



A Holistic Perspective: Reflecting on teaching dance movement with technology

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Abstract

In this manuscript, I offer reflections of my early as well as recent experiences as both learner and instructor in the disciplines of dance education, dance therapy and workplace staff development and training. I explain the foundations of my teaching philosophy, rooted in my passion for dance, dance therapy and the creative arts, that include the essential current-day use of technology as a successful teaching and learning strategy.

My in-depth appreciation of learning and teaching with technology began in the 1980s and has developed exponentially since the start of my tenure at FIT in 2001 when I began participating in training opportunities available to faculty at FIT through its many programs including the Center for Excellence in Teaching, the Center for Continuing and Professional Studies, and the Office of Online Learning and the Faculty Research Space.

Reflecting on my recent teaching experiences in both face to face and online formats, I describe successful lessons incorporating multiple “teaching with technology” strategies that include:

- ⇒ Flipped instructional approaches
- ⇒ Use of the newly developed online FIT Library Research Guide in dance
- ⇒ Use of Blackboard features to assess student progress
- ⇒ Understanding students’ use of technological tools
- ⇒ Teaching dance and movement with technology in blended and fully online formats
- ⇒ SUNY certification programs; conferences and institutes in “teaching with technology”

The many benefits of expanding the use of technology in both teaching and learning are discussed and the impacts of new technologies on teachers and students are highlighted.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic spurred teachers and students to rely exclusively on technology to successfully complete the school year, affording them opportunities to identify challenges specific to a fully online course design. Some of the unique visual and spatial challenges of teaching dance and movement fully online are discussed. In light of technological teaching tools advancing so rapidly, recommendations to address those unique challenges are offered.

A holistic perspective of teaching dance and movement with technology raises questions and concerns on the efficacy of capturing the five dimensions of the dance/movement learning experience exclusively online; for example, how to enable movers in an exclusive online format

to fully engage in mind, body, emotions, spirit and soul individually and through simultaneous movement interaction with each other in the entire group?

Finally, I propose a full “reboot” to refresh and continue learning new technological teaching tools such as social media, VoiceThread and web design, adding them to my teaching with technology “toolbox.” My immediate plan to develop fully online course designs in dance and movement will require a 360 degree feedback in the course evaluation process. And the need for interdisciplinary collaboration in the development, delivery and evaluation of a new online course design is highly recommended.

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My teaching philosophy

The earliest beginnings of my teaching philosophy are traced to my elementary school years when I began discovering, on my own, what really goes into learning and teaching. I absolutely enjoyed being a learner as I found ways to make learning comfortable, fun and creative. The core of my teaching philosophy was conceived when I was about 10 years old when I found self-directed play, creative dance and expressive movement. Decades later, my teaching philosophy metamorphosed as my roles and responsibilities changed in high school and later in college, from: learner to teacher; to teacher and learner at the same time; to trainee then staff development trainer; to college intern then supervisor of interns; to client or patient then counselor/dance therapist; and more recently, to professor alias life-long learner.

The core of my teaching philosophy champions student-centeredness. This core perspective views teaching as a process, described as: effectively communicating with students, understanding their learning needs and preferred learning styles; and focusing on their means of expression in words and movement behavior. My perspective of “teacher” is the responsible person who guides rather than pontificates; inspires instead of merely relaying information; encourages rather than holds back; elicits rather than imposes; questions and probes rather than interrogates; challenges rather than appeases, with the overall arching intention to foster innovative and critical thinking and a sense of responsibility to do good for oneself and others.

My philosophy is based on the premise that students learn best when they are given opportunities to think critically, to formulate meaningful ideas; and to apply those ideas by doing or moving, creating and collaborating. Critical thinking is the key to learning throughout each learning activity, integrating multisensory mind/body processing to evaluate and re-evaluate outcomes.

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to have had many opportunities to teach generations of socially responsible and globally relevant students and professionals the values of creativity and innovation through collaborative and experimental dance/movement. It is for this reason why in 2001, I was drawn to teach at FIT, the “place of path” in my professional journey. FIT where “Creativity gets down to business” has been the leading impetus that continues to nourish my personal passion for the arts, my commitment to teaching and to my continued professional growth.

a. Embodying teacher/learner roles

When teachers embrace the role of teacher and learner at the same time, achieving excellence in teaching is within reach. However, to work in these roles simultaneously, teachers must dedicate extra time and energy to adopt new technological tools that help students meet their learning objectives.

b. Effective teaching fosters self-directed and group learning activities that can be done in face-to-face, blended and in fully online learning formats.

In recent decades, teaching technologies and online resources have been fast developing and increasingly utilized as viable and effective options for both students and teachers alike. However, the Covid-19 pandemic quickly changed all that. Teaching with technology (TWT) is now the only way in which we are able to continue serving our students, our community and our global society. The “social distancing” and “shelter at home” mandates have left us no other choice but to teach *and* learn with technology. This points to the one of the essential characteristics of a teacher, and that is flexibility in adapting to changing learning

environments, regardless of what may be happening on micro or macro levels. Teachers are obliged to continue to develop their craft by adjusting their theoretical frameworks and teaching techniques our world continues to undergo change at lightning speed.

My teaching philosophy integrates developmental, humanitarian, neurophysiological; psychosocial/cultural, cognitive and naturalist theories, particularly the ones espoused by Piaget, Maslow, Rogers, Reich, Porges, Vygotsky, Bloom and Gardner, respectively. However, as our world becomes increasingly complex, it's best to review and refresh our perspectives and rationale for why we do what we do. The need to refresh is particularly relevant now as technology is changing faster than we can imagine. Technologies we thought, at one time would be light years away, are now here to stay. I'm thinking of artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and 3D printing! As I delve a bit further into the WWW, I'm discovering "Block Chain" and "Bitcoin" technologies that are expected to soon have greater revolutionary impact on our world than the Internet! Since these rapidly developing technologies are affecting our ability to build and manage knowledge they are simultaneously changing the ways in which we teach. Therefore, teaching with technology becomes obligatory rather than optional. As we rely on technology to connect with health care providers, shopping, friends, family and teachers, it behooves teachers to develop and strive for, at the very least, an intermediate level of knowledge and experience with learning technologies. When teachers achieve a higher level of technological expertise by learning to use "Teaching with Technology" (TWT) Tools from 50 to 100 percent of their time, they will have greater facility designing and delivering face-to-face, blended and fully online courses. And this is critical for us as teachers, since the majority of students seem to prefer "Learning with Technology" (LWT).

c. Teachers must do more than teach. They must be learners too.

It is paramount that teachers stay current with technological trends and best practices. Once teachers grow accustomed to continuous learning of technological tools available for free, they can technologize and refresh their lesson plans and easily modify course objectives and learning modules and include college syllabi requirements such as those related to accessibility and privacy. By attaining a particular level of competency in using online teaching tools and techniques, teachers will be surprised at how effective these tools are in promoting critical thinking as well as small group learning activities. While gaining confidence in the use of technology, teachers will be more likely to incorporate various TWT tools into their face-to-face as well as online courses. Technological tools enhance learning and are essential time savers for both students and teachers. Teachers may better understand student learning styles, level of engagement and grasp of subject matter as they adopt a variety of technological tools such as Blackboard discussion threads, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, grading features and more.

I emphasize this dual perspective of simultaneous teacher/learner in my reflective teaching philosophy because it offers students rich opportunities to emulate qualities of leadership, responsibility as well as flexibility and strength of character. Moreover, as teachers continue to learn, they have opportunities to step back and to humble themselves into a state of "not understanding," as students may feel at times. By embodying that feeling, teachers are more inclined to empathize with their students, especially those who are full-time juggling demands of school, work and family.

d. My teaching “CETs:” Caring, experience and trust

Essential to my teaching philosophy is the idea of caring for students as developing and aspiring professionals and socially responsible future leaders. I find students learn more effectively when they feel comfortable in the learning environment and when they trust the teacher, first as a knowledgeable person in their field but also as a sensitive and caring person who has vested interest to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning journey. As Maslow, Porges and other theorists have emphasized, students grow and actualize their potential through an interactive process that is grounded in feeling safe, secure and comfortable. Students gain a sense of trust and safety through their interpersonal communications with teachers and fellow students. This happens through verbal and non-verbal/movement interactions ideally in face-to-face situations, but it also happens through online video exchanges via Blackboard Collaborate, Face Time, Zoom, Meet Up, etc.. The underlying tone of “caring” in communications is perceived through non-verbal channels, such as quality of voice; pacing of verbal utterances; facial expressions and body movement. Students easily detect the teacher’s level of enthusiasm, passion and empathy through these “right brain” communication channels. Empathic relationship building in the learning environment promotes student engagement in mind and body and provides opportunities for students to fully embrace their area of study engaging multiple intelligences, cognitively, and emotionally. Fortunately, I discovered this holistic approach to learning early in my life when I started “playing school” and unknowingly developed a trust and a level of confidence in myself that later empowered me to succeed in my education journey as well as in various social situations.

e. Teach to learn or Learn to teach?

This notion of teaching and learning, either sequentially or at the same time strongly resonates for me personally, as I further explain the origins of my teaching philosophy.

I discovered the inseparable notion of teacher/learner during my elementary school years. I was a hyperactive child but managed to find constructive ways to channel my energy. I earned the nicknames “Trixie” and “Nora” because I was constantly at play, exploring how I could do things differently. At home, when no one was around, I intuitively found a way to channel my hyperactivity by “playing school.” I enjoyed doing my arithmetic homework by verbally presenting and solving arithmetic problems to my imaginary students. My “teaching” started with a ritual, creating a “classroom” space in my basement with neat rows of student desks and chairs and “the teacher’s” chalkboard in front of the room. Creative play and active imagination allowed me to move through that space as “teacher” standing and speaking with confidence in front of my “students,” a behavior that was almost impossible for me to do in real life. My hyperactivity was my way of coping with being such an introvert. When teachers called on me in class to recite or just answer a question out loud, I often quivered, blushed and held my breath. But in creative play, I could stand and move in front of the “classroom” face my “students” with open gesture and speak to them confidently, with a full and relaxed breath. I discovered play as a powerful means to manage both the practical and theoretical. In play, I took control of what I had to do, that is... my homework, while experiencing a different way of being in the world that gave me intrinsic reward and self-satisfaction, and it was fun! I believe the actual movement of my body performed with intention in creative play was personally very significant. Speaking the arithmetic problems out loud to “my students” gave me a chance to embody concepts of logic at my own pace. I evaluated my own answers to problems of addition, subtraction and division with no anticipation of being judged. I helped “my students” by interacting with them, talking to them, reviewing their work books and giving them suggestions. Little did I know how much I was helping myself psychologically, socially

and educationally. I loved arithmetic and eventually pursued a math major in college but later discovered my true calling was to study psychology and dance movement, so I changed my college major from math to psychology with a minor in sociology and continued to pursue advanced degrees in dance movement analysis and therapy while still performing professionally in modern dance.

My desire to play didn't stop at "playing school." In that very same comfortable space of the basement (the interior of which, was well designed and constructed by my father), I turned the classroom into a stage and became the lead dance performer in musical productions like *My Fair Lady* and *South Pacific*. I became a GoGo Dancer in a Disco Club dancing to the Rolling Stones. And I improvised in dance to a wonderful diversity of artists including: James Brown, King of Soul, Aretha Franklin, Queen of Soul, the Beatles, the Monkeys, the Rascals, Chubby Checker, Simon and Garfunkel, Frank Sinatra, and many more. In dance/like music meditations, I learned and related to multicultural themes and expressions such as: *My Way*; *Dancing in the Streets*; *Since You've Been Gone*; *I'm Going to Change the World*; *For Your Love*; *Put Yourself in My Place*; *High Heel Sneakers*; and *Hang on Sloopy*.



I had lots of fun dressing up, turning old bed sheets and curtains into long flowing skirts, fixing my hair with pins and big hats, and wearing Mom's high heel shoes. I had my pick of dance partners of "different sized brooms!" Creativity should have been my middle name. And again, little did I know...this was my way of learning how to move and how to dance while having fun at the same time. These early self-initiated fun experiences were great kick-starters to an eventual educational path in the professions of dance, as a performing artist, as a dance educator and as a dance/movement psychotherapist. These early experiences taught me that play and improvisation are essential to learning and personal growth, whether it was learning how to dance, learning arithmetic or just learning to have fun. These experiences laid the foundation for my career development and my later formulation of a "teaching philosophy."

f. Having fun

My teaching style emphasizes active experiential learning that offers a safe and comfortable environment where students may feel free to allow their unique interests and inclinations to emerge; where they might design their own personal space for learning; where they can experiment in thought and action, by trial and error, individually and with each other, while having fun; where no judgement is made; and where they may feel free to fully embody their own style of communicating in movement. As I reflect on my developing teaching style, I have realized the tremendous value of “fun and play” has been for me throughout my career as I transitioned into various roles of learner, educator, trainer, counselor and psychotherapist. Fun and play motivate me to continue discovering new ways in which I can be more effective as a teacher and learner.

g. The “dance movement therapy” in my teaching

While there are key distinctions between teaching dance and working with clients in dance/movement therapy (DMT), there is also overlap in the ways in which I approach both students and clients, primarily where movement behavior is concerned. A basic premise of DMT is psychological meaning that we associate to body movements as either movers or observers, and whether those associations are either conscious or subconscious. One’s personality is manifested in movement behavior and words. DMT training requires development of movement observational skills that enable DMT’s to assess and analyze clients’ body movement expressions while they support clients’ unique expressions of “self” in one-on-one and in group situations. Another premise of DMT addresses guided “movement interaction” as the primary means through which clients adopt new ways of thinking, moving and expressing.

As DMT and dance educator, I utilize highly trained observational and interpersonal communication skills in my teaching. I’m able to gauge students’ levels of interest and , approaches to learning. For example, in dance and related movement-based courses such as yoga, stress management and fitness training, I adjust my individual and group movement instructions according to my observations of students’ movement qualities, for example their level of expression, body energy, flexibility, focus, use of space, body resiliency, etc. Using Socratic questioning, I ask students to express ideas both verbally and in movement. I am guided by their verbal and movement responses and then employ the best teaching strategies aimed at enhancing the learning experience.

When I give students opportunities to observe, assess and evaluate their own physical movements as well as their peers’, their learning experiences are enriched. When I relate to students empathically in both word and movement, they are more responsive to me and to the learning process. These experiences confirm the findings of evidenced-based research in non-verbal communication that highlight physical movement as having significantly greater impact than words in interpersonal communications. I am grateful to my dance movement therapy professors who taught me the value of facilitating empathic dance/movement communications as building blocks of trust and rapport.

II. Reflecting on my experience in a Master Class

As a college student at Hofstra University, I had the great pleasure of participating in a master class led by Charles Weidman (1901 to 1975), widely known for his contributions in American dance as early pioneer of a new emerging art form, Modern Dance. Among his contemporaries were legendary modern dance choreographers including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn. Weidman was especially popular at colleges and universities throughout the United States where he taught many master classes and repertory workshops. Weidman influenced a great many dancers; some of the best-known artists and directors who studied with him are: Alvin Ailey, Jack Cole, Bob Fosse, Gene Kelly, Alvin Ailey (Director of the Lester Horton Technique), Jack Cole, Bob Fosse Gene Kelly, Eleanor King, Jose Limon and Sybil Shearer.



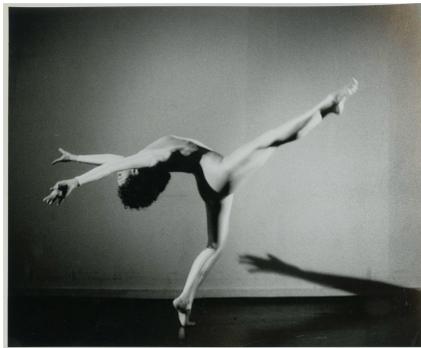
Carl Morris, my former dance professor, is credited for having given me the opportunity to participate in Mr. Weidman's master class and witness his exquisite teaching style. Carl had performed in Charles Weidman's dance and was one of my dance teachers at Hofstra University where I earned my bachelor's degree in psychology.

Weidman was known for his expressive and emotional choreography. His work was highly innovative and had a great draw from the general public because it was so different from anything anyone had ever seen. His movements were dramatic and included elements of comedy and mime. He was fascinated with people's characteristic movements and often incorporated fine details of his family members' physical behaviors into his choreography.

Though more than 40 years have passed since participating in Mr. Weidman's class, I still remember the experience as being comfortable and inspiring. Both Carl Morris and Charles Weidman were adept at creating safe and comfortable spaces for movement. Mr. Weidman's communication style in speaking and dancing was expressive and full of humor. He spent a short time speaking and introducing his dance movement style and then demonstrated his technique that accentuated gravity, suspension, fall and recovery. He gave us time and safe space to experience these movement elements physically, kinesthetically, cognitively and emotionally. I remember he gave us time at the end of the class to reflect and verbally process the experience with each other. Overall, his communication style was warm and empathic. His presentation was so inspiring; it moved me to take another master class with him months later. I was so fortunate to meet and hear him speak again in New York City. In that master class, he led a panel discussion with other notable choreographers. Panelists discussed the "Big Four" 20th Century Modern Dance Choreography (1926 to 1950) and addressed his dance movement theories and techniques as well as those of Martha Graham, Hanya Holm and Doris Humphrey.



Charles Weidman and Doris Humphrey

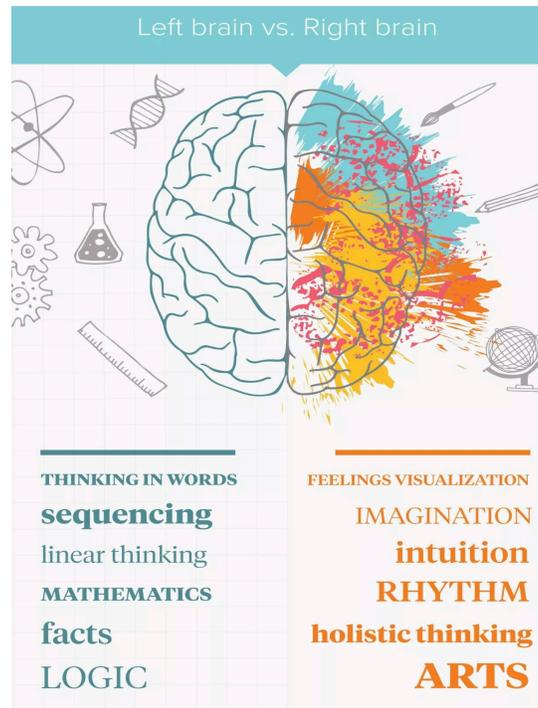


Professor Eleanor DiPalma
Teacher/Student of dance

III. Successful lessons: Right/left brain thinking

In my most successful dance and movement lessons, I utilize a holistic teaching method that addresses each student as a “whole person.” Students are challenged to learn more than the physical dance and/or movement technique. Rather I strive to engage students in five human dimensions of mind, body, emotions, soul and spirit. Learning activities are structured to give students the latitude to stretch their bodies and minds, discuss, move, dance, write, compose, create and collaborate.

Right and left-brain thinking are encouraged throughout a series of learning activities in which students develop an appreciation of dance by experiencing physical technique, individually and in relationship with me, with their peers and with the entire class. They have opportunities to integrate dance theories with practice while developing a mastery of dance movements; improvising; creating; costuming; and building team relationships.



a. Flipped instructional strategy using online tools

Successful student learning happens when I flip my teaching strategy from the traditional didactic to more effective student-centered experiential learning. By referring students to a variety of online resources such as websites, learning content and assignments on Blackboard, they can return to the studio or virtual meeting room and contribute knowledgeably to a discussion with their peers. Instead of the teacher feeding information to students in a long drawn out lecture, students gain knowledge of new material through their own efforts by studying in preparation for the interactive lesson. Their newfound knowledge is later transformed with guidance from teacher, to an even higher level as they exchange ideas and interact with their peers.

In one of my lessons, students research the biographies and dances of notable modern dance choreographers online. I suggest they find modern dances that particularly resonate with them and consider why those works are particularly meaningful. Students compare and contrast various dance movement styles within the modern dance genre and then later arrive at a definition of “modern dance” by exchanging comments with their peers, in the studio or in a Blackboard discussion thread. By familiarizing themselves with various online resources, students are able narrow their selection of dances distinguished as “Modern.” They share their “at home” research findings in class and can integrate their findings with practical experiences, observing each while performing dances that emphasize expressive “Modern” style, for example they may perform pedestrian-like dance movements with various and simultaneous elements of gestural and postural changes.

b. Using technology as a dance/movement research guide

Searching for specialized dance resources related to “Modern Dance” may be daunting for students because of the sheer abundance of online dance content and because accessing content may sometimes require a fee. So, I initiated the idea of developing a customized FIT

Library Dance Research Guide for students enrolled in FIT dance/movement and wellness courses as part of two Liberal Arts minors: The Dance Minor and The Integrative Wellness Minor. After a series of collaborative sessions with Carli Spina and Maria Rothenberg, FIT Library professors, we were able to launch FIT's initial version of the Liberal Arts Dance Research Guide <https://fitnyc.libguides.com/dance>.

Development of the dance library guide will be useful to students, especially since FIT has shifted exclusively to online teaching and learning. Expanding and updating the guide will be an ongoing collaborative effort among faculty, students and staff.

c. Using technology to assess progress and outcomes

To ensure the student learning outcomes will have lasting and integrative effects, I use a progressive instructional approach guiding students toward a cumulative dance group project where they choreograph and present a three-minute dance. Students are directed to use their mobile phones to video record several phases of their dance making: 1) beginning dance movement phrases; 2) longer dance phrases; 3) short compositions and 4) the final 3-minute dance. The immediate video-play technology gives them valuable feedback to reinforce their mind/body memory of the dance from week to week. One click reopens the video play and they can immediately evaluate, modify and finalize. Overall, their use of smart phone technology provides opportunities for them to appreciate the many elements that go into making a group dance.

d. Using technology students use

A successful lesson incorporates those technologies students are already familiar with and can't live without...their smart phones. I just wish we could come up with a different name for a mobile phone! The phone is not "smart." Rather, the person using the phone in a particular way is "smart." I'm still fascinated by the fact that students and teachers have unlimited access to sources that are an absolute must for learning dance. Music, video/audio recordings, text and other types of content searches are a few clicks away. The days of purchasing, maintaining and lugging audio-visual equipment around town are thankfully long gone. But more importantly, encouraging students' use of their own technology for immediate access into their personalized stored data, such as music/video recordings of themselves and/or with their peers, is an effective strategy that increases the number of teaching moments in a movement lesson.

Students quickly access their preferred music in "play lists" for either solo or group dance making. They video record each other's dance compositions throughout the course and exchange video/audio clips for review and feedback. Students learn how to describe their own and each other's dances by using the rubrics I post on Blackboard. I believe giving students multiple opportunities to apply the language of dance in both movement and words will enrich their learning. Years ago, video recording and instantly playing back dance footage as a teaching/learning strategy was inconceivable. But today's advanced personal devices and technological tools such as Blackboard, YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook has made teaching and learning more comfortable, more interesting and more personable. With these applications so readily accessible, students may capture, save and share images on their smart phones with peers and instructors.

e. Teaching modern mask-dancing...with technology

Responding to the recent “shelter in place” mandate and the resulting mid-semester shift from onsite to online instruction, I changed the final group dance assignment to a “Solo Mask Dance.” Since students already had onsite practicum experience in creating dances and exchanging their dance video clips online, I expected this final online assignment would be manageable.

I realized I needed to use a variety of TWT tools to make this teaching strategy work; they included:

- ⇒ Using the “Assignment” to set up assignment instructions and resources on Blackboard
- ⇒ Uploading a video clip of myself doing a mask dance, to YouTube
- ⇒ Using my FIT Gmail account to find a video link to share with students
- ⇒ Using my personal computer file system to find source materials for upload to Blackboard
- ⇒ Use of my mobile device or Blackboard Collaborate to speak with students during “Office Hours”

One of the key factors that helped me to make this strategy work was my use of Open SUNY Blackboard phone support. They were very patient in answering my questions regarding how to create “Assignments” on Blackboard; where to find students’ dance videos; where and how to grade students’ work; what exactly is in that Grade Book?

For the remaining weeks of the Spring semester, Modern Dance lessons were conducted for the first time in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra with great challenges. I describe them below and they include both technical and logistical challenges. Despite the challenges, however, I’m glad we had Collaborate weekly meetings because students had opportunities to at least hear each other’s voices, ask general questions and express concerns about using Blackboard to find or access information. Students, except for one or two, were able to easily submit the Mask Dance assignment. However, some students wanted to see more samples of mask dances before creating their own. Scheduling those weekly Blackboard Collaborate sessions gave me opportunities for “learning moments” to more fully assess student learning needs.

After reviewing students’ video clips submitted thus far, I selected Piggy Blake’s solo mask dance with her commentary to upload to Blackboard for students’ immediate access. However, I faced the challenge of figuring out how to make her video clip and comments accessible to others.

Open SUNY Blackboard phone support explained step-by-step how to insert a video clip into a “Discussion Thread” where students could view and offer a comment. It sounded like a great idea, but I soon discovered the file size was too large for upload. Determined to find a solution, I thought of uploading Piggy’s file to YouTube and “unlist” the content so only people who have the unique video link identifier created by YouTube, could view it. Before taking that next step, I called Piggy and congratulated her for doing excellent work. And you’ll understand why when you see her dance:



<https://youtu.be/vjbTC2ZkqYw>

Costume: Black (death) shadowing the white (life), and the mask which is full of color is meant to symbolize our hope and safety.

Dance Reflection by Piggy Blake: It was very therapeutic to perform because it speaks to how I've been feeling lately. Death is so taboo in our society, but I do feel like I have to be able to express the sadness in some way. The beginning of the dance is meant to portray the lightness and positivity that I have tried to maintain at the start of this pandemic. I was more expressive in my hands because I am limited on space and ability to record my legs. When the music becomes louder I come away from the planned choreography and the sporadic movements are addressing the anxiety I felt. I do draw some inspiration from African dancing during this part. After standing up from the floor, I go back to lighter movements, but they are not exactly like the original movements at the start. They are similar, but not truly the same to show how our new normal will be after this pandemic and that this event has changed me.

In this lesson, my understanding of twt generates possibilities for students to apply their knowledge of dance by creating, reviewing and reflecting on the process of dance making.

For students studying dance for the first time, these assignments may seem very challenging. However, my strategic instructional design encourages dancers who may have only or two of these qualities – mastery of movement technique, expression, creativity, soul and spirit – to join together collaboratively and learn from each other, building on their strengths for their individual benefit and for the entire class' benefit in meeting course objectives.

IV. Lessons learned

I observe some degree of success in every one of my lessons regardless of learning formats. Learning by doing is a process that requires continuous reflection on what was done successfully as well as what could have been done differently to make the lesson a success.

I do have an example of a recent Modern Dance “Blackboard Collaborate” lesson that I believe with practice and modification, can be improved. I'll explain what happened, how I addressed the challenge and my plan to further address that challenge.

After returning from Spring semester break when the Covid-19 pandemic was at its peak, I was motivated to prepare and lead our first online dance class utilizing Blackboard Collaborate. As a follow-up to Blackboard trainings I participated in, led by Jeffrey Riman, Antonia Blatchford and

Jose Diaz, I called SUNY phone support to become even more familiar with Blackboard Collaborate in particular. I decided to invite a few students in the class to join me in conducting a run through a few days before the live meeting. I surveyed the class for volunteers and two students responded. I explained we would try out some of Blackboard Collaborate features including audio, video, “sharing files” and “break out group.” These students seemed very willing to help; in fact, they were more responsive than I had expected. I got the sense they were eager to get back to the dance and have a shared dance experience with their peers as they had in the studio before Spring break.

The “pilot” session to try out Blackboard Collaborate went well as I practiced using audio and video controls and toggling between sharing files, sharing my screen and chatting. The students mentioned some of their other teachers were having challenges viewing more than two or three students at a time on Blackboard Collaborate and that sparked my curiosity. As the date/time of the actual online Collaborate session quickly approached, I felt a little more confident to begin working with Collaborate live and to try out as many features as I could while students were in the virtual “room.”

Reflecting on that class led me to believe, Blackboard Collaborate was probably designed for lecture and discussion with talking heads in mind, not with full view of bodies in mind from head to toe. Since I usually start a dance class with 5 to 10 minutes of talking, the technology worked well for the talking part. I got the feel for using “share file” and “share screen” features during the lecture /discussion. But I feel Collaborate might be further developed by computer engineers to better take into account some of the challenges I experienced while teaching dance.

V. The challenges

a. Total body view

My biggest concern is the limited ability of students participating in “Collaborate” to observe each other in full body view. One of the unique features of dance is to move in full body action. Despite my best efforts to ensure students had view of my entire body, I still wondered if they could see me in full view, from head to toe. Likewise, I’m wondered if students were also uncertain as to whether I could view them in full view.

b. Being seen on video

Using Blackboard Collaborate, I found technical issues emerging for both students and me, for example, sometimes students indicated in the “chat” section of Collaborate that they couldn’t hear me. This might have been due to unstable internet connections either on my end or theirs. Some students said they had limitations in their hardware that didn’t not allow them to “share video” and other students chose not to be seen on video for various reasons.

c. Space for dance/movement

Another concern is the amount of square footage available for dance versus the amount that can be video captured. I experimented with three different rooms in my home. And found the rooms with the greatest depth worked fine. It took some time to try out different rooms before realizing which one worked best.

d. Students prefer face-to-face

In the process of doing a lesson in an unfamiliar environment, Blackboard Collaborate, one student said adamantly, she did not like learning online. She mentioned that she has difficulty focusing in online lessons because of her attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and because of family members walking past her while she's participating in course online sessions.

VI. Addressing the challenges

a. Total body view

SUNY Blackboard tech support was very helpful. They suggested using Photobooth, a Mac tool to better manage the reciprocal teacher/student viewing issue. Later I discovered Photobooth was useful in that it enabled me to determine physical parameters of my space that would be visible to students online to give the best video full-body view of my movements. But this worked fine for only a minute or two at a time. I found myself interrupting the flow of my instruction to navigate in and between two applications, Blackboard and Photobooth, and to kick starting Photobooth every two minutes. Starting, stopping and restarting movement instructions was counterintuitive to my natural tendency in my dance teaching to demonstrate fluidity and grace.

Moreover, perceiving dance movement from a partial view of the body detracts from student understanding of human movement as a total-body expressive-art form. Hopefully, in the next release of Blackboard Collaborate, we'll see new technical solutions that will have resolved these issues. For example, the video feedback of myself in the "virtual meeting room" seems to be smaller and very different than the students' view. Another issue is that Blackboard displays only 3 students, who have their cameras on, at one time. A dance teacher demonstrating movements from at least 6 feet from the video camera, must interrupt instructional flow again to click on Blackboard to enable view of other students. Viewing all students who have "video share on" at the same time doesn't seem possible in Blackboard; maybe that's why some faculty prefer using Zoom. These limited views also diminish teachers' ability to gain a sense of the group movement dynamics occurring at any one moment, assuming that everyone has "video share" on.

Addressing these challenges requires further inquiry and collaboration with FIT and SUNY Blackboard Open Learning to explore existing and future possibilities aimed at working with existing technologies for best practices and at planning to develop a new version of Collaborate, fully customized for teaching/learning online movement-based courses.

b. Hardware/software protocols

To address online learning challenges related to hardware/software, I will include a “hardware/software” Check List in the course syllabus. One may already have been created; and if not, I will create one. Students and faculty would benefit from completing the Check List before the course begins to best prepare for the planned online learning formats and to reduce technological glitches. In cases where student and faculty equipment don’t meet or are not compatible with the required technical specifications, everyone would have ample time to make necessary adjustments. In a fully online dance or movement course, review of the Check List also would reinforce student expectations of the course technical learning formats such as cell phone video recording and online dance/music searches.

The unexpected shift from onsite learning to exclusive online learning that recently occurred due to Covid-19, presented a whole host of challenges to teachers and students; many related to continuing along their paths of teaching and learning. In the past two months, teachers and students, particularly those new to online learning, experienced steep learning curves to become confident in the use of many Blackboard features and the use of many associated online tools. In light of this unprecedented challenge, my teaching approach with students was lenient. I gave them time to adjust and allowed them time to adopt the required additional online tools in their courses. Meeting this unprecedented challenge was useful however because it gave me and the students opportunities to put the available tools to good use.

Including a Hardware/Software Check List in my curricula will be useful in my planning for next semester’s TWT, either for onsite courses and/or fully online.

c. Exploring visual/spatial challenges

Modifying dance lessons for the virtual “meetings” requires teachers to be flexible, motivated and persistent in technical creative-problem-solving. Dance/movement teachers may begin to address the many challenges of TWT by collaborating with allied teaching and learning professionals as well as with computer program developers to engineer specialized features specific to video capturing and sharing. Technical requirements for video sharing in a movement-based class are very different from the technical requirements of classes where only partial views of teachers and students are appropriate. Learning dance movement requires students to move in place, using small, medium and expansive movements that reach high and low, side to side and forward and back and movements that travel in small, medium and large spaces, both indoors and out. These spatial considerations call for creative solutions as we develop new releases of learning technologies. To better prepare for the future of TWT, we must consider how we might apply our creative talents to enhance TWT. By collaborating with a diverse team of faculty, staff, developers and administrators, we can imagine, explore possibilities and begin to design new and expanded strategies for online learning.

As someone who believes in the inseparable roles of teaching and learning, I have been participating in many online synchronous dance classes and have been taking notes on a number of issues. I’ve discovered the areas of space used by the dance instructor was limited and therefore the movements were limited to primarily “moving in place,” within an approximate

square foot range of 5 to 6 feet. When traveling movements were introduced, the movements traversed along the depth rather than width of that limited range. The audio input of teachers speaking as they demonstrated the movements was compromised for the most part because they demonstrated movements at a distance from the speaker. In some cases, when teachers used their cell phones for video/audio sharing, students were only able to view their video share on an angle, for example right side up. Furthermore, I couldn't help but notice the variability of settings in which dance teachers offered their online instruction. The settings ranged from dance movement studios, to outdoor settings (on the patio deck) and to small New York City apartments, some with living room furniture and ballet barre! From a student perspective, I found this to be interesting but at the same time distracting. I recommend these additional notes be considered as we continue conversations collaboratively and work together to develop and implement effective TWT strategies.

d. Students prefer face-to-face

Recently in a Blackboard Collaborate session, one of my students openly disclosed her opposition to learning online because of ADHD, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. I was concerned especially for her and the situation she described and immediately started planning to do things differently in my teaching to ensure she could take away something positive in the learning. I quickly thought of shortening my oral presentations of material on Bb Collaborate into more bite-sized portions and make it easier for her to maintain focus. I considered other ways of addressing this challenge: review my printed content for clarity and brevity; send additional Bb "Announcements" reminding students of "assignment due dates" and my virtual office hours as well as occasionally checking in with them by email, inviting them to ask questions or make a comment regarding the course. When students disclose that they have a disability, it is recommended that teachers inform them of the available school resources such as FITABLE and FIT Counseling. It is also recommended that teachers become familiar with other college resources available for teachers, for example the Web Content Coordinator who has responsibility of explaining how to make print and digital content and digital environments more accessible to students who have a disability.

VII. Expanding the use of technology

Expanding use of technology is essential to fostering and promoting a student-centered education. Using technology puts the students in the driver seat while teachers serve as guides in the learning journey, providing a structure for the learning experience through instructional design and delivery. Teaching with technology provides students opportunities to build on knowledge and connections they have already established in their lives, for example through daily use of social media and other online applications (apps). Teaching/Learning with technology (TWT & LWT) promotes digital literacy. As teachers and learners develop the skills required to navigate numerous apps and platforms, they can master those skills will increase self-confidence, online presence and digital citizenship. Achieving digital citizenship involves demonstrating online etiquette and being responsible and respectful of people, particularly with regard to their public and private information. The Internet allows us to teach and learn across

geographical boundaries. When teachers use technology to teach, they offer students endless possibilities for world-wide connections and collaborations and prepare them to serve as caring, responsible and global- ready professionals.

a. Steady practice

The advantages of teaching with technology far outweigh the disadvantages though some teachers may find that keeping pace to understand and use new technologies is too great a challenge to face. I'm too familiar with this perspective especially as the underlying daunting feeling in my body and dry eye symptoms emerge sporadically. Keeping pace with technology does require time, lots of self-directed trial and error and rests in between. It's highly unlikely that anyone will take a TWT course to learn a set of new technologies and gain mastery in the use of those tools immediately. Only through consistent and steady practice, will teachers understand the purpose of using each tool and how it is used to develop and deliver online instruction. Using technology to teach is an efficient and effective use of teachers' time and ultimately, with new and added improvements, it will continue to be appreciated as the way to serve the learning needs of students, particularly in today's technologically-based global society.

b. Analytics

In a recent online training with Jose Diaz, I learned how to create, copy and edit tests on Blackboard. I discovered this test generator feature produces "analytics" a powerful technological tool that will be incredibly useful to me in creating tests that effectively challenge students. Typically, it is very challenging to create tests that are neither too easy nor too difficult but rather present a learning challenge to many. Blackboard "test analytics" is an excellent tool to add to my toolbox. Teachers now can easily create their own tests or edit "off the shelf" tests available online. This analytics feature eliminates many hours of frustration that once was required to edit "off the shelf" test questions, grade and analyze student test scores!

c. Building a "body" of knowledge

Teaching with technology allows students to take full responsibility of their learning. When they engage in the learning process that takes place in their familiar digital world, they have the means and wherewithal to employ independent critical thinking and creative problem solving. By using technology, they can elevate the process of just managing knowledge to a transformative level because of the overabundance of online resources that can be accessed making critical analyses richer and more fruitful.

d. Customized Learning

Students tend to learn more effectively when they are given choices. Adopting online technological tools in teaching provide students the option to work asynchronously or synchronously with peers and with the instructor. Learning wherever and whenever one feels comfortable, at home or in a private studio, empowers students. They can learn according to their own pace of learning readiness within clearly defined and timed parameters, such as learning modules covered in two weeks rather than the traditional face to face learning module of typically one week. Another very important feature of expanding the use of technology is that students, particularly FIT students, seem to be naturally drawn to using online technology because of the endless array of content, such as displays of text, images, graphics, video, tv,

translated in numerous languages and customized for people's access who have diverse abilities.

VIII. Reflections: technology resources in the 1980s and 1990s

My teacher cohort of baby boomers experienced the advent of the World Wide Web (WWW) on the internet, a major revolution that brought online resources into the mainstream. Segments of the population notably people in academe, the military and computer science quickly began unlearning habits of navigating within a text-driven DOS environment to learn new and exciting ways of navigating "online" in a fast-paced, emerging world of graphics, color, images and text. This technological revolution paved the way for the highly advanced technologies of today such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), 3D printing and more. Soon after the advent of the WWW, the rest of the population caught on to an earthshattering era of personal computing that forever changed the way people learn, the way they communicate and the way they do business.

In the early 90s, while I taught cooperative education seminars and dance movement therapy courses at LaGuardia Community College of The City University of New York (CUNY), I was also serving as senior training consultant for the City of New York. I was very fortunate to mentor a New York University computer science intern as part of my work for New York City Human Resources. I vividly remember the great moment we shared in the NYU computer lab when he showed me the groundbreaking Microsoft Windows with GUIs (graphical user interfaces) on the WWW just before it was introduced into mainstream. I was awestruck! The revolutionary look and feel of Microsoft Windows and these GUIs inspired me to learn the application so I could design a training curriculum for City agency employees on how to navigate the World Wide Web! Ironically, I collected and read hard-copy books on the World Wide Web, available at that time, to better understand it.

My process of unlearning the old to bring in the "new" technologies is analogous to my early formulation of a teaching/learning philosophy, when I embraced the "doing" with much trial and error to acquire new skills. I recall having to unlearn my skilled movement pattern of "typing on a typewriter without looking at the typewriter keys to "typing on a computer keyboard" where I had to begin looking at the keys all over again. The new term "peripheral" used to refer to a keyboard and the new term "central" used to describe the Central Processing Unit or CPU are still very interesting to me because I immediately associate these terms to human movement. For example, dance movements of arms and legs are described as "peripheral" and the movements of the torso are described as "central."

Unlearning the old to bring in new technologies was something I got comfortable doing. The process of continuous learning brought tremendous rewards such as witnessing the excitement and thrill of City employees as I guided them in the process of experimenting and navigating in the WWW. I knew the computer skills they were learning would serve them for years to come in so many ways, personally, socially, professionally and for very practical every day purposes related to safety, health, educational, finance, transportation and being wise global consumers.

IX. New technologies: Impacts on students and teachers

a. On students

When Social Media such as YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn are integrated with a learning management system such as Blackboard, students are easily engaged in learning since they already are using these tools outside of the classroom. So, teaching with technology, facilitates students' ability to transfer and apply their learning in contexts outside of the classroom.

Technology provides students direct access to relevant and interesting video content that illustrates the widely recognized cross-disciplinary nature of the fine and performing arts. As a faculty member in the School of Liberal Arts, I was invited to join the FIT Museum staff in the planning and delivery of a community project in connection with the very special exhibit, "Ballerina, Fashion's Modern Muse." The purpose of the project was to educate and engage elementary school children in the art of making costumes and dances. The project was part of the FIT Museum's exhibit on "Ballerina, Fashion's Modern Muse" curated by the talented Patricia Mears, deputy director of The Museum at FIT. Ms. Mears included her very own video in the exhibit to beautifully illustrate moving images of dance and its inextricable relationship to fashion design. Applying my new knowledge and experience with Blackboard, I was able to include a link to her video in a discussion thread which I created on Blackboard in my Modern Dance course this semester. Students loved this assignment! Their discussion threads were informative, stimulating and insightful and significantly added to their knowledge of modern dance as they discussed online, the distinguishing characteristics of modern dance with reference to ballet, ballet costuming and ballet movement.

I believe learning and incorporating online technology such as Blackboard and Social Media tools into fully online practicum-based courses such as dance, health and wellness including fitness and yoga will open up many more vital learning opportunities for students. As teachers and students continue to adopt and to modify technological tools for online movement-based courses we can get closer to optimal learning experiences in the virtual environment. The abrupt and mandated shift to teach exclusively has been a powerful learning experience for all of us. We have a better appreciation for TWT and perhaps are more motivated to incorporate technology in our teaching. With technology tools close within reach, we continue building a body of knowledge while connecting online to transform knowledge. The only missing link that diminishes the TWT process, is the lack of energy and motivation to "just do it." But it's entirely up to us to get moving and start "doing."

b. On teachers

When planning to incorporate technology tools into a lesson, teachers must first gain a basic level of understanding of how those tools are used and then be able to adopt those tools to achieve specific learning objectives in their course ahead of the lesson. The true test, however, will take place when students access information online, complete assignments and provide feedback related to their learning experiences. Teacher feedback regarding their use of TWT is also critical. As they learn and adopt new technologies it is important for them to debrief and share their experiences with peers and support staff. I found formal and informal networking

with my colleagues in various settings such as CET trainings, institutes, retreats as well as SUNY CIT conferences to be very helpful in my learning of TWT. Creating and cultivating various key partnerships becomes essential; partnerships that include: teacher/student; student/student; teacher/tech support; teacher/online learning manager; teacher/administrator.

By learning and exchanging information on how to more fully incorporate technology in teaching, I have found the following tools, particularly in Blackboard, to be very effective in promoting student learning successes and saving lots of time in the preparation and evaluation of student progress: Announcement, Collaborate Ultra, Discussion Threads, Qquickly Attendance, Grading, Journal, Calendar, Embedding Lynda.com and Library Research Guides and Designing a Course Landing Page.



Professor Eleanor DiPalma - Multi-dimensional/Holistic Modern Dance Photographer - Otto Berk

With help from SUNY Blackboard Support, I uploaded this photo of myself to PE111 301 Modern Dance Spring 2020's Landing Page in Blackboard as a way of introducing myself to students. I also wanted to give students a visual of what to expect in the course.

X. Learning/implementing new ideas

a. First decade of 21C - TWT trainings

On January 16, 2020, Elaine Maldonado, FIT Director of Faculty Development and Center for Excellence in Teaching and Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET), and Jeffrey Riman, Coordinator of CET and Instructional Designer presented an informative and inspiring program on Teaching with Technology that included key areas of learning and practice for faculty to further develop in their “teaching and learning” journey.

1. Accessibility in the Classroom
2. Creating, Managing and Sharing with Colleagues and Students
3. Library resources and Lib Guides
4. Using technology strategically in course development
5. Collaborative tools and techniques
6. Lynda.com and LinkedIn learning

Reflecting on this experience raised my awareness of how much more technology there is to learn and put into practice. The presentation was collaborative and included speakers from CET, Online Learning, the FIT Library and Communications (Web Coordinator) and corporate (Customer Service Lynda.com). At the same time, the program inspired collaboration among those present. The program gave us fun opportunities to work together and put those technological tools into good use such as VoiceThread and Padlet.

Reflecting on this learning experience and other “Teaching with Technology” (TWT) programs over the years, I realize that I have learned a lot and but that this process of learning and teaching with technology is becoming more of an all-consuming endeavor. COVID19 and “sheltering-in-place” come to mind.

It’s been more than five years since I began participating in TWT programs such as those hosted and presented by CET at FIT and by SUNY CIT (Conferences on Instruction and Technology.) Assuredly, I can say the amount of information that I’ve collected and saved on my computer is far greater than the number of TWT course modules I am currently using in my courses!

The CET programs, SUNY conferences and other workshops and forums are great opportunities and reminders for faculty to discover new and abundant teaching tools. They also serve as reminders and incentives to learn, in the service of teaching. These programs inspire us to “get moving,” clean the dust off the TWT toolbox and start using those tools with students.

Participating in the January 2020 CET program, inspired me to refresh my knowledge of TWT and reflect on my learning accomplishments and “refresh” my reference materials. Some of those accomplishments and materials include:



CET Adjunct Summer Institute - “Social Media - Safety and Privacy Tips for Social Media Networking” June 6, 2013

As a result of attending this CET Summer Institute, I adopted Web 2.0 teaching tools in my courses: surveys; professional networking; video editing and video and audio sharing. I gained a better understanding of the primary relevance social media has for students and the impacts that readily accessible and immediate communications have on their learning. Privacy issues were explained and my trepidations to use social media were allayed.

CET Seminar University of Georgia January 2014

The seminar “Classroom 2020: What is the Future You Want to Make?” emphasized that students can fully connect to the course subject matter only as they feel comfortable making connections to each other and to the teacher. As a result of completing a CET Seminar at the University of Georgia, I have incorporated teaching strategies that emphasize social interaction in my courses (PE111 Modern Dance; PE117 Choreography; PE143 Yoga; HE102 Stress Management; and PE141 Fitness Training).

CET Summer Institute

June 5, 2014

As a result of attended CET’s Summer Institute “Flipped, Reversed and Wired,” I adopted the “flipped classroom” technique in my Dance and Movement course designs and delivery.

Collaboration with FIT Instructional Services Staff to Develop FIT Library Online Dance Resources -

Sept 2014; March, Sept, and Oct 2015

I included Modern Dance PE111 and Choreography PE117 class visits to the FIT Library computer lab, where FIT Library staff and I guided students in online research to complete their research assignments

b. Reboot to implement new ideas

With lots of TWT training under my belt, the time has come to complete the online instructional designing which I've been planning and recently initiated with FIT CET and Online Learning Managers. I'm interested in first proposing an online Modern Dance course and eventually an online Dance Movement Therapy as well as an online Fitness course.

However, more work is needed to create customized learning resources and learning modules designed specifically for online instruction. I will continue to develop a facility in using technological tools, already in my toolbox, and incorporate those tools in my lessons. I'm eager to continue in the practice using new tools and adding them to the box. They include:

- VoiceThread
- Social Media including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn
- "Create, Copy and Edit Tests" feature in Blackboard
- Creating websites using for example WordPress
- Further design of Dance Research Library Guides and review of Lynda.com trainings to incorporated into my course shells

c. Adding to my TWT Toolbox

I'm interested in facilitating student-centered learning by incorporating more variety in my Teaching with Technology (TWT) toolbox particularly apps the students are most familiar with. They include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube and VoiceThread. In these virtual contexts, students are easily inspired to demonstrate evidence of their knowledge and to transform their ideas through a plethora of related apps that promote interactive and collaborative learning.

Since social media is the primary means by which students communicate online, I plan to first adopt social media and later, other online tools to expand my student reach.

d. Evaluating success

Assessing and evaluating program success is a multifaceted endeavor that requires input from a variety of sources including those who have technical (online learning technology) and those who have subject matter experience (dance/movement). Eliciting input from various sources may seem to be logistical challenge but using online video conferencing will easily address that challenge.

I plan to begin the evaluation process of my online course proposal with a self-assessment and evaluation, followed by consultation with online instructional designers who will review my instructional design according to online teaching/learning standards. For example, they might see whether I include a balance of interactive activities interspersed throughout the online learning modules of the course.

The plan to evaluate includes eliciting from my peers who are familiar with my subject matter so they too may assess the clarity of content presented. They may consider the amount of material

in my instructional design to check for possible “cognitive overload.” They might also consider the level of social engagement in the practical interactive assignments embedded in the instructional design and evaluate the degree to which those assignments encourage and reinforce collaborative learning.

Conducting a pilot may provide the teacher as well as students, valuable information on course effectiveness. However, I defer to the online learning experts regarding the best approach. If a “pilot run” for students is not possible, I suppose other evaluative mechanisms are available to assist faculty in their first-time offerings of online programs. I think constant assessment and evaluation throughout a new fully online course is best.

Student feedback and final evaluations of the online course will be very helpful to both teacher and student. There are many aspects of the instructional design from the students’ perspectives that can only be identified as students actively participate in the course. There are advantages for students too when they evaluate the course as they engage critical-thinking skills and expressing thoughts and feelings with respect to their entire learning experience.

e. Critical issues/questions

Teacher assumptions regarding Teaching and Technology?
Are we teaching with technology or for technology?

Teachers and students are continuously challenged to keep pace with new and groundbreaking technologies. Though many of our students were probably first exposed to a computer from as early as just a few weeks old were, we should not assume all students are knowledgeable of technological tools. As I’ve been incorporating Blackboard features more and more into my teaching (Collaborate Ultra, Discussion Threads, Journals), I find that some students do need guidance in using these tools. Each computer, computer application, and learning management system is different requiring both students and teachers to experience a learning curve, however small. As teachers increase opportunities for students to use technological tools in blended and online learning, we can better assess their needs for guidance in all subject areas including the technical.

The all-encompassing role technology plays in our lives can be daunting and somewhat stress-producing. For decades, we increasingly have been relying on technology in every sphere of our lives but since Covid-19, we now depend on technology to function in every aspect of our lives... for our education, social and psychological needs; for our medical and financial needs; for our voter rights; and for all our business transactions and transportation needs, in all private and government entities. The world is witnessing a total dependency on technology.

The recent lock down, “shelter in place” and “social distancing” protocols enacted to reduce the spread of Covid-19 has forever changed our behaviors, our awareness of how we communicate and how we move in relation to each other, in all spheres of life. These circumstances have had a significant impact on our lives, particularly in education and health. The use of technology allows us to continue teaching and to maintain communications by working from home and this has given the world a fantastic means to survive and to cope with this horrific pandemic.

This widespread behavioral change also raises serious concerns. Our natural human tendencies in movement, particularly in child development and education, require face to face human interaction with no social distancing. Dance and movement are vital creative art forms in education, in performance and in therapy that satisfy our need to experiencing the full range of social relations in real physical space from making physical contact to creating small, medium and far distances between. Our survival depends on our ability to integrate all bodily senses for touch and movement in comfortable and healing spaces as we communicate and relate to one another. Multisensory awareness, physical contact, creativity and play are essential in this process. They are required throughout our early, middle and later years to develop and to maintain our physical and mental health.

Dance students around the world continue to learn dance movement, music and other art forms despite restrictions of time and space due to the pandemic. Artist volunteers teach online classes daily in music, dance and fitness offered privately, through universities and major dance companies, such as NYU, the Dance Theatre of Harlem, New York City Ballet, the New York Public Library and many other organizations, including the Institute of Dance Therapy of Australia. However, many teachers, therapists, and artistic directors of major dance companies have concerns regarding how we will continue to provide students rich opportunities to learn the essentials of dance and movement with technology.

To fully appreciate and experience dance and movement, the learning environment should allow movers to be fully engaged in mind, body, emotions, spirit and soul. This process of holistic and aesthetic engagement is best actualized when shared in synchrony with others; yet it can also be achieved while alone, asynchronously. In face-to-face onsite learning where teachers and students share a dynamic process involving three-dimensional physical bodies moving in real time and real space rather than virtual, we are totally free to dance. We can see, hear and feel each other breathe; see each other's sweat and even smell each other; we move to our synchronized heart beats and express spirit and soul. In contrast, since online learning of dance movement can provide only a partial capture of these dimensions, we are seriously challenged to improve this situation.

I propose dance and movement teaching professionals begin to address this issue collaboratively by identifying online learning factors that diminish the optimal dance movement experience. But this will happen only as dance and movement instructors continue to use available technologies steadily and practically with a "trial and error" approach. Dance movement and related creative and performing arts teachers may begin to take action by problem solving with computer application engineers to design specialized TWT tools.

Several critical questions are raised:

- ⇒ Are technological tools developing fast enough to accommodate students' optimal learning of dance and movement-based courses online?
- ⇒ Working collaboratively, how can we begin to resolve the technical limitations?
- ⇒ How can we provide optimal learning for students that capture the essence of the live shared experience in dance and movement through options that integrate online, blended and face-to-face formats?

⇒ Will fully online-learning of dance and movement in the “virtual” environment enable students to meet learning objectives designed to guide their understanding and appreciation of dance and movement disciplines; disciplines that can only be experienced multidimensionally through live and shared experiences in the “real” environment?

Active experiential learning of dance and movement is vital to our growth, our health and our education as both teachers and learners. Holistic learning experiences that are “moving,” are our lifeline. In our learning and teaching, these experiences empower us to transform knowledge and apply our creative movement intelligences. TWT in the dance and movement-based professions is vital to our educational institutions and our society, especially as we create new ways of staying safe and healthy and as we continue to thrive in a technological world that keeps turning in lightning speed.

Acknowledgements

The students

My great pleasure is to first acknowledge FIT students. They have been my source of light and promise, the reason and purpose for this formulation of a “Holistic Approach toward Teaching with Technology” Their success is my success. Their knowledge, personalities, diverse cultural perspectives, abilities, and skills have influenced my growth and development as teacher. From the beginning to end, we are in this together, continuously exploring, experimenting, building an ever expanding body of knowledge in a learning journey; a journey where at times we approach each other and move in place, and at other times we soar; moving toward higher heights, because we know we can make it, together.



Coco's "Wings"
FIT Modern Dance Student

FIT Administration and Leadership

Dr. Joyce F. Brown, president

Dr. Ronald A. Milon, chief diversity officer

Dr. Giacomo Oliva, vice president for Academic Affairs

Yasemin Jones, associate vice president for Academic Affairs

Dr. Patrick Knisley, dean, School of Liberal Arts

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Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET)

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Antonia Blatchford, coordinator, OL

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Faculty Research Space

James Pearce, emerging technologies manager

Open SUNY

Rob Piorkowski, assistant director, Online Learning

Open SUNY Helpdesk Team

Dance-as-art collaborators across divisions and schools, including fellow teachers, students, staff and administrators/leaders in the...

FIT Library

The Museum at FIT

FIT Information Technology

Communications and External Relations

School of Art and Design

Accessories Design

Fashion Design

Fine Arts

Photography

Interior Design

Toy Design

School of Liberal Arts

Film, Media and Performing Arts

English and Communication Studies

History of Art

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Jay and Patty Baker School of Business and Technology
Advertising and Marketing Communications
Fashion Business Management
International Trade and Marketing for the Fashion Industries

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Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing and Management
Fashion Design MFA
Illustration MFA

Center for Continuing and Professional Studies