From Here to Here: Teaching Interactions Between the Live and Virtual Self in Choreography

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This article focuses on teaching and learning about dance through the use of digital media. The overarching topic is the concept of self as situated in one’s cultural practices, and how this sense of self plays out in choreographic projects. The theoretical methodology that supports this work are two-fold and are illuminated in this paper: One, based on the Embodiment theory whereby the body is the generating center of experience that receives and sends information to and from the external world and is situated in culture. The second aspect is the choreographic practice with media creates an alternate live realm inclusive of the live and virtual body. All projects carry the concept of self which does not require an actual onscreen dancer, but rather a depiction of self. The primary directive is to integrate an image with live dance and that self carries significant conceptual weight which guides the process.

Figure 1. Bloom 2014, by Mondragon and Lopez, Photo Babcock
Dancers cautiously beaconing each other to carve a way onward. Suddenly they fling themselves into crystalline-shaped stillness. One, and then another peels out of each shape with such delicacy in their movement, it was like a whisper slipping out. Projected icons of change flow on varied surfaces as the dancers move in front of or behind them as if moving inside a secret. Together, the live body and the virtual images coalesce into creating a poetic otherness. Spiraling dancers and projected colors needing each other equally to exist, sometimes together, sometimes against each other, the two integrated to realize the choreographic intent of this dance entitled Bloom.¹

Integrating digital media with dance is as exciting as it is challenging. As a choreographer, I am interested in re-defining existence of the self through the use of digital media, and sharing that realization through performance. From the educational perspective observing student awe and excitement in learning how the study of self can be embodied physically, and elaborated on virtually provides many learning opportunities for sharing teaching experiences that might be meaningful to others.

This is a narrative inquiry on teaching and learning about the choreographic integration of self² with digital media, whereby the focus comes primarily from somatic practices and how this somatic knowing guides and is guided by live and virtual interactions. Clandinin and Connelly underscore that “educators are interested in learning and teaching and [in] how it takes place.” (1999, 2) They add that these narratives hold many valuable lessons to be shared, in which they refer to as narratives of educational experiences, and which are lived and told stories of practice. (2000, xxvi) Narrative inquiry, in this case, is an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experience over time, and takes account of the relationship between individual experience and cultural context where we can merge theoretical and practical meaning. (Connelly and Clandinin 2000)

Utilizing experiences as a choreographer who works with digital media, and a teacher of dance and technology, this chapter is a result of working from both fields and sharing some of those experiences. Questions driving this work include, how does digital media and choreography inform one another? How might the study of self be elaborated in this union, and in the process create a poetic otherness that couldn’t be possible without interaction?

The structure of the chapter contains two sections. The first section concerns defining the concept of self as situated in one’s cultural practices. Investigations on how this sense of self plays out in choreographic projects, and why this is important for integration with use of technology are discussed. Within this section I delineate an embodiment framework³ necessary for understanding the study of self.
The second section of this chapter emphasizes how digital technologies can be used in the classroom, in what Whatley & Varney (2009) describe, “as creatively enabling tools in the choreographic process. (53) While emphasis is always placed on the body first and foremost, digital technologies offer varied ways of exploring visual [and aural] representations of embodied experiences. Coupled with the physicality of dance, and the complexities of human communication, technology expands our perceptions of self, while deepening our understanding of the creative process. (2009, 53)) Also in this chapter, is a detailed discussion on the creative process using digital technologies. Within this section I share teaching strategies and examples of student works followed by demonstrations of how they integrate through classroom curriculum in a dance and technology course.

Responding to Clandinin’s quote, and my own teaching and professional experiences with dance and technology, I have collected data, stories, and experiences about the impact that working with digital media and choreography has had on how students expand their ideas and form knowledge about self and about dance. This inquiry covers seven years of working with my own intermedia dance company, Satellite-Dance, media collaborations with various artists in the field of dance, and undergraduate students in higher education, specifically in a course titled ‘Dance and Technology.’ This pedagogy weaves into practice, the theoretical framework of embodiment for understanding self, and the theories of 2-dimensional design elements used with digital media, more specifically in shooting and editing, into choreography.

Because this work is a blending of pedagogy and the creative process, both fields have varied ways of mapping understanding and processing. With the emphasis on ‘bodily experience’ as a way of knowing, combined with theoretical understanding, one finds validity in various ways, such as artistic, pedagogical, and in the method of study. This is a multi-focused approach to understanding and as Green (2014, 74) states: “allow for creativity, but goes beyond to allow the reader to enter the texts through a number of paths (as in rhizomatic validity).

Data has been collected from video-taping of student dance works, student interviews, self-assessments, and performances. In this chapter, I delineate concepts that focus on the following questions about integrating media with choreography: How can the study of self be translated into choreography and media? How does utilizing two dimensional design theory play a pivotal role in integrating choreography with digital media without canceling out each modality.

**Technology in undergraduate studies: What makes this work significant?**

There are several truths about technology. It is always changing and expanding ways to exchange ideas and transfer information. There is significance in learning
to use technology as a creative, expressive and communicative tool. Risner and Anderson emphasize,

‘It is crucially important that undergraduate dance students possess and maintain technological skills and advances currently utilized for producing and documenting creative and research endeavors. Moreover, pedagogical innovation that utilize computer mediated resources such as video editing, graphic design, and website development software not only advancing students’ career possibilities but spark student and faculty creativity for opportunities for collaboration with artists and scholars from other disciplines.” (Risner and Anderson 2008, 128)

As educators we observe that our students easily engage in new and interesting technologies many times faster than adults. Students’ ease with learning technology, motivates them to engage in dance, in choreography by expanding perspectives of self in relationship to what choreography is about. Butterworth and Wildschut state, “There is growing interest and importance in the discipline of choreography in relation to other disciplines. Sometimes the juxtaposition of dance with another discipline allows deeper understands to develop, or extends our knowledge of its boundaries.” (2009, 380-381)

An overarching truth about the use of dance with technology is the premise that teaching dance and technology is essential for expanding dance literacy through undergraduate curriculum, and it provides multidisciplinary skills essential in the 21st century. This chapter contributes to the small but growing body of work in the field of teaching and learning with digital media.

The blending of choreography, performance and integration of the media challenges the students on the idea of intermediality in their work. We can find that this works through answering these questions: How does this work impact student learning? Why is the work so effective? This work engages the students to find meaning in their notions of self within the media that also connects and integrates with their choreography. With the integration of media within the choreography and performance, learning occurs on a much deeper level than before, because students are actively engaging in their own learning and outcomes. They develop self-knowledge through their moving and through their programing.

Using technology with choreography extends dance literacy in multiple facets. Students learn to use the interplay between the choreographic process, 2 dimensional design theory and the language of software application as it relates to their dance-making.

And finally, dance and media practices that support the study of self, change students’ relationship with their tendency to “other” their bodies. These
practices include exploring intent through various activities that cultivate intuition, awareness of bodily emotion, kinesthetic awareness, and corporeal imagination, are all grounded in an embodiment framework in which bodies are agents in power relations. Empowering, empowered self is what is significant about this work.

Section I: The Study of Self

Figure 2. 2013 solo dancer; study of self

Figure 3. 2008 In the lab; in the studio

Our focus begins with the study of self. We begin by exploring aspects of self, inclusive of feelings, sensations, sight, thoughts-memories, smell, sounds, temperature, rhythm, muscular sensations, experiences, spatial referencing, and time. We heighten our sense of self by asking what is it I feel inside the movement? What am I sensing? What do I see? Who am I in this moment? Teaching about these modalities are part of what somatic education is about; bringing these modalities to hold the same value as the sense of sight, expands our sense of who we are as movers. Shapiro states, “it [somatic practice] teaches the art of listening to the self; voicing the unsaid; listening to others; staying alert to all the currents and undercurrents of life; and imagining what could or should be, in terms of self, other, or world.” (1998, 11) In Dragon’s (2014) description of somatic education, she describes somatic education as valuing “the creative process, subjective experience, and reflective practice. It supports individuals to pay attention to their internal sensations, to become sensorily self-aware and to use sensed information for the purposes of empowering themselves to make meaning and decisions and to take action in educational, therapeutic, and life situations. (30)

Within the study of self, we come understand how we move, how we respond to others moving and how we find meaning through moving. Through the experience of moving we heighten our sense of self through kinesthesia, emotion, and intuition. “In Doing Time: A discussion of interventionist and celebratory approaches to dance making for undergraduates,” Lomas (2009 204) states,
“Intuitive responses are used to create, and as we take part in or observe the process, we see the formulation of the creation. Participants are involved simultaneously in ‘intended performance’ managing and manipulating content and form, and in risk, uncertainty, trying and testing.” As students learn to listen, to attend, they become empowered to create their own voice through their unique movement choices. They understand abstracting an idea through movement, because they can claim its essence through their own moving. (Smith-Babcock 2002, 139). In dance we create our story, which is never void of our perceptions, our habits, our sense of who we are as movers. We are embodied.

We also recognize that we have varied relationships of self: self as performer, programmer, sister, brother, mother, father, aunt-uncle, cousin, teacher, student, wife, mate, or partner. Extensions of self might include ones that are happy, tortured, sad, determined, and more. Students have used metaphors of self as motivation for movement ideas, such as a warrior, mountaintop, geometric time traveler, tiger, sun, and river. Gibbs emphasizes that “metaphor is fundamental to human thought. It is nearly impossible for us to conceive of ourselves, others, the world we live in without embracing the power of metaphor. We use metaphor not only to express our thoughts linguistically, but to make sense of our own everyday experiences and to establish coherence out of an inchoate world.” (in Taken by Surprise 2003, 187) All of these images provide a connection to self; they provide an impetus to move, and a way to connect imagination to motion.

As the choreographic process begins, students are challenged to inquire into the questions that require self-reflection, physical explorations and mapping the process. Questions that frame the choreographic research become, how do I frame self within this project? Who am I in this dance? Why is that important with regards to the choreographic intent? What might the metaphor be? Connecting the metaphor to the intent aids the student in identifying the appropriate media to use. As self emerges in motion and in thought, the process begins to unfold as students explore the use of media that capture their real-time ideas into an expanded virtual reality.

While this paper shares some educational curriculum on learning about dance through the use of digital media, it’s more than that. Within the realms of virtual and live dancing, an interplay between the dancer’s interpretation of the image and the subsequent performance of self exists. This interplay is an external and internal negotiation, both of which are situated in the body of self and other, and both of which are constituted by culture. (Csordas, 1990) We find that self carries significant conceptual weight which guides the process. When we start, here, at this point we look at what self means so that we might understand how this knowing plays out within the choreographic process using digital media.
Theoretical Framework of Embodiment

My research in embodiment as a methodology in studying dance always informs my teaching and research. I look at what makes an experience live, present, and embodied. I find that it is the notion of presence-enlivenment as opposed to representation that becomes the primary focus. Expanding notions of dance to include the virtual image, I find a dialectic between live body and the image begins to blur and expand what the concept of ‘liveness’ entails. Within the notion of ‘liveness’ one expects to discuss the idea of present time, embodied living, or embodiment, which is best framed by the orientation of phenomena, which attempts to view experience as liveness, an at-one-ment, or presence in the moment by moment experience of performing.

Understanding of embodiment cannot be discussed without bringing up the theory of the Cartesian Dualism of the separation between mind and body. The newer realm of cyber-culture has re-configured the discussion around the polarities of the virtual body vs. the real, and virtual space vs. live space, to include an alternate space or “ambiguous zone” that can frame the fusion or blurring between the dancing body and image. Because the performance of the live has shifted attention to include the live-real time processing of media, an interesting intersection between the two can occur, whereby the live and virtual become players in space and in time, sometimes interdependent in their connections, or sometimes discordant, or perhaps completely void of each other. The embodied dynamic of self with, alongside, against, inside, outside of the media, coexist together within the complete context of the dance.

A Closer Look at the Embodiment Theory

Embodied experience places our attention in the present time where we simply are in the world. It places us at the existential moment of creating, of being in the lived experience of now. Babcock (2002) states, “Experience becomes the operative concept as it is the origin or foundation of knowledge that is immediate, bearing a sense of self that carries sensory presences and engagement.” (125) Lomas states, “To experience the dance kinetically as performer or visually as viewer we have to be present to feel it, to see it. Preoccupations with the technical and crafting concerns do not necessarily afford dance experiencing directly.” (2009, 198)

A phenomenological orientation is important in this work, because it attempts to view experience from the inside, (subjective viewpoint), rather than apart from the experience (objective viewpoint). While the subjective self and objective self assume a dialectic relationship, I emphasize the concept of presence and engagement because of the nature of creating, placing emphasis on the idea of engagement in the present moment-by-moment experience. Dance making is a
time when one is in-between known environments and experiences, and ways of behaving and forming new arenas of knowing, or in the shifting of self-identities in and through dance.

Grounded in an embodiment framework, which supports work of this nature, we find the conjoining theories of Pierre Bourdieu, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Thomas Csordas are integral in examining the concept of embodiment and supporting the descriptions of the process of creating, performing and studying. (Babcock 2002; Babcock & Overby 2015) These authors emphasize the body as the generating center of experience—a body that receives and sends information to and from the external world and is situated in culture. (Csordas 1990)

Following Bourdieu’s (1990) socially informed habitus, we can understand the modern dance body as a socially informed body with its own unique moving behaviors and habits that are driven by the environment in which that dancer is part. This performance of self affects the ways in which we interact with any given space. We therefore understand dance by experiencing the body moving in the space inclusive of our cultural habits learned in our dancing. Foster states, “We bring the habitus into being through our actions.” (2011, 168) Notions of body and space have always been dialectic because of the ongoing argument that the body is both subjective and objective and that space is not only contingent upon where the dance takes place but includes construction and negotiation in and through space by not only the dancers but also in audience experience. (Smith-Babcock, 2002) Maurice Merleau-Ponty (in Csordas, 1990) asserted that perception begins with the body, with its senses, before judgement or interpretation has taken place. He refers to this as the pre-objective, where another person is perceived as another “myself,” creating an intersubjectivity or co-presence. Thomas Csordas’s (1993) somatic modes of attention (Smith-Babcock 2002) bridge our practices with perception through the interactive process of the embodied experience which includes attention to and with one’s body, the self, as well as attention to and with the bodies of others through emotion, kinesthesia, intuition and more. In dance we are presented with many opportunities to go beyond our daily self-identity, to shift our ordinary perceptions into other ways of feeling, seeing, believing and moving. The study of self within this context allows students to become engaged movers where they are part of the dance, the choreography and the virtual worlds rather than objectifying their sense who they are in the dance. They become present. (Smith-Babcock 2002)

**Embodied Moving**

In speaking about “the body of dance,” Ann Cooper Albright states the dance, unlike other cultural productions, relies on the physical body to enact its own
representation. (Albright 1997, 3) In dance making and performing the dancing body is at once a representation of an idea, and it is also in process of forming. Albright describes this dual process as a “double moment of dancing in front of an audience is one in which the dancer negotiates between objectivity and subjectivity—between seeing and being seen, experiencing and being experienced, moving and being moved—thus creating an interesting shift of representational codes.” (Albright 1997, 3)

A similar dialectic occurs when choreographing a dance. Experiential in nature, there is traversing or shifting between one’s sense of self and the other, and the alterity of self-transforming into a new way of being—in the body, and in the space. This moment of alteration is the most dynamic aspect in a work of art and in the dancing body because out of this dialectic, new boundaries become known in the space of a newly formed dance. Media expands the spatial boundaries among the live and virtual body, many times blurring the edges of what is actually present into trajectories of where one might go in the space and time realm.

Section II: Teaching with Digital Technologies as a Tool for Creativity

The use of technology in dance broadens the playing field to include the virtual body as part of the cast. Virtual body, in this case, includes varied ways the media is utilized, this includes but is not limited to the virtual performer, landscape, lighting source, and more. Dixon states, “What fascinates digital artists is the ways in which their embodied existence is redefined in cyberspace...so they use digital technology to examine the interaction, between the physical and the virtual.” (Dixon 2007, 216) This makes it vital that technological tools be used to teach and create in dance.

‘Dance and Technology’ is an introductory survey course of digital media and 2 dimensional design theory designed for the basic use of multimedia as it relates to dance-making. The purpose of this course is to provide students with a foundation in the use of digital media and associated software applications that they can directly apply to the field of dance, and more specifically to dance-making. Based on the theories of design and composition in video shooting and editing (Levin, 2009), photography, sound editing, and choreography, students are able to do the following by the end of the semester:

- Work with digital media: cameras and video camcorders.
- Learn how to use software applications: Photoshop Elements, iMovie, Audacity Sound, Isadora to provide interactive control over digital media, and share work with the class.
• Use Keynote or iMovie as a platform for running digital media.
• Choreograph and perform short studies, and a multimedia informal showing that integrates the digital media covered during the semester.

Mapping the players involved

![Figure 4. Mapping](image)

In choreography one has to have a working understanding of the elements of dance-time, space, force, body-actions, form, and relationships. It is the same with 2 dimensional media. Immediately when combining dance with digital media we move into a shared vocabulary, which means we must study and explore both realms.

*Live body* is the dancer in real time enlivening the performing space within their embodiment of self through the moment by moment of present time.

In a sense, through technology the *virtual body* acts as an extension of the dancer in order to create meaningful interpretations through movement, melding performance with media.

*Digital media* in this case are the still cameras and camcorders, projectors, sound sources, and the software. For this paper, the software utilized is Photoshop, iMovie, Final Cut, Audacity Sound, and the interactive software called Isadora (Mark Coniglio-creator).
In mapping the process, one course project was assigned that framed ‘earth elements’ of air, wind, water, or wood. Choosing one element to explore movement possibilities, students created storyboards to organize ideas for a simple dance structure that captures the essence of that earth idea. After preparing for a photo shoot, we took simple digital stills and investigated the intent of the choreography juxtaposed with these questions: When is the live body seen? When is the image seen? When and how do the two intersect without canceling each other out? By answering these question in our dance making with media, we being to witness how digital media and choreography inform each other. Each student identified moving prompts to explore, and through improvisational scoring, changed and developed images so that they had a relationship of movement to image and image to movement interplay. Two dimensional design elements (Levin 2009) informed integrating the work, making it easier to navigate the dance-making terrain. We moved on to utilizing media in our study and explorations with video shooting and editing. Finally, we integrated our actions with our images using interactive media. Knowing and applying the two dimensional design elements is an essential part of the map.

2 Dimensional Design Elements
We find many parallels with dance and 2 Dimensional design elements. Although not a finite list, the following are some of the basic design elements:

![Figure 5. Life Guard 2006 photo by Babcock](image)

Form or solid shapes and lines and curves are the basic elements of space.
Texture gives depth and feel to the image. Color can be used in a variety of ways including saturated and unsaturated hues, and more or less contrast provide emotional context to the space.

Light affects the framing of the overall work. Negative and positive space illuminates the relationship between the shape and the space.
Rule of thirds is the graphic placement of imagery within the frame on the upper, lower, left, or right third line. Images that utilize this rule add pleasing tension, and are usually considered more aesthetically successful because of the contrast that is created in the image or dancer on stage.

Perspective includes varied camera perspectives, such as shooting above the subject, below, traveling with the camera while the dancer is still, the camera is still while the dancer moves, and/or both camera and dancer move.

**Issue of Liveness**

In reading the dance, mediations between the live and the virtual body/space occur. As we look to the live body and the virtual world created through the projected images we shift from one to the other as if in a conversation. Transitions merge into one playing field as our lens widens to perceive that a new place has been created. The body-in-dance gives rise to knowing who we are inside the movement. The body-in-space creates a place of expression and meaning. The mapping of dance uncovers the pivotal-most meaningful aspect of dance—that is in the shifting of identities within and through the performance of the space. Two dimensional design theory places the body in dance within a created space, making it significant in teaching because of it is multi-faceted in the following ways:

1. *The intersection of the live and virtual expands our thematic material by altering the space.*
2. *Knowing the design elements and principles is the beginning of creating a work of art, then developing the work with those design elements always in mind.*
3. *Learning how the design elements integrate into works of art can take the work into a much deeper level of artistic value.*
4. *The design elements support the choreographic intent.*

**Negotiations between Performance and Audience**

“The viewer completes the work of art.” Marcel Duchamp (Dixon 2007, 559)

Projected screen images expanded on the traditional theatre space by providing a “uniquely pliable and poetic space.” (Dixon 2007, 335) Dixon adds, this as the ability of quick shifting in perspective the media provides. Unlike the fixed point of view offered to the audience, screen media facilitates multiple perspectives and spatiality which can be transformed from a vast panorama to a huge close-up in
split second timing. Editing enables an instant visual and aural fragmentation of space and time. (2007, 335)

**The Process is Emergent**

Through movement explorations based on the earth element, we found what I refer to as movement prompts. Time spent improvisationally moving these prompts is time well spent as these explorations help students to identify choreographic intent. Once the intent is loosely identified, students explore the media and its functions that can support, expand, and/or frame that intent. All projects carry the concept of self, which does not require an actual onscreen dancer but rather a depiction of self. The primary directive is to integrate an image with the live dancer, and that dancing with your self carries significant conceptual weight which guides the process.

Earlier in this paper I asserted that dance and technology engages students to find meaning in their notions of self as the media and choreography merges. The following students works reflects these connections.

**Inquiry by Jake Bone**

The idea of an inquiry frames this work. The designer contrasted saturated color found in the virtual images with black and whites against the live dancer. He also juxtaposed subdued color with the extremely saturated imagery. He edited the framed film by using the ‘aged grain’ effect giving the look of an old/surreal dreamlike quality. ‘Aged grain’ effect gives the media scratches, jitters, and a sort of distorted otherness; the added actor standing as if purveying the shack, the live female dancer in black and white against the saturation of the surveyor gives the space a creepy feel. The camera moving while the subject is still, deepens the surveyor effect to be similar to those of a predator. The music illuminated the overall mood. In this project, the live dancer becomes the virtual purveyor, and
then the virtual dancer seemingly replaces the live dancer through the camera editing as well as the live and virtual dancers’ duet.

*Ascension by Monica Ho*

![Figures 12, 13, 14](image)

*Ascension* is about overcoming obstacles one step at a time. Her perspective framed many paths taken. The live feed created a space of her thoughts; ethereal, fleeting, and hard to grasp. She used the 2 dimensional design elements of line, color and repetition to support the concept of trying to overcome her sense of continuing alienation over and over and over again.

*Laid by the Heels by Jake Bone, Tyler Patterson and Amanda Will*

![Figures 15, 16, 17](image)

While these photos are from the projected image only, we can quickly see that this is a project on perspective, utilizing texture, and lighting to create a restricted feel, perhaps connecting to inner restraint. You can see the use of perspective because of the varied positioning of the camera lens. Dancers worked with spatial limitation and their response to it. These dancers described their overall choreographic inspiration of being confined as an interesting subject to
explore because there is always some limitation. These students found they could never get away from its limitations.

**Changed Perspectives**

The following statements are student responses on how they have deepened their understanding of dance through the use of technology. (Babcock, Student interviews 2009-2012)

- Technology can do things that aren’t possible to do with just the body.
- Making choices.
- Expands notions of what dance is and can be.
- Jobs and more scholarship ready.
- Learned about how light worked to ‘pop’ the live dancer out within the virtual background.
- Opened up the collaborative dialogue.
- Explored foreground/background relationships between the live and virtual. Finding out how to trim too much focus shifting from one to the other.
- Manipulating media was like manipulating dance elements for a more solid composition.
- Interacting with media self teaches how live and virtual realms become live through the interactive process.
- Elements of dance and design theory come together with the software application. Example: Sound and the use of color, or sound to text to gesture when using rule of thirds.
- Power in the use of text media as a partner.
- Meaning and non-meaning hold equal value.
- Learning the use of the software became part of the process, like players on a field.

In the process of expanding their notions of dance, colleagues commented that the students were looking at their work more objectively as more meaningful art works with less ego, or that the ego transcended into an idea. The students developed a less self-consciousness of what they were doing because they began looking at how to connect with the image or the ‘other,’ which interestingly is part of their own process. As seen in the previous student works, they began to find the power in choreographic intent and how media can support that in their work.
Conclusion

With regards to advancing the research in dance and technology in undergraduate studies, we give students the challenge to work with many opportunities for artistic practices and collaborations. This course work underscores the challenge of finding and applying mediation with live-virtual relationships. Birringer adds,

Intermediality and performance, the relations of live art and electronic mediation, the difference between stage and screen, the role of computer-assisted interactive design with cameras now used as motion tracking rather than recording devices—these are only a few of the challenges faced by the emerging generation of artists who draw inspiration from a diverse range of media practices. (2008, 10)

Students learn tools of mediation that begin with the understanding of the live body, the self. We started here: with the study of self by asking what do I see? What do I feel? What do I think? Who am I inside this movement experience. As we answered these questions through our moving experiences, we moved with the images that extend our 3 dimensional choreographic field. We found intersecting ties between the virtual and live embodied concepts of self. We found that the practices transform students’ relationship with their tendency to ‘other’ their bodies through exploring work that cultivates intuitive awareness of bodily emotion, kinesthetic awareness, and corporeal imagination—during which the weighted concept of self takes us into our self again as agents in power relations and not mere objects. No longer polarized, but engaged; part of—rather than a part from.

The importance of this work is not only to add to the current educational practices on dance and technology, but it includes an overview of what self means, and how this can play out in the live and virtual field of choreography. Equally important is the fact that students from diverse cultural backgrounds explore concepts of self, unfolding an interplay between intention and performance of self, an external and internal negotiation, both of which are situated in the body of self and the other, and both of which are constituted by culture. Practices in teaching and learning about dance through the integrated use of technology engages students in activities that allow them to find personal meaning in their lives and in dance. Through this work, students are also doing what Stinson (1991, 29) states “as necessary… they are acquiring knowledge and skills to truly have the freedom to create and to construct beyond the most superficial level.”
Notes

1 Bloom 2014, a choreographic work by students Mondragon and Lopez concerns 2 women foraging in the abyss of change. Pouring, swirling, fighting, lifting each other up as if they are dancing as one to find what an other side might bring.

2 When we speak of self, we must turn to bodily knowledge inclusive but not limited to emotion, intuition, kinesthesia, memory, imagination, and how these somatic aspects affect and are affected by movement.

3 The framework of embodiment situates the body as the central focus that include our habits, perceptions and somatic practices, all of which are constituted by one cultural influences. See Csordas, 1990, 1993 and Smith-Babcock 2002.

4 Just as dance elements provide foundational concepts and vocabulary that develop skills and understanding in dance as an artistic practice, two-dimensional design elements are essential components of an artwork. In order to understand and create a visually dynamic work, you will need tools for identifying, creating, and critiquing a work that include both an aesthetic and a technical framework. This knowledge is essential in the creation and presentation of your work as an artist, educator, or researcher. Levin, M. and Babcock, M.L. (2009)

5 Dance Literacy: An Embodied Phenomenon, Jones defines dance literacy as ‘conscious awareness of cognitive, aesthetic, and physical activity combined with skills to articulate it.” (2014, 110)

6 Intermediality denotes communication through several sensory modalities at once, for instance, music and moving images.

7 Embodiment informs how practices, perceptions and sensory engagement in emotion, intuition, kinesthesia and imagination frames understanding of who we are as movers, our sense of self and our sense of otherness.

References


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