

Visual Impairment-An Addendum

In Karen Bond's (2002a) article 'Love is Blind: Musings on Research as an Art-Science Duet' published in the last Quarterly, we regret that the chart of 'Right Dance' was missing. This chart should have represented Figure 3. The first two graphs in the article should have both been Figures 1a and 1b, not 1 and 2. The spiral, 'A Path to Aesthetic Community in Dance' is Figure 2, not 3. Our apologies to Karen for this error, but next to every negative lies a positive, and on this occasion it is the opportunity to not only print the chart, but to expand on 'Right Dance'.

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Right Dance

The following elaboration of 'Right Dance' is drawn from Karen's Ph.D. thesis *Dance for Children with Dual Sensory Impairments* (La Trobe University, 1991). This empirical study examined the influence of dance on six nonverbal children with vision and hearing impairments, aged from six to nine years, in a residential educational setting. The children, each partnered by an adult, were divided into two groups of six, to take part in a five-week (20 sessions) dance program and a second five-week play program. Karen and the children's head teacher conducted Dance and Play respectively, and partners rotated each session to encourage children's social flexibility. This in-depth study employed participant observation, systematic video recording, and interviews with school staff, together with statistical and qualitative analysis, to illuminate children's engagement in dance.

We know from the article in the last Quarterly that 'Right Dance' represents a synthesis of qualitative and quantitative findings, as well as literature consulted prior to and emerging from the ongoing study. From the essential chart, missed in the article and now illustrated below, we can see that 'Right Dance' is a developmental design of five parts, facilitated by a ritual process. Representative content is provided for each part, along with the elements of ritual process. The five parts include: a group circle greeting; a multi-sensory warm-up; moving the whole body in space; child leadership time; a weight theme; and a farewell group dance. As a holistic gestalt, 'Right Dance' encompasses the form, content and method that "*appear to be associated with engagement, self-transformation and aesthetic community*" for children with dual sensory impairments (Bond 1991, p. 359).

A key finding of the study is that the six children were able to engage with the dance that was offered as long as it was congruent with their own needs and desires, which appeared to be profoundly aesthetic in nature. Karen notes (2002b),

in the same way that many a dance enthusiast will put up with toe crunching by an inept partner in a social dance context, children's engagement did not seem to depend on a skilled or even empathic dance partner. Children appeared to find the 'right dance' intrinsically rewarding.

The social phenomenon of 'aesthetic community' evolved over time out of shared experiences. Overall, 'Right Dance' offered a "*a holistic experience which takes cognizance of human potential as mediated by biological endowment, aesthetic perception and dynamic and spatial*

possibilities". (1991, p. 361). This “*cumulative process of inquiry*” (p. 361) with young nonverbal children generated a person-centered, aesthetic theory of therapeutic group dance that Karen has continued to adapt to a range of settings and populations, including higher education.

Structure and Features of Right Dance: A Prototype of Person Centred Group Dance for Nonverbal Children with Dual Sensory Impairments

GREETING	entering special space rhythmic name chant gestures of contact a repeatable ritual	circle form passing of special object light sharing peer and group relationship
MULTI-SENSORY WARM – UP	circle form body awareness – parts, whole, interconnections rhythmic tactile stimulation breath awareness, phrasing emphasis on tension release range of flow experiences	sitting dances posture and head position hands and faces body percussion voice dyad relationship
WHOLE BODY IN SPACE	whole body in personal and shared space dimensions and planes locomotion, elevation	range in space – distance, direction, shape, pathway level, relationship range of dynamics – flow, weight, space, time
CHILD LEADERSHIP TIME	Duet form: adult reflection of child behaviour: - natural actions, motor style, voice, posture, gesture, dynamics, rhythmic patterns, spatial behaviour, personal mannerisms (including light oriented movement), affect (openness to resistance)	
WEIGHT THEME	weight – sensing, centering shifting, balances, swings, turns low level locomotion – rolling, crawling passive and active	speed changes - linear acceleration / deceleration relationship dances – support counter tension, push – pull peer and group relationship solos encouraged
FAREWELL	contact rhythmic stepping, bouncing improvised singing	group relationship circle celebration
RITUAL PROCESS	formal design special object(s) crucial time / created space; the circle social innovation - child leadership, adult liberation, outsider as facilitator repetition, contagion	multi – sensory, whole body rhythm and gesture voices special movements group style performance hard work affirmation, humour celebration

References:

Bond, K. (1991). *Dance for Children with Dual Sensory Impairments*. Thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. School of Education, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

Bond, K (2002). Love is Blind: Musings on Research as an Art-Science Duet. In, Moving On: Dance Therapy Association of Australia, Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 3. Melbourne: DTAA .

Bond, K. (2002b). Personal communication.

Ed. Note:

Thank you to Karen for allowing us to expand on 'Right Dance' with further input from your 'personal communications'.

Also, a reminder that the DTAA library has access to an Examiner's copy of 'Dance for Children with Dual Sensory Impairments'. Contact the DTAA librarian, Naomi Aitchison, refer to contact details. **JG**