Through the Fable text, Hauser and Jones create a new duet for *A History* that recalls their performance history from the *Verge* duet.

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114 See Chapter 2 for description of the Talking Talking and headphones choreographic construct.
Composition: Scoring, Menus

As discussed in Chapter 3, making work in the Bebe Miller Company is a highly collaborative process. Within the transition to a residency-based company model from the New York/studio-based model came increased use of improvisation that seems to require deep scoring practices in the company. These deep scoring practices frequently involve “improvisational states” — the company’s term for collections of movement vocabulary, dynamics, imagery, and movement qualities used as the basis for generating improvisation-as-performance. This section looks at one of those scoring practices for A History.

The Reset section of A History was one of the most difficult improvisational and compositional moments of the dance. In Reset, Hauser and Jones take turns performing improvisational states while traveling downstage. Before each turn, they “reset” to the upstage in order to begin anew. Hauser and Jones had trouble in starting from scratch each time. According to Hauser, it was like “being pushed off a cliff” into an impossible situation because there were no easily accessible entry points to begin moving (18 July). Hauser and Jones would have to begin improvising and building immediately from nothing because they were “resetting” from the previous round.

While they developed this section, Hauser and Jones arduously worked through trial and error to find source material or entry points into the improvisation that would elicit the quality of movement, relationships, and use of space and rhythm that Miller wanted to see. A breakthrough came during the April 2012 residency at The Ohio State University. During one run in which Hauser and Jones take turns with their improvisational states, Miller asked Hauser to try to find dynamics that resonated like
Jones’s Drive. Hauser mimicked Jones’s sudden tosses and weight-dropping, but her body reverberated from them rather than coming to complete stillnesses. Miller remarked, “Cool, write that down,” and Hauser ran to her notebook to jot down her thoughts and experience about that run. She wrote a list: “visual/physical,” “time delay,” “Angie doing D Drive,” “*stay connected to the score!! No gaps” (Hauser Notebook).

The rehearsal continued with Hauser and Jones taking turns watching and listening. Jones demonstrated his Drive again and narrated how he was finding particular parts of the body to respond to what he sees – back of the knees, back of the neck, toe. His arms and legs, he said, found more linear approaches to space, which made him tired, so he alternated with softer moments to recuperate from the force of the linear, jabbing movement. Hauser watched Jones, shadowing his movement in her own body before running again to her journal to jot down notes. “You’re talking about initiations, right?” Hauser asked. Jones confirmed, and they continued working with translating Jones’s Drive into Hauser’s body. Eventually, this would become “no gap sourcing” for Hauser: staying committed to her internal score with no stopping in finding her next visual and physical source material. This “no gap sourcing” was the first iteration of the “menus” they would later enumerate at their final Ohio State residency before the premiere of the dance.

Before the “menus” breakthrough, Miller had been giving choreographic feedback to Hauser’s and Jones’s improvisations. Unfortunately, the material of the improvisations changed every time, so this type of feedback was not applicable to subsequent runs of the section. Once they realized this disconnect, they began to discuss Reset in terms of entry points and improvisational states, and were able to identify
several mini-scores that Jones and Hauser were already utilizing. They explicitly named and wrote down the “menu” on strips of paper from which Jones and Hauser could choose to improvise in Reset (see Fig. 4.14). Writing down the menu provided concrete items to reference, and on which Miller could comment, giving feedback about how to frame the improvisation.

FIGURE 4.14 MENUS FOR RESET

(Hauser Menus)

The mini-scores in the menu have unique descriptive names that follow the language development and naming practices the company typically uses: Rhythm Torque
(Jones, beginning like Darrell Drive); Line (both, energetic, curving, distal initiation, Hauser demonstrates with \{leading with elbows across body, sequentially downward, fold unfold arms, squirmy\}); Swipe (both, evocative of the word swipe); Compact (both, condensing of space, whole body or isolated parts); Bird Cage (Hauser, image about the “thoracic body being the container” for the heart and lungs, which can move separately from rib cage and thoracic spine) (Hauser Menus). For Hauser, “[Reset is] not about completion of that score [items from menu], it was just figuring out a way to talk to each other about what we were trying to do” (18 July). At first, they kept the strips of paper on hand to reference and recall the menus as an improvisational score. Having the written choices broke down the images and improvisational source material into smaller, more defined scores, and supplied specific language for what they were doing.

**Documentation: Dramaturg as “Accidental Archivist”**

As the dramaturg for the Bebe Miller Company, Talvin Wilks’ role is documentation-centric. He is responsible for language capture, collecting and describing the unique lexicon the company develops for improvisation states, phrases, and concepts. This focus supplies the development of the choreography with organized record-keeping of the thematic concepts, movement material, and states explored in each rehearsal. Wilks’ documentation became known as his “templates.”

Wilks’ templates are large word-processing documents that collect, organize and preserve several categories of information. They capture developing company terminology and notate general movement descriptions as well as the structure of the piece-as-a-whole. Wilks is more than a documentarian for the company, however. As the
de facto record keeper, he collects and influences the interpretation of developing language. He notes:

Dancers became appreciative of [the documentation] because they knew someone was there notating and collecting things that they were agreeing upon...so they could rely more on that and not necessarily run to their journals. Then I was collecting [the specialized vocabulary], and then restructuring it, and then creating a glossary, and then utilizing that language as a way back in, a way for me to communicate what I'm seeing or what I'm collecting. (Wilks 18 May)

The template becomes a record of the exercises used, conversations that took place, and the trajectory of the choreography. The templates track the specialized vocabulary as it develops, perhaps one of their most important functions due to the necessity of lexicon creation in the company’s generative process.115

Wilks’ templates are a centralized collection, which any company member can access at any time. At times, he gives printed drafts or digital drafts of his templates to company members and collaborators. The templates easily convert into cue sheets for artistic collaborators, such as lighting designers and stage managers, which makes them versatile in their use to the company. In his ongoing template, Wilks creates a new table for each residency, and each day includes several sub-sections: notes from collaborators/download discussions; sections of the dance with movement descriptions, video and audio content/cues, and questions or thoughts about how they are developing; notes from watching runs of the dance; collected text from dancers and outside sources; tentative arrangements of the choreographic structure; and/or working schedules (see Fig 4.15 and Fig. 4.16).

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115 See Chapter 3 for discussion on language development and language/verbal modalities in the Bebe Miller Company.
FIGURE 4.15 EXCERPT OF TEMPLATE CONTENT: NOTES FOR RESET PROCESS

Reset process –
- Moving back and forth between Angie and Darrell
- Splicing in video from REHEARSAL MOVIE
- Using new music from Michael Wall
- Shaping the relationship between dancing and images
  Angie
  Darrell
  Angie

Darrell (measuring space) (puppy dog attached),
Angie,
Both (Parallel Reading) Angie leaves Darrell
Both (Parallel Reading) Darrell leaves Angie x to table
Space
Puppy Dog
(Wilks Frankfurt)

FIGURE 4.16 A HISTORY TEMPLATE EXCERPT OF CHOREOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE
(OSU/WEXNER JULY 2012 RESIDENCY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANGIENESS</th>
<th>MOVEMENT</th>
<th>SOURCE/TEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angie enters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X. dn. St.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie – no gap sourcing</td>
<td></td>
<td>VQ - Text: Angie-ness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gestural exchange (Darrell/Angie)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop – at screen, crawls under screen</td>
<td>Text insert -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrell Proximity – Darrell x dn.st. to Angie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Both (move together)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrell Leaves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie Set up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Wilks Template)

Wilks’ templates also serve as a mode of archiving. As the template evolves over time, it accumulates information from each residency. Through the templates, Wilks documents how the dance changes during the process, which aids in developing the
overall choreographic structure, capturing the evolution of sequencing along with additions or deletions of sections of the dance. Dramaturgically, his templates make valuable development information easily accessible. Wilks need only search the document to find previous iterations of a section or notes from discussions to see how particular sections did or did not work together, for example. The accumulation of information in the templates allows him to see the development of particular moments over time, and even across dances.

Wilks’ templates became ideal source material for mining during the DanceFort interactive archive project. During the process for *A History*, Wilks realized that he was an “Accidental Archivist.” During the Krannert residency, I was present as an “embedded archivist,” in an experiment to see how dance companies and choreographers might use an archivist creatively to support their work. Wilks put me to work cataloguing audio and video files for their content. They needed to mine these files to find source material for the audio that would play through headphones during performances, which Jones and Hauser would repeat out loud in what would develop as the Talking Talking construct. My cataloguing of media from past residencies mirrored the live cataloguing that Wilks does for the company. In the process, Wilks discovered that he was an “accidental” archivist by the scope of his work as a dramaturg — he was collecting *creative* material and preserving it.

Through Wilks, the company seems to have a sense of archive-building as on-going generation of material, an interminable state of process, and processing. There is a subtle distinction to make between the kind of creative history archived by Wilks and the kinds of materials that are typically found in a company archive. A traditional archive
holds physical materials relating to company management, development, engagements, press releases and reviews, photographs, videos of performances, and things of this nature. Wilks’ burgeoning archive of templates gathers and creates the artifacts and information around the dances and the making of those dances: all of the materials – physical and ephemeral – that only the collaborators get to “see,” that would be lost otherwise. Wilks is documenting and preserving non-tangible actions, interactions, creative processes, and insider terms and meanings. His templates create a work history for each dance, noting where the final movement, sections, or themes originated, and how they developed from the original seeds.

Conclusion

Alphabetic and notational literacy events demonstrated a concentrated usage of written texts. The dance artists created various residual texts that stood in for movement in various ways: processing thinking about movement or movement thinking; documenting movement and choreography for reuse, dissemination, and or choreographic development; and generating new movement or composing through written scores. As with the multiliteracy dance events, alphabetic and notational dance literacy events spanned reading and writing, and at times combined reading and writing.

Physical composition events included the use of written scores for improvisation. Maxwell Rezabek used motif notation symbols as mini-scores for her younger students to read and then write the movement with their bodies, composing structured improvisations. The menus created for Reset by Hauser, Jones, and Miller served a similar purpose. They provided a set of improvisational states and structures within
which Hauser and Jones could produce work for Reset. In these two instances, written scores acted as the impetus for kinesthetic responses. Reading the scores was an integral part of these two events. However, physical composition — the writing of movement with bodies — was the focal point and main goal. For Reset, Hauser and Jones needed a collection of material they could use to improvise each time they performed *A History*; frequently composing/re-composing this section of the dance required a readily available source of material from which they would generate. Maxwell Rezabek wanted her students to explore types of action such as jumping/springing and rotation. The motif notation symbols, like the Reset menus, provided a focused and conceptually grounded source from which to explore.

Writing events in journals primarily pointed to the physical act of writing as a mode of thinking. Substantial portions of Miller’s journal are devoted to writing that allows her to think on paper. Her journal records creative thoughts about current dance works and their development. They are a space for the expression of thinking about her choreographic and artistic work. Both Durham Wall and Hauser wrote aspects of movement or choreography into their journals that they used as triggers to kinesthetic memory. Both journals acted as placeholders for physical actions rather than precise documentation of those actions. Although Ofer did not keep journals, her experience of writing RikudNetto's movement phrases into Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation demonstrates the way in which the notation acts as a placeholder for her own physical memory of movement. In order for Ofer to write the notation scores, she must reference her own dancing body in action and her own kinesthetic sense of performing the dance phrases. To write the dance in symbols, Ofer must access her movement thinking.
Finally, documentation played a major role in alphabetic and notational dance literacy events and practices. In terms of writing events, Ofer and Maxwell Rezabek use dance notation systems to record movement and choreography; Guyton Nee documents her choreography through her own idiosyncratic notation, which combines dance words, numbers, drawings, and abbreviations. RikudNetto publish their scores for public dissemination and use. Instead of documenting the choreography, however, the RikudNetto scores document the movement phrases and the original movement instructions. Their intended use is as an educational source demonstrating how Eshkol-Wachman can be used for compositional purposes. Maxwell Rezabek uses Labanotation to record class exercises and choreography that she creates for her ballet students. Although she is trained as a professional notator, she does not often choose to write her scores to certified, professional score standards. Instead, her notation scores are a shorthand for her own purposes in later reusing or restaging her own work. She may write the structures of the exercises or the core movement phrases of the choreography, and may use alphabetic writing to describe other aspects of the movement.

Wilks’ documentation for the Bebe Miller Company is an important aspect of his job as dramaturg. He creates templates for each new choreographic work that record choreographic structure, development of language specific to the current dance, conversations with collaborators, directing notes and structural development notes. His templates become an archive of creative process for each dance, tracing the origins and development of key moments and improvisational structures.

Maxwell Rezabek also demonstrated reading and combined reading/writing events with alphabetic and notational dance literacy. The Dancer’s Edge studio faculty
holds yearly evaluations of student progress. For the ballet students, this includes a written assessment of ballet terminology and theory. Maxwell Rezabek’s students used a written packet to review in class and to study for their assessment. Maxwell Rezabek also gives her students drawings of floor plans and written outlines of choreography for them to review their end-of-the-year recital dance. Students may read and study these documents between class meetings to help them remember their dances.

When Maxwell Rezabek stages repertory for the Classical Edge student group, she often uses written resources that include alphabetic texts and dance notation scores. These literacy events combine reading and writing — reading her resources and writing as composition to stage étude versions of the repertory with her students. When she creates her étude versions, she jokingly refers to this practice as “improving Petipa.” Through this literacy practice, Maxwell Rezabek exerts shared authorship of historical repertory. She couches her revisions within the historical and cultural traditions of revising ballet choreography to suit performers and directors. She neither claims sole ownership of the études, nor that she is staging the unchanged “original” choreography. Instead, she contextualizes her choreographic revisions for her students.

Alphabetic and notational dance literacy events demonstrate interactions between dance and literacy. The residual texts created and used by dance artists work in similar and distinct ways to the multimodal dance texts explored in Chapter 3. In the following chapter, I will examine the ways in which dance literacy, the multimodal reading and writing of dance texts, and dance and literacy, the interactions between written texts and dance, converge and diverge. How do they each address aspects of reading and writing? How do they intersect and inform one another?
Chapter 5 Partnering Multimodal and Notational Dance Literacies

Dance Literacy is Multiliteracy

In this dissertation, I have sought to explore both dance literacy and interactions between dance and literacy. As discussed in Chapter 1, dance literacy scholarship has typically fallen on two sides of a literacy/orality binary, defining dance literacy either as multimodal processes of dance-making or the use of and fluency in written dance notation systems. Rarely have dancers or dance scholars considered these two seemingly opposing definitions in relation to one another. The structure of this dissertation repeats that dichotomy in order to examine both arenas of dance literacy through contextualized and defined reading and writing events and practices.

In both Chapters 3 and 4, literacy in dance emerges through contextualized uses of reading and writing in/with/through/about movement. Reading and writing in dance operate through multimodality. Reading is the interpreting, analyzing, and consuming of multimodal information in order to create understandings about movement. Writing is the enacting of movement through demonstrating or repeating a known dance phrase, generating or improvising movement, and/or the documenting of movement and choreography. Multiliteracies as described and studied by the New London Group (see Chapter 1), place notational and alphabetic modalities next to aural, visual, spatial, gestural, and kinesthetic modalities. Notational and alphabetic modalities are not separate
from multimodality but are included in its breadth. By labeling dance literacy as multiliteracy, I am arguing that notational and multimodal aspects of dance literacy are, in fact, partners. In this final chapter, I summarize the major themes that emerged from the research and suggest possible implications and new directions.

**Locations of Movement Texts and Residual Texts**

My examination of dance literacy in context has required me to identify the “text” that is read or written. Ruth Finnegan’s exploration of oral literature delineates parameters for the “text” of songs/epic poems as literature in performance (Finnegan *Literacy and Orality*). Oral literature, Finnegan argued, is found within lyrics and music that are distinguishable and repeatable in various aspects. These aspects tend to be different from those that make written literature distinguishable and repeatable. Written literature in performance often tends to allow enactment of an exact repetition of the written text – all the same words, same rhythms, using the written literature as a “yardstick of accuracy” against which to measure the performance (Finnegan *Literacy and Orality* 81). Oral literature, on the other hand, tends to allow reproduction of a negotiation of rules, structures, and forms. Exact phrases of lyrics were not necessarily repeated, although similar phrases that communicated the same idea or rhythmic and rhyming schemes were.

To consider dance literacy in context, I asked how dancers employed reading and writing of movement and the use of written documents. I found it necessary to delineate parameters of a “text” in dance, the sources and products of reading and writing in dance literacy, and in whose bodies the texts are created and repeated, and how are they read
and written. Additionally, many of these “texts” emerged as multimodal events, combining visual, aural, kinesthetic, and notational modalities.

In multimodal dance literacy events and practices, dance texts were located within and between bodies. As dance artists generated set movement phrases for class or rehearsal, they composed or wrote the dance texts. Later, in the studio, they enacted those texts physically for their students to read, becoming in a sense, the dance texts. As Carol Maxwell Rezabek and Meghan Durham Wall demonstrate the movement, they often simultaneously narrate what they are doing, performing a form of verbal self-annotation to draw their students’ attention toward reading a particular aspect of the movement. Then, students re-write the texts in their own bodies by dancing them. When the Bebe Miller Company and RikudNetto create their dances, the dance texts exist within and between several bodies. Dancers Angie Hauser and Darrell Jones create improvised sections of the choreography, composing movement texts that Bebe Miller and Talvin Wilks read. Likewise, RikudNetto dancers, such as Shlomit Ofer, physically compose dance phrases from the movement instructions verbally given to them by their choreographer, Tirza Sapir. When creating choreography, reading and writing merged, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

In notational literacy, dance texts were primarily located outside the body. Reading events happened around scores and documents: repertory scores, motif scores read in class, scores or notes used to learn phrases pre-choreography, or notes to trigger movement memory. Writing consisted of acts of composition and documentation. Documentation took the form of residual texts outside the body, as personal and temporary reminders of movement phrases and as scores and archival templates for
preservation of choreography. Because Jill Guyton Nee writes in her notebooks while Fake Person creates her choreography, Guyton Nee’s notes are both documentary and compositional. They capture the substance of the actions for later reproduction, and are an integral part of Guyton Nee’s compositional process. Maxwell Rezabek’s Labanotation scores and collections of teaching resources are primarily documentary in nature, archiving movement material for later use. Residual texts also captured thought-processing. For example, Miller uses her journal for thinking through artistic questions and choreographic problems that arise as she creates her dance works. For Durham Wall, the physical act of putting pen — or pastel — to paper enables her to think kinesthetically about her movement practices and class preparation through the actions of scribbling, drawing, and note-taking.

Although residual texts exist outside of bodies in notational dance literacy events, they often facilitated the return to movement texts physically enacted. Maxwell Rezabek used scores and other written resources to recreate repertory and class exercises for her students to perform. Guyton Nee’s choreography notebooks referred back to the choreographic phrases she would teach to her dancers. RikudNetto’s EWMN scores clarify movement instructions for younger members who read the scores as they learn the repertory. The Bebe Miller Company created written menus in order to develop the improvisation for Reset. The descriptions on scraps of paper defined imagery, movement quality, and spatial parameters of each improvisational state. All the dance artists used language, tactile feedback, rhythmic vocalizations and other modes while teaching and choreographing in order to clarify execution or intention, dance phrases, and exercises.
The residual texts of scores, journals, and notebooks acted as another mode for understanding movement texts.

**Reading-Writing Combinations**

The practices of the dance artists combined reading and writing. Movement texts, such as class exercises or phrases of choreography, are created and shared among multiple bodies, which often necessitates combined reading and writing events, such as when a choreographer reads movement phrases performed by dancers in order to write the choreography. In addition, reading residual texts often led to physically writing movement content into one’s body. The table below summarizes relationships between movement and residual texts, in terms of primary modality, aspect of literacy, and literacy function (see Fig. 5.1). Literacy events and practices involving movement texts included composing or generating them, demonstrating or performing them, and viewing and analyzing them. Reading and writing included understanding/interpreting, composition, journaling and *ductus* (physical acts of writing), and bodily writing (performing movement texts). Additional functions of documentation and authorship are discussed further below.
TABLE 5.1 MOVEMENT TEXTS AND RESIDUAL TEXTS — RELATIONSHIPS TO MODES, LITERACY ASPECTS, AND FUNCTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement Text or Residual Text</th>
<th>Primary Mode</th>
<th>Aspect of Literacy</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Enacting movement text (generating, demonstrating, performing)</em></td>
<td>Kinesthetic</td>
<td>Reading/Writing</td>
<td>Composition, Bodily Writing, Understanding/Interpreting, Authorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Reading movement text on another body</em></td>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Understanding/Interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Writing movement text with one’s own body</em></td>
<td>Kinesthetic</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Bodily Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Residual text - documentary score/choreo notes</em></td>
<td>Notational</td>
<td>Writing, Reading/Writing</td>
<td>Documentation, Authorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Residual text - memory notes/ process notes</em></td>
<td>Alphabetic</td>
<td>Writing, Reading/Writing</td>
<td>Journaling/Ductus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Residual text – template</em></td>
<td>Alphabetic</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated earlier, larger and more complex literacy practices encompassed several reading and writing events. Choreographing a section of a dance such as Reset, for example, combined reading and writing among Miller, Hauser, and Jones. Miller must watch (reading) the improvisations (movement texts) composed by Hauser and Jones (writing/shared authorship). Miller’s reading of their improvisations serves the larger purpose of Miller choreographing the dance-at-large (writing/composition and authorship). Miller coaches Hauser and Jones (language/kinesthetic/visual modes), directing them toward the improvisational states she is looking for (writing/composition).

Guyton Nee’s highly idiosyncratic literacy practice in creating choreography reveals a similar trajectory through combined reading and writing events, although she initially choreographs without her dancers present. Guyton Nee listens to music (aural
mode) to trigger a visualization of Fake Person (visual/kinesthetic mode, writing/composition, movement text). Fake Person “generates” choreography as Guyton Nee listens to the music, visualizing and then learning the movement from Fake Person (writing/composition and authorship, reading movement text, visual/kinesthetic/aural modes). Guyton Nee physically marks the movement and writes it into her notebook (writing/documentation, kinesthetic/notational modes, residual text and movement text). She “watches” Fake Person (reading) to make choreography (writing). Later in the studio, Guyton Nee will refer to her notebooks when she teaches the choreography to her dancers (reading and writing, residual and movement texts).

When creating and setting repertory with Classical Edge, Maxwell Rezabek reads notation scores (reading, residual text) in order to learn the choreography (movement text). In the studio, Maxwell Rezabek will demonstrate dance steps and phrases (bodily writing) and teach them to her Classical Edge dancers (writing). Maxwell Rezabek makes changes to the dance steps (writing/composition and authorship) to suit the technical level of her students. The dancers watch and listen to Maxwell Rezabek’s demonstrations (reading, visual/language modes), and then dance the movement (bodily writing, kinesthetic mode). In preparation for technique level evaluations at Dancer’s Edge studio, theory review packets (residual texts) allow students a physical understanding of ballet technique (movement texts). Reading is enacted from words and drawings on the paper and extracts from movement in the teachers’ bodies. Physical and paper evaluations provided opportunities to support and test students’ embodied and intellectual understanding of ballet theory and technique.
Literacy Functions: Documentation and Authorship

Various types of functions are revealed in multimodal and notational literacy events. Documentary functions are primarily found operating within notational literacy events, but are not active in multimodal or orality-based literacy events. Documentary uses of residual texts — notation scores, journals, and templates — give a concrete-ness to the ephemeral legacy of dance and help solidify an existence outside of “clock time.” Residual texts have a material presence beyond dancing bodies on objects such as paper or screens. Movement texts are ephemeral, existing within and between bodies in motion; they disappear when they are neither seen nor danced, but can be visualized within the mind’s eye. To be read or written, movement texts must exist within a real time performance. If the performance stops, the text stops.

The residual texts of the dance artists studied demonstrate a range of documentary functions. The effectiveness of their documentary use must be viewed in light of their purposes. For example, Durham Wall’s and Hauser’s journals function as kinesthetic memory triggers of particular movement phrases or improvisational states. If other dancers were to read the journals, they would not necessarily be able to recreate the movement phrases or the improvisational states. However, their intended use is not archival. As residual documentary texts, they primarily serve as personal tools.

Wilks’ template functions as archival documentation of the development of A History, as he records some movement aspects, captures company-specific vocabulary, and charts the evolving choreographic structure. The template’s purpose is to record constancy and change over time, rather than to preserve the choreography in minutia or to trigger the dancers’ kinesthetic memories. In contrast, dance scores such as those used by
Ofer and Maxwell Rezabek serve a documentary function in preserving specific movement phrases and actions. They show the end product of the choreography rather than the process of its creation.

Both multimodal dance literacy practices and notational dance literacy events raised questions of authorship when they involved choreographic works. Authorship relates to creating, controlling, and/or disseminating a work. The dance artists in this dissertation displayed a range of authorship forms. However, authorship primarily emerged around composition. Authorship as a literacy issue did not directly arise from Durham Wall’s and Guyton Nee’s dance technique class context. In this educational setting of teaching and learning dance technique, Durham Wall generates movement material for day-to-day practice, rather than for a later performance. Authorship does not particularly come to bear when movement texts and their residual texts do not lead to an end goal of a public performance, or even a choreographic product. The educational process trumps the end product of a choreographed dance in these contexts.

Dance-making processes correspond with models of authorship through compositional and generative aspects of making choreography. In Chapter 3, I discussed the didactic-democratic continuum of dance-making processes proposed by Jo Butterworth. This continuum describes dance-making relationships between choreographers and dancers. On the didactic end, choreographers almost exclusively control the creation of movement content and decision-making about the choreography. On the democratic end, choreographers share creative responsibilities with dancers in generating movement and decision-making about choreographic structure. Authorship models as seen in this research span a similar spectrum concerning access and
dissemination of dances: from choreographers maintaining tight control of their dances, toward lesser degrees of such control, to the public domain, in which anyone can perform, arrange, or revise dances. Artists labeled as “choreographer” usually retain authority over final decisions about the choreography, and often exercise control over performances and dissemination.\(^{116}\) In actual practice, authorship models are more complex than a linear progression from restricted to free, and are used flexibly depending on contexts of genre traditions, and educational or professional settings. As demonstrated by the artists in this study, multiple points along the spectrum may be simultaneously present, demarcating differences in generative and compositional responsibilities, and dissemination and access privileges.

The Bebe Miller Company exemplifies the most collaborative of shared-authorship models of the artists in this research. The company’s creative process falls under a “democratic” dance-devising method in the continuum proposed by Butterworth. Miller, Hauser, Jones, and Wilks collaborate within their respective roles as choreographer, dancer, and dramaturg. Each makes a substantial contribution to the development of the movement, its choreographic structure, and in creating meaningful content. Hauser and Jones create most of the movement material in \textit{A History} through improvisation, and Miller acts as director and arranger. She guides Hauser and Jones in developing set and improvised movement to suit her artistic vision for the dance and with Wilks’ dramaturgical assistance and input, Miller arranges the sections of the dance and coordinates multimedia elements with the dancing.

\(^{116}\) In the case of large dance companies, such as ballet companies, this role is filled by the artistic director, rather than a single choreographer.
Dissemination through live performance of Miller’s choreography typically concludes at the end of a tour or performance season. Miller occasionally re-stages her earlier dances on other companies or groups, such as the Bebe Miller Company piece, *The Hendrix Project*, for her students at The Ohio State University in 2013. However, the dancers do not re-stage Bebe Miller Company dances with other dance companies. The legal and artistic ownership remains with Miller as the company director/choreographer.

More recent dances created under the residency-based and improvisational model, such as *A History*, do not easily lend themselves to reconstruction in new contexts. The creative impetus for *A History*, in particular, was the development of the duet relationship between Jones and Hauser specifically, and the creative practices and relationships among Miller, Jones, Hauser, and Wilks represent more than a decade of working together. Dances created in this sort of contextually-specific framework do not easily produce a performance life beyond an original run. Setting *A History* on another company or even on other Bebe Miller Company dancers would nearly constitute creating a new dance.

Ofer and the RikudNetto dancers also share authorship with choreographer Tirza Sapir in terms of composition. Sapir devises the movement instructions and arranges the resulting dance phrases into choreography when the company prepares for a performance. The RikudNetto dancers collaborate with Sapir in generating dance phrases from her movement instructions. They compose the movement texts from Sapir’s verbal instructions. Interestingly, Sapir has published the movement instructions for many sets of her work with RikudNetto for wide distribution. Ofer explains that the purpose of the notated scores is to allow other people to learn about Sapir’s compositional method using
Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation. The scores are disseminated beyond the immediate circle of Sapir and RikudNetto, potentially reaching dancers who have never met, danced or studied with them.

By publishing RikudNetto’s scores as books that can be purchased and owned by consumers (as opposed to temporarily rented), Sapir loosens control over her movement instructions and movement phrases. They can be read and danced by people without Sapir’s body-to-body presence. The published score for Birds notes that the last five dances “provide examples of different ‘choreographic’ arrangements of the material” (Sapir and Reshef-Armony 1). This seems to imply the scores allow readers to explore their own ways of arranging the movement phrases choreographically. It is also interesting to note that the Birds publication does not include any explicit statement about the copyright of the movement for performance purposes. The copyright page does include a statement prohibiting the reproduction of any parts of the publication, which could be taken to mean the written, notated scores.117

One can make distinctions about authorship for scores that were written with differing intentions: namely, an educational intention versus an intention for preservation and performance. It may be that the residual text of Sapir’s published score and the movement text of the danced phrases are not seen as separate entities requiring authorship statements, as is the case with the Labanotation scores. The vague statement prohibiting reproduction of the RikudNetto score contrasts explicit statements about

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117 Due to common sense regarding authorship of published performance material, such as playscripts and music scores, however, one could assume that rights and permission need to be secured from Sapir prior to public performance. Exceptions might entail “fair use” instances, such as an educational purpose during an informal, non-public performance.
separate copyrights of the notation and of the movement and choreography, which are required of Labanotation scores officially housed by the Dance Notation Bureau (DNB) in New York City. Most Labanotation scores within the United States are not available for commercial purchase, and must be rented through an intermediary such as the Dance Notation Bureau or accessed in a special collections reading room through a performing arts library such as the New York Public Library or Thompson Library at The Ohio State University.¹¹⁸

Choreographers enjoy a much tighter control over the dissemination of their scores when they have limited, non-purchasable availability. Labanotation scores housed by the Dance Notation Bureau, the largest institution for housing scores and arranging performances through scores, serve a different documentary function than the RikudNetto scores. The scores at the DNB are explicitly meant to document and preserve dance for reconstruction, staging, research, and public performance. As the intermediary between choreographers and reader-performers of the scores, the DNB has a stake in respecting the authorship rights of choreographers. Sapir’s RikudNetto scores, on the other hand, are not primarily meant to preserve choreographic arrangement, but are educative about Sapir’s “way of thinking and developing dances or exercises as a model for composition” (Ofer 9 May). The RikudNetto scores focus on how Sapir develops composition through the conceptual frameworks of Eshkol-Wachman Movement Notation.

¹¹⁸ The Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute (TRI) at The Ohio State University holds the Dance Notation Bureau Collection. This collection is the largest archive of Labanotation scores and teaching and research materials, and was gifted to Ohio State from the Dance Notation Bureau. Accessions to the collection are on-going for the foreseeable future. The Dance Notation Bureau also has a partnership with the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library, where many scores and media may be viewed.
Maxwell Rezabek’s use of scores and other source material in restaging ballet repertory with her Classical Edge students represents yet another point in the authorship spectrum. Maxwell Rezabek bases her staging practice, jokingly referred to as “improving Petipa,” in the history and tradition re-staging ballet repertory. She notes that there is ample historical precedent for changing ballet choreography. Since the professionalization of ballet in the 17th-century, ballet masters have revised choreography to suit their star performers, and dancers have demanded to perform their preferred solos or variations, regardless whether they were originally from the ballet being staged. Maxwell Rezabek explains this convention, “If you look at Paquita, all the solos in that [ballet] are from other things. You staged something, the ballerina would come in, and she'd say, ‘I don't like that [variation]. I have one I like better that I already do,’ and you'd put it in” (22 March). Ballerinas preferred to perform variations for which they were famous and which best showcased their specific abilities.

Ballet tradition expects the classics to be re-staged and expects that the choreography will be contemporized — or at least reflect the style of the re-stager — with each re-staging. The signature romantic ballet Giselle premiered in 1841 and was choreographed by ballet masters Jules Perrot and Jean Coralli. However, it is Marius Petipa’s restaging of Giselle several decades later that is considered the standard today. Petipa made notable changes to the choreography and the libretto, and it is his version that forms the basis for 20th-century and 21st-century stagings of Giselle. For example, in the original ballet, Giselle kills herself with a sword, but in Petipa’s version, Giselle dies of madness from a broken heart. Using innovations in ballet technique, and updating the
costumes and sets to reflect more current tastes, Petipa contemporized *Giselle* for his audiences.

The combined reading-writing practice of contemporizing, revising, and restaging ballets creates a mixture of old and new. Ballet repertory stagings are typically employed through multimodal body-to-body transmissions, although alphabetic and notational resources do play a role. Ballet masters and former principal dancers teach the choreography and coach the interpretation of solos, variations, *pas de deux*, and so on, to new generations of dancers. Body-to-body transmissions are not unlike orality as discussed by Ruth Finnegan (see Chapter 1). She argues that “orality” would often be more accurately described as multimodality ("Reclothing"). The contemporizing nature of staging ballet repertory challenges the assumptions regarding “orality” as homeostatic and unchanging much as Finnegan has argued.\(^{119}\) When revision is expected, repertory traditions could hardly be described as unchanging.

Maxwell Rezabek is in the intellectual company of professional ballet stagers such as Petipa, and Richard Holden and Pierre Lacotte, in taking license with re-choreographing repertory, as discussed in chapter 4. She makes choreographic adjustments and condenses plots to fit the number of dancers in her performance group and the roles her students are able to fill. Likewise, in staging and composing her *études* versions, Maxwell Rezabek makes technical changes to suit the development and level of her students. She substitutes more complex steps for vocabulary students are currently developing, or reduces the number of turns or beats in *allegro* work. She does not

\(^{119}\) See Chapter 1 for discussion of associations with literacy and orality, as well as Finnegan *Literacy and Orality*, and Ong *Orality and Literacy*. 

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entertain illusions that her étude versions are her sole artistic creations, nor even close representations of the original choreography. Instead, Maxwell Rezabek contextualizes her staging practice within ballet traditions and educational goals, working with repertory as a living, flexible movement text.

Maxwell Rezabek takes an authorship role in re-writing elements of classical repertory to suit the technical ability of her students, as well as the context of their non-professional performances. She uses her artistic and choreographic sensibility to fulfill her pedagogical goal of using repertory as an educational tool, believing that students of ballet have the right to learn the repertory of their form in order to develop artistically and to physically experience the performance history and traditions of the genre. Due to the distance in time from the premieres of the repertory, many of the dances are in public domain. She cannot consult the original choreographers or performers, who have long since passed away. Working within an educational ballet-staging context, she enjoys a measure of creative autonomy in terms of composition and control of her stagings.

Maxwell Rezabek attends to the compositional rules and traditions of ballet form instead of a “yardstick of exactness” to bring alive her movement texts. This is not so say that she does not appreciate or seek accurate source material for her stagings. She prefers to know that her source materials are authentic and accurate, whether they trace back to the original choreographic notes or documents, or derive from body-to-body transmissions through a lineage going back to original performers. In essence, she prefers a “yardstick of accuracy” in the residual texts of her source material, in order to work flexibly with the movement texts of the repertory. In Maxwell Rezabek’s hands,
“Improving Petipa” demonstrates a productive and complex method of partnering between notational and multimodal dance literacies.

Working with the Classical Edge situates Maxwell Rezabek within an educational setting that carries different expectations and responsibilities regarding authorship than professional settings. Professional organizations such as DNB and the Balanchine Trust — the non-profit arm that oversees the licensing of 20th-century ballet choreographer George Balanchine’s dances — monitor and restrict the use of choreography in addition to fostering the preservation of authorship and legacy. The mission of the Balanchine Trust essentially is to control access and dissemination of Balanchine’s movement texts (including the choreography and future performances) and their residual texts (videos, notation scores, archives). According to its mission statement, the Trust is responsible for “preserving and protecting Balanchine’s creative work...disseminating and protecting the integrity and the copyrights... including all media rights and live performance rights worldwide” (George Balanchine Trust). The Trust describes its work in terms of protection and restriction of access. To ensure this control, “all licensed ballets require a Balanchine-approved repetiteur to stage the work in rehearsals and get the work on stage for the premiere” (George Balanchine Trust). The authorship functions of ownership and dissemination are split in this example. During his life and upon his death, it is well known that Balanchine gave ownership of his dances to several of his dancers. However, it is the Trust that controls the performance contracts for the dances and accessibility of notation scores.

The ballet tradition with its tacit expectation of revision in repertory does not apply, however, in the case of Balanchine repertory. The Trust maintains a tight hold
over who is allowed to stage and perform the dances, whether by notation score or through body-to-body transmission. Approximately forty-three of Balanchine’s ballets are recorded in Labanotation and are available through the Dance Notation Bureau by permission of the Trust. Following Balanchine’s death in 1983, large-scale preservation projects were embarked upon in order to capture the legacy of his style and technique, both through carefully detailed notation examples and video “essays” of former principal dancers coaching the style. Due to the large amount of residual texts and the control of the Trust, the “yardstick of accuracy” regarding Balanchine’s work is well-maintained. Only Trust-approved stagers can set Balanchine’s dances and can do so only on companies who meet the Trust’s expectations of technical and artistic quality (George Balanchine Trust). Balanchine himself was notorious for revising his dances during his lifetime, and at times had the Labanotation scores updated to reflect his most recent choreographic changes. However, Balanchine’s context as a 20th-century choreographer within the ecosystem of residual texts as maintained by the Trust disallows the more usual ballet tradition in terms of staging revisions of Balanchine’s work.

Despite the tight control over dissemination, the Trust does “encourage you to explore the universe of George Balanchine” (George Balanchine Trust). In my own experience, the use of the notation scores for educational purposes and research is often

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120 The Dance Notation Bureau’s Balanchine Project documented 18 of Balanchine’s dances and the nuances of his technical style beginning in 1983 following his death. See Dunning “Balanchine Ballet Kept”; several articles from the “Balanchine Issue” of the Dance Notation Journal regarding the Balanchine documentation project including Topaz “The Balanchine Project: A Brief History,” Doris “A Notator’s View,” and Simon “Victoria Simon on Balanchine and Notation”; and Becker “Ballet Notes” also regarding the Labanotation documentation project. The Balanchine Foundation sponsored “The Balanchine Essays” as a series of video “dictionaries” of Balanchine’s technical style by former principal dancers Suki Schorer and Merrill Ashley. See also The George Balanchine Foundation website www.balanchine.org.
granted. I have gained approval on more than one occasion for my university students to read short excerpts of Balanchine’s ballet Agon from Labanotation score for class repertory projects. I have also received approval to view several versions of one of his dances to research changes in choreography, phrasing, and performance quality over time. The Trust wishes for Balanchine’s legacy to be more widely accessed for education and research. However, the “living” reenactment of the choreography through public performance is highly controlled.

Moving Forward

The scope of any research must be limited in order to effectively answer the questions it poses. This dissertation was limited to a small number of dance artists who all work within Western concert dance institutions, and the themes emerging from the research should be considered within the contexts from which they stem. However, further study of dance literacy and of dance and literacy can build upon the work begun here.

An investigation of other movement contexts and dance genres would unquestionably yield an alternate array of literacy events and practices. How might social or cultural forms of dance make use of or partner multimodal and notational modes? What about concert dance traditions from non-Western cultures? Altogether different concerns and themes may arise than those explored in this dissertation, and in alternate relationships to the literacy practices of their larger socio-cultural contexts. Additionally, the ecosystems for particular notational practices such as those introduced in this dissertation have not been considered in depth. In what ways to do they sanction, support,
or sponsor particular uses of notation and residual texts, forms of authorship, or educational versus professional practices?

The presence of recorded video did not play a prominent role in the practices of the dance artists within this dissertation. However, within a larger cultural shift toward media documentation and surveillance, video recording has become simpler and less expensive. Personal or handheld electronic devices such as phones and tablets can now record video at high quality, and online cloud services and sharing sites make storage and dissemination of video recordings more accessible to larger groups of users and audiences. For example, I was recently involved in revising the Labanotation score for Bebe Miller’s dance Prey while it was being staged in Atlanta. During rehearsals, we had no professional video equipment, but I was able to use my iPhone to record reference footage. The high-definition quality of the video is in turn being considered as an addition to the multimedia documentation that accompanies this particular dance score. This begs the question of how might digital residual texts such as blogs, artist-created Vimeo clips or YouTube channels, tweets, or online dance video subscription services such as OntheBoards.tv create dance literacy practices.

The literacy practices of dance scholars and critics will also yield rich ground for study. Writing about and through dance is not a new area of investigation. Utilizing the

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121 On the Boards (OtB) is a non-profit organization that supports international dance, theater, and music artists through an annual performance season, residencies, and spaces for showing works-in-progress. OntheBoards.tv is the online streaming wing of OtB that makes videos of contemporary dance, theater, and music performances available to international audiences who would not otherwise have the opportunity to see the artists in live performance. OntheBoards.tv is available through rental or purchase of individual performance videos, or through a yearly subscription to the entire video library. See http://www.ontheboards.org/ and http://www.ontheboards.tv.
senses and one’s kinesthetic empathy in order to write about dance is well-represented in dance scholarship (Feck; Foster *Choreographing*; Koroscik; Preston-Dunlop; Martin; Reynolds). How would this look within a literacy studies partnership? How would bodily, kinesthetic, and textual modes relate as aspects of reading and writing? Interest in embodied archives has also gained ground in recent history. For example, the Dance Heritage Coalition has sponsored multiple “embedded archivist” projects, placing archivists within dance companies to assist with a plethora of traditional and new archival practices. The archive has historically been the domain of literacy, a storehouse for books, documents, and various other genres of written texts. What would it mean for archives if multimodal and body-to-body transmissions and texts were incorporated?

What is gained through this exercise of claiming literacy for dance? In chapter 1, one of the Dance Literacy Symposium participants questioned how appropriating the cultural capital of “literacy,” could lend academic and/or intellectual credibility to the often marginalized meaning-making and knowledge-producing processes of dancers. Dance educator Ann Dils writes: “applying the term ‘literacy’ to dance dignifies an arts practice that has been traditionally ignored within schools and calls us to ask questions about its potential contribution as a way of knowing and field of inquiry in general education” (Dils 96-97). There is an unfortunate truth to these statements about the low value educational institutions place on embodied forms of knowledge. However, I would advocate against blind adoption of “literacy” for dance meaning-making practices. Adopting a moniker of “dance literacy” provides a specific set of questions about how

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122 See chapter 1 for a brief discussion on kinesthetic empathy.
dancers work in the studio as demonstrated through practices of reading and writing. I have argued that a critical appropriation of literacy for dance meaning-making practices requires responsibly situating them within individual, social, and historical contexts.

On the surface, literacy and orality are often taken as opposites: incommensurable ways of knowing, creating, or communicating. Even within the field of dance, partnerships and interplay between multimodality (orality) and notational/alphabetic modes (literacy) go unrecognized. Consider the tension between participants in the Dance Literacy Symposium regarding whether “dance literacy” should or even could encompass only one or the other of multimodality or notational/alphabetic modes. On the one hand, some participants argued that dance literacy can only exist through the use of notation systems (literacy), but at the same time claimed that embodied knowledge (orality) was crucial to dance literacy. On the other hand, some participants wanted to graft literacy onto multimodal dance meaning-making practices (orality) in order to benefit from literacy as a status symbol, without acknowledging uses of notational/alphabetic modes (literacy), while at the same time upholding the importance of dance criticism and written dance scholarship (literacy). Embodied dance practices are indeed rich with multimodality, but notational and alphabetic textual modes appeared for every artist in this study. These modes were not unilaterally applied, but represented individually contextualized uses for each artist’s practices.

We, as dancers, should embrace the breadth of intersections between dance and literacy, while simultaneously acknowledging and honoring our embodied knowledge as well as recognizing the importance of residual texts. Several Literacy Studies scholars challenge the assumption that that literacy replaces orality (or even that electronic/digital
replaces manual/analog), maintaining that in reality they exist side-by-side (Clanchy; Graff *Literacy Myth*; Heath *Ways with Words*). Describing modern relationships between literate and oral (multimodal) communication, Ruth Finnegan writes, “In practice people switch from oral to written to electronic communication and back and from personally generated to mass-media forms, without any sense that there is some radical change involved” (*Literacy and Orality* 143). The same can be said of the interactions between dance and literacy in this dissertation. Dancers frequently switched between verbal, visual, kinesthetic, and notational forms of communication without outwardly expressing surprise that they did so. In many instances, the very interaction of multiple modalities (gestural and verbal for example) was crucial to communicating dance-specific knowledge.

Claiming literacy for dance meaning-making practices requires us to avoid universalized definitions of dance literacy that blindly graft specific reading and writing practices — whether multimodal or notational — onto practices within diverse contexts. Instead, claiming literacy for dance meaning-making practices challenges us to critically examine social, cultural, and historical contexts for our reading and writing practices within an ecosystem of dance style/genre, training/educational methodologies, institutions, political and power dynamics, and/or partnerships between multimodality and notational/alphabetic modes.

A critical appropriation of literacy to dance would broaden and benefit Dance Studies and Literacy Studies alike. Through further study of meaning-making dance processes partnered with Literacy Studies frameworks, we may gain new understanding about what dancers do in the studio and how. How do dancers produce dance-based
knowledge through their reading and writing practices, both multimodal and notational? Conceptualizing dance meaning-making processes as literacy practices will have implications for the teaching and learning of varied curricular areas such as dance technique, movement analysis, and composition. Including dance literacy alongside the ways traditionally conceptualized literacy interacts with dance could broaden Literacy Studies to new horizons with performing arts and elucidate new instances of multiliteracies. Considering the ways dancers create and use residual and multimodal movement texts, in addition to their combined reading-writing practices, could provide fresh perspectives about reading and writing relationships. Finally, the critical study of dance literacy in context reveals important partnerships between multimodal and notational/alphabetic meaning-making practices, further blurring the boundaries between the literacy/orality divide and narrowing the literacy/bodily movement divide.
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Appendix A: Glossary

*Arabesque:* A classical ballet position in which the leg is extended behind the body. The arms may take one of several positions.

*Barre* and *Centre:* From ballet, the two sections of a ballet technique class. Students first complete exercises next to a ballet *barre* before dancing more complex movement and exercises in the *centre* of the studio.

*Bartenieff Fundamentals:* A set of correctives developed by Irmgard Bartenieff, a student of Laban. The Fundamentals create movement sequences based on Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) frameworks to develop efficiency and increase mobility.

*Choreology*/*Choreologist:* Choreology is also a term for analysis and study of movement and choreography made popular more generally in the United Kingdom by LABAN Centre dance scholar Valerie Preston-Dunlop. Choreologist is the term given to notators and stagers within the Benesh Movement Notation tradition.

*Cou-de-pied:* From ballet, meaning “neck of the foot.” A position in which the foot of the gesturing leg is at the ankle of the standing leg.

*Danse d’école:* From ballet, literally “dance school.” *Danse d’école* refers to the formal, academic dance technique of classical ballet.

*Dégagé:* From ballet, meaning “disengage,” shortened from *battement dégagé.* This action is similar to *tendu,* but once the leg is fully stretched the foot lifts off (disengages) the floor before returning to a closed position.

*En croix:* From ballet, meaning in a “cross shape.” A pattern of repeating actions such as *tendu* to the front, side, and back, of the body, and often repeating again to the side.

*En pointe, Demi-pointe, Talon:* From ballet, the parts of the feet supporting the weight of the body. *En pointe* refers to standing on the tips of the toes, typically when wearing *pointe* shoes. *Demi-pointe,* also called half-toe, refers to standing on the balls of the feet. Finally, in *talon,* the dancer stands with the whole foot flat on the floor.
Épaulement: From ballet, meaning “shouldering.” Refers to the slight rotation of the shoulders and placement of the head relative to the pelvis in classical ballet positions.

Étude: An étude is a short artistic work in music or dance to be performed by students typically focusing on a particular technical aspect that students are currently developing. An étude version of classical repertory would be a shorter and/or simplified version of a well-known dance or piece of music.

Fondu: From ballet, abbreviated from battement fondu, meaning “melt.” Standing on a single leg and bending it, i.e. a plié on one leg. See also, Plié/Plier.

Fouetté: From ballet, meaning, “whip.” Most often executed as a series of continuous pirouette turns, demonstrating a dancer’s virtuosity.

Grand allegro: From ballet, meaning large jumps. Grand allegro is the final collection of exercises in a ballet class, including large jumps and leaps.

Grand battement: From ballet, meaning, “large beat.” This is a high kicking action with a straight leg, either to the front, side, or back of the body.

Improvisation Scores: Written or verbally constructed sets of rules, tasks, or means of interacting with other dancers and one’s environment.

Inversion: From contemporary dance technique, similar to handstands. The body inverts to be supported by the hands while upside-down, but the focus is on using momentum to suspend the weight into and out of the upside-down moment.

Kinesphere: The space around the body in which a person can move without taking a step or traveling.

Kyphosis: From kinesiology. Curving of the thoracic spine (upper back), also known as “dowager’s hump” when highly pronounced.

Lordosis: From kinesiology. The inward curving of the lumbar spine (lower back), also known as “swayback” when highly pronounced.

Marking: A dance term for practicing movement without doing it fully. It is similar to singing sotto voce. Energy or dynamics, and/or space and extension may be decreased. Turns or jumps may be eliminated or noted with an alternate gesture, for example. Marking takes on many forms depending on the context.

Pirouette: From ballet, meaning whirl. A turning action, typically with the gesturing leg in the retiré position.

Planes of Movement: In many movement analysis systems such as kinesiology and Laban Movement Analysis, the body moves in three major planes. The sagittal or wheel
plane describes the front-back and vertical plane of space around the body: imagine a person inside a hamster wheel. The coronal or door plane describes the side-side and vertical plane of space around the body: imagine a person spreading his/her limbs into a doorway. The horizontal or table plane describes the side-side and front-back plane of space around the body: imagine a flat table.

**Plié/Plier**: From ballet, meaning, “to bend.” One of the seven movements of ballet, a preparatory and finishing action in which the legs bend.

**Port de bras**: From ballet, meaning, “carriage of the arms,” referring gestures and positions of the arms.

**Racourci**: From ballet, abbreviated from battement racourci, meaning “shortened.” A dance step in which the dancer begins in demi-pointe with her gesturing leg to the side, followed by a sharp and quick bending of the gesturing leg into the retiré position and the standing leg executes plié. See also Retiré and Plié/Plier.

**Relevé/Relever**: From ballet, deriving from relever, to raise. The action of rising onto the balls of the feet or in pointe shoes onto the tips of the toes. See also Seven Movements of Dance

Release Technique: An umbrella term for several styles of contemporary dance movement emerging from the 1960s to the present that take free, efficient use of the body and weight, as well as a sense of lightness and anatomical function as guiding principles. In these styles, “release” refers to a release of excess and inhibiting muscular tension and of releasing weight.

**Retiré**: From ballet, meaning “withdrawn.” It is the action of drawing one leg upward by bending the hip and the knee joints until the toes contact the knee of the opposite leg.

Seven Movements of Dance: Ballet pedagogue Enrico Cecchetti developed the seven movements of dance, which form the components of all classical ballet steps. They are: plier (to bend), entendre (to stretch), relever (to rise), glisser (to glide), sauter (to jump), élançer (to dart), tourner (to turn).

**Sissonne**: From ballet, named after the creator of the dance step. One of the five categories of jumping/aerial actions, taking off of two feet and landing on one foot.

Tabata: A high-intensity interval training method. Workouts are short and intense with typical exertion and recovery ratios of 2:1 repeated through several sets. For example, one may sprint for thirty seconds then walk for fifteen, completing eight sets of the sprint-walk pattern.
Tarsals, Metatarsals, Phalanges: Anatomical terminology for the parts of the foot. Tarsals refer to the bones closest to the ankle, and metatarsals are the long bones that run the length of the foot. Phalanges are the bones of the toes.

*Temps de cuisse:* From ballet, referring to the thigh (*cuisse*) as the initiator of the dance step. The dancer places one foot in front of the other, then jumps from both legs onto one leg.

*Tendu/Étendre:* From ballet, meaning “stretch.” The action of brushing the gesturing or working leg outward until the leg is fully stretched and the foot and ankle pointed. This action begins many ballet steps.

Turnout and Parallel Leg Rotation: Turnout refers to outward rotation in the legs, so that the feet point outward to the sides of the body and is an important aspect of ballet technique. In contrast, modern dance uses parallel leg rotation, in which the feet point forward.
Appendix B: Primary Dance Artist Consent Form

Title of Project: *Dance Literacies in the Studio*

Principal Investigator:
Dr. M. Candace Feck
Professor of Dance

Co-investigator:
Rachael Riggs Leyva, Doctoral Student in Dance

Dear Dance Artist,

I am a graduate student at The Ohio State University in the Department of Dance, and I am conducting dissertation research related to how dancers are multi-modally literate (for example, visually, kinesthetically, and symbolically) and how dance literacies contribute to creating dance-specific knowledge. This research will also investigate how dancers use other literacies, such as using alphabetic or other written texts, in their dance practices.

I would like to talk with you about how you teach dance, choreograph, perform dances, notate dances, or work with dance scores. I would also like to observe your dance classes or rehearsals.

This is a research study and your participation is voluntary. If you agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. You are being asked to participate in this study because of your expertise as a dance artist.

If you are willing to participate in this study, I would like to interview you up to five times to learn about different aspects of your dance teaching, choreographing, performing, or notating, including your background in dance, and specific strategies you use to communicate and understand movement in the studio. Each of these interviews will take 45 minutes to one hour, depending on how much you would like to say on each topic. I will audio or video record these interviews. I will also ask you to share copies of any written documents or audio/visual materials that you use such as lesson plans, rehearsal documentation, choreography notes, or published print materials that you use in relation to your work.

Additionally, I would like to observe your class or rehearsal at least five, but no more than twenty, times over the course of the Spring and Summer of 2012. During these
sessions I will be taking notes about how you and your dancers communicate about the movements you are doing, and how you make visual, verbal, kinesthetic, or symbolic meaning during your dance practices. I will also make notes about the dance movements you and they perform. I will videotape some of these class sessions so that I may analyze them in more detail later, looking closely at how visual, kinesthetic, aural, symbolic, or verbal elements relate to movements being done.

Your words, descriptions of your actions, and dance literacy practices will be included in the final published document resulting in this study. However, recordings of your image and voice will not be published or included in presentations.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may choose whether you want to be named in the final, published document. You may wish to have your name included so that your professional accomplishments and contributions to the research can be acknowledged. However, you may wish for privacy reasons to have your name and identifying information kept confidential and not appear in the published document. If you choose to have your name and identifying information removed, your participation in this study will remain confidential. However, due to the small number of dance artists in Ohio and Labanotators nationally, it is possible that readers familiar with the field will be able to guess your identity.

My professor and I will be the only people with access to the data collected in this study, including audio and video recordings, written transcripts, and notes. Hard copies will be stored in a locked file cabinet and electronic copies will be stored digitally on a password-protected computer for three years following the end of this study and then destroyed.

I am unable to offer you money or other compensation for your participation in this study. This research may not benefit you personally. I hope that your participation may benefit dance artists in the future as we learn more about dance literacy and how it contributes to dance-specific knowledge.

If you have questions about this study or your participation in it, you may speak with me in person or contact me at the phone and email address below:
  Rachael Riggs Leyva
  Riggs-Leyva.1@osu.edu
  319-430-8609

You may also contact Dr. Candace Feck, who is the principal investigator for this project, with any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study.

  Dr. Candace Feck
  Feck.1@osu.edu
  614-247-6070
For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

Once you have read this form and had any questions answered, if you are willing to participate in this study, please indicate your preference, then sign and date this form below:

_____ (Initial) I consent to have my interviews **video** recorded

_____ (Initial) I consent to have my interviews **audio** recorded

_____ (Initial) I consent to have **my name and personally identifiable information included** in published documents resulting from my participation in this study.

___________________________________________________
Signature                      Date

___________________________________________________
Print name

_____ (Initial) I consent to participate in this study, but request that **my name and personally identifiable information be kept confidential and omitted** from published documents resulting from this study.

___________________________________________________
Signature                      Date

___________________________________________________
Print name

A copy of this form will be provided for you, so that you have a record of contact information.
Appendix C: Secondary Dance Artist Consent Form

Title of Project: *Dance Literacies in the Studio*

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Candace Feck
Professor of Dance

Co-investigator:
Rachael Riggs Leyva, Doctoral Student in Dance

Dear Dancer,

I am a graduate student at The Ohio State University in the Department of Dance, and I am doing a research project about dance literacy. I am studying the ways that dancers are multi-modally literate (for example, visually, kinesthetically, and symbolically) and how dance literacies contribute to creating dance-specific knowledge. This research will also investigate how dancers use other literacies, such as using alphabetic or other written texts, in their dance practices.

Your dance teacher/choreographer/notator has agreed to participate in my research. As part of his or her participation, I will be observing your dance class/rehearsals and taking notes. I will observe your class at least five, but not more than twenty, times during spring and summer of 2012. The primary focus of my research is your dance teacher/choreographer/notator and the dance literacies he or she uses in the studio. However, because interacting with dancers, asking and answering questions, and dancing together are all part of working in the studio, I will sometimes pay attention to what you say or do as well.

You will not be personally identified in the notes I record about what I observe in the class. If I make a note about something you say or do, I will use a pseudonym (pretend name), not your real name. Only my advisor and I will have access to my notes. This means that your teacher/choreographer/notator will not see what I write when observing your class/rehearsal.

With your and your fellow dancers’ permission, I will video record class sessions/rehearsals as well. The video will help me in my research so that I can go back and look closely at movement information was communicated relates to the dance movements you
were learning and performing at the time. So much happens in a dance class that it is
difficult to write down everything, so the video recording helps me to make sure that I
don’t miss something important.

My video will be separate from any recordings taken by your teacher/choreographer/
notator for documenting class/rehearsal. No one but me and my advisor will be able to
watch the video, and it will be digitally stored on a password protected computer hard
drive for three years following the end of this study and then destroyed. At no time will
the video be used for public display, and no images taken from the video will be
published.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any
time. There are no negative consequences to you if you decide not to participate or to end
your participation. If you do not give permission for you to be videotaped, videotapes
taken during class sessions when you are present where your image or voice are captured
will be deleted immediately and not used for the research.

I am unable to offer you money or other compensation for your participation in this
study. This research may not benefit you personally. I hope that your participation may
benefit dance artists in the future as we learn more about dance literacy and how it
contributes to dance-specific knowledge.

If you have questions about this study or your participation in it, you may speak with me
in person or contact me at the phone and email address below:

    Rachael Riggs Leyva
    Riggs-Leyva.1@osu.edu
    319-430-8609

You may also contact Dr. Candace Feck, who is the principal investigator for this project,
with any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study.

    Dr. Candace Feck
    Feck1 @osu.edu
    614-247-6070

*For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-
related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you
may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-
800-678-6251.*

Once you have read this form and had any questions answered, if you are willing to
participate in this study, please sign and date this form below.
DANCER:
(Initial) I consent to participate in this study and be video recorded in dance class/rehearsal for research purposes.

Dancer Signature ___________________________ Date __________________

_________________________________________________________________
Dancer - Print name

A copy of this form will be provided for you, so that you have a record of contact information.
Appendix D: Dance Student Assent and Parent Consent Form

Title of Project: Dance Literacies in the Studio

Principal Investigator:
Dr. Candace Feck
Professor of Dance

Co-investigator:
Rachael Riggs Leyva, Doctoral Student in Dance

Dear Dancer,

I am a graduate student at The Ohio State University in the Department of Dance, and I am doing a research project about dance literacy. I am studying the ways that dancers are multi-modally literate (for example, visually, kinesthetically, and symbolically) and how dance literacies contribute to creating dance-specific knowledge. This research will also investigate how dancers use other literacies, such as using alphabetic or other written texts, in their dance practices.

Your dance teacher/choreographer/notator has agreed to participate in my research. As part of his or her participation, I will be observing your dance class/rehearsals and taking notes. I will observe your class at least five, but not more than twenty, times during spring and summer of 2012. The primary focus of my research is your dance teacher/choreographer/notator and the dance literacies he or she uses in the studio. However, because interacting with dancers, asking and answering questions, and dancing together are all part of working in the studio, I will sometimes pay attention to what you say or do as well.

You will not be personally identified in the notes I record about what I observe in the class. If I make a note about something you say or do, I will use a pseudonym (pretend name), not your real name. Only my advisor and I will have access to my notes. This means that your teacher/choreographer/notator will not see what I write when observing your class/rehearsal.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. There are no negative consequences to you if you decide not to participate or to end your participation.
I am unable to offer you money or other compensation for your participation in this study. This research may not benefit you personally. I hope that your participation may benefit dance artists in the future as we learn more about dance literacy and how it contributes to dance-specific knowledge.

If you have questions about this study or your participation in it, you may speak with me in person or contact me at the phone and email address below:

Rachael Riggs Leyva  
Riggs-Leyva.1@osu.edu  
319-430-8609

You may also contact Dr. Candace Feck, who is the principal investigator for this project, with any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study.

Dr. Candace Feck  
Feck1 @osu.edu  
614-247-6070

*For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.*

Once you have read this form and had any questions answered, if you are willing to participate in this study, please sign and date this form below. Both you and your parent or guardian must sign this form in order to grant permission.

DANCER:  
____ (Initial) I consent to participate in this study in dance class/rehearsal for research purposes.

________________________________________________________________________________________

Dancer Signature                                      Date

________________________________________________________________________________________

Dancer - Print name
PARENT/GUARDIAN:
____ (Initial) I consent to allow my child to participate in this study in dance class/rehearsal for research purposes.

___________________________________________________
Parent Signature Date

________________
Parent - Print name

A copy of this form will be provided for you, so that you have a record of contact information.
Appendix E: IRB Approval Letter

Office of Research
Office of Responsible Research Practices

Protocol Title: DANCE LITERACIES IN THE STUDIO
Protocol Number: 2012E0152
Principal Investigator: M. Candace Feck
Date of Determination: 03/06/2012
Qualifying Category: 01, 02
Attachments: None

Dear Investigators,

The Office of Responsible Research Practices has determined the above referenced project **exempt from IRB review**.

Please note the following:

- Retain a copy of this correspondence for your records.
- Only the OSU staff and students named on the application are approved as OSU investigators and/or key personnel for this study.
- No changes may be made to exempt research (e.g., personnel, recruitment procedures, advertisements, instruments, etc.). If changes are need, a new application for exemption must be submitted for review and approval prior to implementing the changes.
- Per university requirements, all research-related records (e.g., application materials, letters of support, signed consent forms, etc.) must be retained and available for audit for a period of at least three years after the research has ended.
- It is the responsibility of the investigators to promptly report events that may represent unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This determination is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website: [www.orrp.osu.edu](http://www.orrp.osu.edu).

Please feel free to contact the Office of Responsible Research Practices with any questions or concerns.

Thanks,
Cheri

**Cheri Pettey**  
Sr. Protocol Analyst | Office of Responsible Research Practices | The Ohio State University  
**T:** 614.688.0389  **F:** 614.688.0366  **E:** pettey.6@osu.edu  **W:** [www.orrp.osu.edu](http://www.orrp.osu.edu)