

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa the Department of Education continues to seek solutions for the challenges it faces in trying to improve education for all. The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) attempted to do that (Department of Education, 2002) but Outcomes Based Education (OBE) (Schalock, 2001) has met with much opposition and the Department of Education is once more searching for alternatives as the curriculum continues to be revised.

Africa faces many challenges in education.

Against a backdrop of declining educational performance, at both the systemic level and that of learner performance, ... no one will deny that Africa faces many challenges ... the general picture of African educational systems is bleak ... schools are not functioning, children are not performing adequately and teachers appear to be failing. (Soudien, 2007, p. 7)

Soudien suggests that “for better or worse, Africa is deep inside the global system” (Soudien, 2007, p. 11) and is engaged in a two-way process of globalisation where “Africanization or indigenous knowledge systems are *already* engaged in articulation with the global world” (Soudien, 2007, p. 10). He suggests that those who endeavour to reform the educational curriculum, and those who seek to implement its ideals are often misaligned, “where the school is being held to standards that the system is not *geared* to achieving” (Soudien, 2007, p. 16).

When a curriculum attempts to embrace the diversity and complexities of a multicultural society, I believe challenges emerge. I use the term multicultural very broadly to include racial and gender diversity as well as diversity in belief systems and religion. In my experience the South African classroom is reflective of South African society, and attempts to devise an educational curriculum which satisfies its complexities and diversity may prove to be very challenging if not illusive. I would suggest that systemic and social issues have an enormous influence in the classroom and that ‘solutions’ may lie beyond the parameters of the curriculum. If a two-way engagement of Africa and the global community is already operational (Soudien, 2007), then this too, will surely influence classroom activity.

I am a flamenco dancer, teacher and international examiner. I began my dance studies with classical ballet, and have performed and taught dance for over thirty five years. I was introduced to flamenco (a style of music and dance which originated in southern

Spain) when I attended a professional performance of flamenco at the age of fourteen. I felt compelled to study flamenco. As a third generation, white, South African girl, of European descent, I gradually became aware of the fact that identity is complex and that my inherited culture did not fully resonate with my inner personal being. Sen's theory of what he calls "the illusion of a singular identity" (Sen, 2007, p. 8) highlights the importance of recognising the individual's ability to reason and choose aspects of their identity, as opposed to "unquestioning acceptance of received beliefs," (Sen, 2007, p. 9). I felt fortunate in that I 'stumbled' across flamenco which has allowed me to express myself in a way that transcended my inherited culture.

Sen suggests that individual identity has many aspects which should not be regarded as fixed but that one can and does choose much of our individual identity, including the order of priority that we give these identities. One person can be a South African citizen, of French origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a man, a dancer, a school teacher, a feminist, and a heterosexual, a supporter of gay rights, a tennis fan, a pianist, and an environmentalist (Sen, 2007). For Sen these affiliations may not all have equal priority for the individual, and in fact may change in order of priority in different circumstances. He suggests that while some aspects of identity may not be changed some affiliations are in fact a matter of choice. From my personal experience, I believe this to be so.

When I was introduced to flamenco it became the lens through which I viewed the world: an opportunity to experience life beyond the culture into which I was born. My exposure to flamenco has enriched my understanding of myself and others, and this has extended me beyond my given culture. Palmer suggests that we are

drawn to a body of knowledge because it sheds light on our identity as well as on the world ... we did not merely find a subject to teach - the subject also found us (Palmer, 1998, p. 25).

Palmer quotes Kaplan a French language teacher who questioned why people would want to adopt another culture. Kaplan then gives the following response, "Because there's something in their own which they don't like, that doesn't name them" (Palmer, 1998, p. 25).

I have studied flamenco for over thirty eight years and have come to understand it as a dance form of non-conformity. It emerged out of the struggle of the social 'outcast' to

resist hegemony: to resist 'boxing' (Leblon, 1995; T. Mitchell, 1994; Thiel-Cramer, 1990; Totton, 2003; Washabaugh, 1998; Webster, 2003). It was and, I believe, still is the dance of protest, with its roots in the expression of those who resisted conformity during the Spanish Inquisition. I believe it is a dance form which is grounded in the authentic expression of individual emotion which flourishes in a community of support. Flamenco resonated with my own personal struggles to resist conforming to my inherited beliefs and culture. It gave me a way of expressing my individual authenticity through movement and empowered and liberated my sense of self: it developed a powerful 'body language' evidencing my confidence in my own knowledge and identity.

South Africa has emerged out of a divided past where we were 'boxed' and labelled during apartheid and where thinking and culture was colonised by the colonisers leading to a "society in cultural disarray" (Maqoma, 2001, p. 75). Maqoma notes that "many South African dance forms were created to protest against the government of the day while vividly pronouncing integration in the form of cultural diversity" (Maqoma, 2001, p. 75). Dance was used to protest against segregation and became one of the ways in which cultural integration was sought. Artists like Maqoma soon realised that "South Africa has a diverse culture ... and we cannot afford to remain in our little squares; it just doesn't work. We are a world as we are ..." (Maqoma, 2001, p. 79).

As an artist I agree with this: we are indeed the 'world as we are', but I have observed how disrespect for diversity and other 'ways of being' still remains in many individuals and social formations in South African society. We cannot afford to remain 'in our little squares' but should look for ways to soften 'boundaries' in order to communicate. By this I do not imply that I believe in the 'colonising' of another's thinking in whatever form, but rather the embodied knowledge of the individual and their authenticity should be respected and individual creativity encouraged. As we in South Africa now seek a way forward in nation building, I would suggest that we examine closely and critically, what it is that we, in a multicultural society, do share, and how the boundaries between us can be respected but simultaneously remain permeable.

My own experience of the complexities of individual identity have led me to believe that all children can benefit from discovering what 'names' them (Palmer, 1998, p. 25). I have come to realise that this is perhaps one of the advantages of growing up in

diverse society where everyday interaction with other cultures, races or beliefs may provide such possibility. I feel privileged to have benefitted from a dance education, and have come to realise the educational and personal value of dance and flamenco. I was fortunate in that I had parents who could afford to pay for private dance tuition and therefore I was given the opportunity to explore more fully what 'named' me. I am saddened by the fact that this opportunity may not be available to all children.

In a new democracy like that of South Africa, nation building is regarded as vital to growth and prosperity. Soudien suggests that in addition to its educational challenges South Africa has the task of trying "to build the nation" (Soudien, 2007, p. 8). This leads me to question how this 'nation building' should occur.

I believe imposing or substituting one way of thinking with another is not the solution: this would be colonisation once more. Colonisation of another's thinking engages us in a vertical power struggle evaluating one way over another. I believe the answer resides not in an 'either-or', hierarchical approach but an 'inclusional' one (Rayner, 2004). In such an approach, respect for individual authenticity and self determination becomes the 'common border' between ways of thinking: across this boundary lies opportunity for individual and social transformation.

As a performer and dance educator, I have been invited to many schools over a number of years to give workshops and performances. In the schools that I visited I observed how classes have become a reflection of the diversity of South African society and opportunities for meaningful interchange between different cultures, races and belief systems were highly sought after. Although our classes are changing, I wonder whether our teachers are equally transforming to adjust their teaching to accommodate the complexities, possibilities and challenges of a multicultural class.

While giving my workshops, I became concerned with the way in which dance was being taught at the schools which I visited. Even though dance has been included in the education curriculum, I discovered that it was facing many challenges. I tried to imagine possible new ways of teaching flamenco that would address some of my concerns. Currently primary school learners have dance included in the Arts and Culture or 'life-skills' learning areas or as part of the Drama syllabus. Thereafter they have the option of choosing dance as an elective subject for grades 10-12. During my

research (2009-2010) the South African Department of Education began to engage in major revisions to the educational curriculum and I found myself positioned between curriculum 'boxes'. As the OBE Curriculum exits and the new curriculum (The Curriculum and Assessment Policy) is yet to make an entrance I am left wondering if dance will be even further marginalised as the new Creative Arts curriculum falls under the Life Skills learning area in the intermediate phase. With teachers under pressure to cover so many components and teach so many skills, there is every likelihood that dance may slip under the radar.

As my point of departure I decided to examine some of the current educational aims of the South African Education Department together with other government policy documents. I discovered that one of the operational principles of the Arts and Culture policy in education is that of "nation building" where "mutual respect and tolerance ... facilitate the emergence of a shared cultural identity constituted by diversity" (Department of Arts, 1996, p. 7). Education which redresses the "past cultural biases and stereotypes" (Department of Arts, 1996, p. 11) is one of the goals of education in South Africa. "Dynamic interaction" of cultures is seen as possibly leading to "subtle cross pollination of ideas, words, customs, and art-forms, culinary and religious practices"(Department of Arts, 1996, p. 5).

I began to wonder if flamenco dance could assist these endeavours in education.

Dance scholars van Papendorp and Friedman regard movement as "common to all people, heedless of language and cultural barriers"(van Papendorp & Friedman, 1997, p. 5), and therefore highly suited to social interaction and healing. I reasoned that if flamenco was to be used for such purposes, it would require 'new' perspectives of flamenco and dance education. I gradually became more convinced that dance specialists in conjunction with educationists, should endeavour to investigate new ways of teaching dance, if it was to make any meaningful contribution in education. This may prove to be more challenging than it appears. I decided to begin with myself.

In my teaching, I have observed how in dance (as well as sport) the body is intrinsic to this 'common ground' (van Papendorp & Friedman, 1997, p. 5). But dance moves one step further than sport and explores the 'common ground' of emotions as well. While the universality of emotions may be debated, dance offers wonderful opportunities to

explore the emotional worlds of different cultures or ways of being. During many years of teaching and performing, I have observed how the body is a powerful medium of expression and I believe that as human beings we share a common ability to respond to rhythm and express our emotions through the body. I believe dance provides wonderful opportunities for individuals to 'connect' at a fundamental level. In many ways this is also true of sport, but, unlike sport, which often encourages a spirit of competitiveness, I have realised that dance can penetrate to where the emotions provide opportunities for synergy.

All people dance: whether it is for celebration, recreation, tradition, or religion. From the moment we are able to stand on our two legs and 'bob' up and down, I have observed how many mothers or families encourage the child's innate ability to 'dance' by encouraging them to clap their hands as well. During many years of teaching, I have noticed that this innate capacity is not developed further in many children and by adulthood may completely disappear. Not only is this a personal capacity that is neglected and often lost, but I would suggest that it can also have social implications which extend beyond the individual. I believe that encouraging children to dance together, can lead to a shared joy which can form the foundation of mutual respect and tolerance by finding 'common ground' through shared experience. While sport is able to encourage the breaking down of barriers in similar ways, dance often penetrates to levels of identity and commonalities.

I began to envision teaching flamenco in a new way. Some may ask why flamenco in Africa? Why choose to dance in a way that is not related to one's inherited culture? Flamenco has encouraged me to embrace broader perspectives of other cultures which extend beyond my immediate one and to shape an identity and a 'voice' that I could not find from the culture into which I was born. Kaplan in Palmer reflects:

... speaking a foreign language ... is a chance for growth, for freedom, for liberation from the ugliness of our received ideas and mentalities (Palmer, 1998, p. 26).

I realise this may not be true for all, but it is for me and may be so for others. I reasoned that those who felt that their inherited culture did 'name' them may still perhaps benefit from becoming aware of how 'others' dance and another way of being. I reasoned further that if this was so, then flamenco in education may provide opportunities to explore identity in a way that helps to transcend cultural, racial and gender divisions.

My experience of flamenco with its multicultural origins, gender inclusivity, and physical accessibility all suggested to me the possibility of a unique opportunity to break down the barriers of 'boxes' of racial categorisation.

I believe flamenco is concerned essentially with individual emotional experience and that this individual experience is intrinsically linked to the social experience. It is significant that this is exactly what happened in the origins of flamenco where people came together from various cultural and religious backgrounds to dance and to share and support one another in their mutual suffering and search for emotional release. In its origins, flamenco developed out of a multicultural interchange (Edwards, 2000; Junta de Andalucía Tourism Trade and Sport Council, 2004; Leblon, 1995; T. Mitchell, 1994; Pohren, 1980; Schreiner, 1996; Thiel-Cramer, 1990; Totton, 2003; Washabaugh, 1998; Webster, 2003). The marginalised or excluded in Spanish society expressed their individual emotional pains and joys in a community of empathetic 'sharing' which evolved into an oral tradition of song and dance called flamenco. The multicultural origins of flamenco (Jewish, Islamic, Protestant, Gypsy, Catholic, Greek, Indian etc) suggested to me the possibility of shared experience amongst a diversity of individuals.

As I began to envision a possible new way forward for flamenco in mainstream education, I started to question whether perhaps the challenges facing dance in education were related to the educational curriculum, or the scholarship of teaching (Pan, 2009). By mainstream education I am referring to dance education as a compulsory learning area for all learners as set out in the GET phase for the Arts and Culture Learning Area. I began to reflect on my own teaching of flamenco and to examine it in light of the diversity I was encountering during my workshops at schools. I began to realise, that if I wished to embrace this diversity, that perhaps not only my teaching practice needed to transform, but also my pedagogical content. This transformation would require searching for new vantage points from which to examine 'what was', 'what is', and 'what could be'.

... I wish to emphasise how important it is, not merely to continue the acquisition of knowledge, but also to develop new view-points from which to envisage all our vast accumulated material of knowledge (Smuts, 1927, p. 6).

During my workshops at schools, I was led to enquire of the teachers that I spoke to how they were including dance into their classes. I discovered that for many of them

dance education was more often than not undervalued or misunderstood, and there was a general reluctance to include dance into their learning programmes. On further investigation I discovered that few of the schools that I visited are able to employ specialist dance teachers to assist them, and so many generalist school teachers found themselves trying to include basic dance movements into the school play or avoiding dance altogether. Some of the teachers that I interacted with were even asking learners to teach one another while others invited guest dance companies to perform or give a workshop.

While many of these activities are valuable, I believe they lack the continuity that dance requires for it to be able to play a meaningful role in shaping and influencing individual growth as well as physical, emotional, and psychological development. In the schools which I visited, I observed how dance was often left in the hands of the generalist teacher with limited or no training in dance. Many teachers did not have the knowledge, time or inclination to study dance in order to teach it at even a basic level. Many of the teachers I spoke to, also had their own personal perceptions of dance ability (lack of talent, co-ordination, confidence, cultural perspectives etc.) which often prevented them from even trying to include dance into their general learning programmes. It is perhaps for these reasons that they chose to include music, drama and art, while dance was either ignored or poorly taught.

I wondered if the lack of teacher training, experience and knowledge that I was encountering, may be an indication that dance education may not have appropriate direction or overall 'vision' in order to maximise its educational potential in South African schools. The shortage of adequately qualified dance educators also concerns Sharon Friedman, (Friedman, 2006) dance educator at UCT (University of Cape Town). She identifies the need for dance educators who have been trained in all aspects of dance as well as child learning and development in education. She points out that this does not necessarily mean dance studio teachers.

Maree in her examination of dance education in KwaZulu Natal (KZN) found that dance in Primary education was often the subject given to the class teacher which led to random lessons with very little shape, context or connection to dance educational outcomes (Maree, 2004). This lack of teacher expertise she attributes to the fact that there is no guiding encouragement taking place to assist teachers and to address the

issues facing dance education in KZN. Her findings resonated with my own experience. She found the educational outcomes for dance being fairly well approximated in the privately owned Crawford Schools in KZN. From my personal experience, I would suggest that perhaps this is due to their specialist teacher expertise.

I began to reflect on some of the enormous challenges facing dance in education in many of the schools that I visited. I believe dance training requires specialist technical expertise and that there are very few dancers or teachers who are able to master more than one or two dance styles to any degree of excellence. If taught by someone with limited passion, knowledge or expertise, each dance style will be dishonoured to some extent. It is only in the hands of experts that each style can inspire and flourish. This raises further issues. Who are these experts? How can they be integrated into mainstream dance education? Should their expertise and knowledge be used to guide dance education curricula? What is the nature of the additional training they may require? How will they need to adapt their teaching techniques and pedagogy in order to embrace the diversity found in many classrooms?

I began to imagine how dance specialists could be encouraged to contribute their expertise to dance education and to examine not only 'what' is taught but 'how' it is taught. I believe the 'what' and 'how' of dance education should be examined in the light of the social transformation which continues to challenge all aspects of daily life in South Africa. Perhaps varied approaches to dance education should be reflected upon in light of the current diversity in many classrooms if it is to have educational value in mainstream education.

I do not believe that dance in mainstream education should be approached in the same way that dance is taught to willing volunteers. As an elective subject or extra mural activity it attracts students who are willing to learn to dance whereas dance in mainstream education needs to engage many unwilling participants often from diverse backgrounds. This is where I believe modification of teaching techniques and pedagogy is required. The challenges which I observed in the schools that I visited are not unique but they are comprehensive. Friedman asks the all important question: "whose dance should be taught? To what end?" (Friedman, 2008a, p. 131)

During my workshops at schools, I discovered that due to the sensitivity of cultural differences which are associated with many dance forms, the introduction of dance at an educational level were often challenging. At the schools I visited, I realised that dance is often viewed by teachers and students as a collection of ‘boxes’ which are perceived to have limited or restricted access. These ‘boxes’ are often placed into further ‘boxes’ of classification as either ‘art’, ‘cultural’, ‘urban’, ‘educational’ or ‘professional’ dance. I observed that there are also the racial, cultural and gender ‘boxes’ which seem to constrain. In the classes I taught, I came to realise that classical ballet is often regarded as elitist and predominantly suitable for females of European descent, African traditional dance as belonging to certain tribes and cultures, Indian classical dance as belonging to Indian culture, and hip-hop, contemporary dance, jazz dance as basically reflecting American and youth sub-cultures. I wondered whether other teachers wishing to introduce dance styles into their learning programmes encountered rejection from certain learners based on cultural, racial, and gender preconceptions.

Sen’s view of multiculturalism asks whether human beings

Should be categorised in terms of inherited traditions, particularly the inherited religion of the community in which they happen to be born, taking that un-chosen identity to have automatic priority over the affiliations involving politics profession, class, gender, language, literature, social involvements and many other connections? Or should they be understood as a person with many affiliations and associations the priorities over which they must themselves choose ...? (Sen, 2007, p. 150)

Sen regards the neglect of the plurality of affiliations, and the need for freedom of choice to decide on the priorities of these affiliations, as helping to sustain the illusion of a unique and choice-less identity imprisoning people into ‘boxes.’ He suggests that an important goal of multiculturalism should be to “enhance the capabilities of children to live ‘examined lives’ as they grow up in an integrated country” (Sen, 2007, p. 160). To this end, he highlights the importance of providing children with opportunities to learn about the diversity of world cultures and to learn to reason and understand about the choices that human beings can and do make.

I believe this to be true and that dance education provides wonderful opportunities to explore world culture, while simultaneously allowing children to discover what may ‘name’ them. It seems to me that Sen is suggesting that sharing is inherent to individual

growth. I believe as I 'share' who I am with another, both of us potentially become open to change and transformation. I would argue that it is this mutual interchange which informs individual and collective growth and learning.

During my workshops, I also encountered the gender stereotypes that certain cultures often instil. The perception was often that boys don't dance, that dance is effeminate, or that certain dances are restricted for males or females only. I observed how this can, and often does, leave some boys at a further disadvantage as they struggle to overcome these misconceptions. I observed how perceptions of dance were often related to perceptions of race, culture and gender with the effects of being 'boxed' into categories still in evidence.

South African dance educator, Lliane Loots, has explored some of the gender 'gaps' or 'boxes' that came to be associated with dance in the past, and how many of these issues are still evident in South Africa (Loots, 1995). She suggests that assumptions regarding what is appropriate feminine behaviour and what is not appropriate masculine behaviour are heavily embedded in the stereotyping involved with classical ballet training and appear to have infiltrated other dance forms as well. In my experience this is often very evident when teaching dance in mainstream education. The teachers I interacted with mentioned that many boys were often reluctant to have their masculinity challenged by what they perceived to be a feminine activity.

In dance education, there are those who believe dance education should aim for and achieve professional standards and there are those who believe it should embrace educational values (Smith-Autard, 1994). I believe this division continues to incapacitate the progress and successful implementation of dance into mainstream education and that dance can embrace both simultaneously. Smith-Autard suggests that new models for dance education should be sought which go beyond the professional and educational aims. I reasoned that rather than continuing to examine the problems facing dance education that perhaps I should seek my own new solutions to new challenges. I decided to take action and enrol for a master's degree to research how I could teach flamenco to a diversity of learners of mixed ability.

I examined the requirements for dance education (Department of Education, 2002), and I began to wonder if it would be possible for me to teach flamenco in a way that was

inclusive, skills-orientated, educationally relevant as well as accessible and enjoyable for a diversity of learners. In order to envisage a way forward, I critically reflected on my experience as a language and drama educator as well as my dance experience as teacher, performer and examiner. I decided to try and design a course of flamenco for primary school learners which endeavoured to embrace the skills development of professionals as well as the values of educationalists (Smith-Autard, 1994). My challenge: how to respect diversity and embrace educational and professional standards? I realised that my understanding of flamenco in education needed to be carefully considered as I did not want to encourage misperceptions of dance or culture.

I know from my own experience as a dancer that neither words nor technology can begin to 'explain' what I have come to 'know' through dance. As a child and later as a teenager I found my need to dance as important as my need to breathe. Without either, I believed I could not continue to live. Laban suggests that "Man moves in order to satisfy a need" (Laban & Ullmann, 1971, p. 1). I have danced and continue to dance, because of an overwhelming 'need' to commune with my 'whole being' and to understand that whole being more fully. In my early years I found great difficulty in learning to perform for an audience. I danced because I needed to, not because I wanted to share it or show others. For many years I had to consciously force myself to feel comfortable dancing for an audience. I have had to become aware of what they wanted and enjoyed in order to try and align my needs with theirs.

For many years I resisted giving the audience 'commercial' entertainment and danced purely as I wanted to. I preferred dancing alone because it felt amazing! But when I danced for an audience that feeling of 'amazing' took a new form: it became shared and therefore different. By sharing my 'private' experience I had to become aware of what lies beyond me. For many years, I battled to do this because it felt so much better to dance alone, in the studio, by myself. I would often dance for hours alone, and often without musical accompaniment. I almost didn't need more, as this was when I felt in communion with all that was within me and beyond me, in that moment. Learning to share my experience through extending my awareness to an audience took many years, and to this day, dancing for an audience cannot replace how I feel when I dance alone. They are similar and yet completely different experiences.

In my early years of flamenco, I only wanted to dance the ‘Siguiría’ which explores deep and melancholic fears and struggles. Its themes of death and imprisonment helped me to express a profound personal need to ‘know’ and understand my own ‘dark’ and secret struggles. I did not feel that I needed an audience to do this. But as the years went by I learnt to share these and other feelings, with others through teaching and performance. When I became a mother, the joy which I experienced with the birth of my son, Ramon, took natural expression in my dance. I no longer felt the need to express my pain- I ‘needed’ to express my joy. I immediately switched from dancing the ‘Siguiría’ to dancing ‘Alegría’ (a dance which explores feelings of joy and happiness). For the remainder of my performing career, these two dances became my outlet for what ever I want to express.

Throughout my life flamenco has allowed me to explore a profound intimacy with who I am. I have come to realise that who I am is not constant, and flamenco has given me opportunity to know and understand myself in the moment, continually transforming. I have found no other experience to compare with it. To this day, when I am able to dance in a way that allows me to go to the deepest levels of who I am, the experience defies any written description or video recording thereof.

My son Ramon is an avid tennis player and a wonderful flamenco dancer. He is 14 years of age and has been dancing since the age of six and playing tennis since the age of 9. He has played in numerous tennis tournaments and performed in many shows. I asked him if he could describe if there was any difference in how he felt when he played tennis to when he danced. These were his responses:

When I dance I feel part of a family. I don’t feel I have to take on everything on my own. Dancing allows me to express my feelings ... it makes me feel good about myself ... on stage I feel something inside me taking over and filling my body with happiness. When I am angry I can express it through the way I hit the ball...but its more a rush of adrenalin ... I feel great when I hit a good shot ... but you can’t show it as much in tennis ... it’s a different kind of feeling in dance ... in tennis I need to feel tense and tough ... I’m there to win ... fight ... dance is not a fight ... its becoming one with yourself ... dance is being the best you can be ... tennis is trying to be better than the other ... (Fernandez, Appendix 4)

I was astounded at his in-depth perception and ability to express verbally the distinction between the feelings he experienced in tennis and dance. I have watched him do both,

and my own experience resonates with so much of what he says. I have always relied on the wisdom of children to remind me of how simply truth can be expressed and I continue to use the reflections and wisdom of children to guide my own reflections.

For me, flamenco is about communing with one's own authenticity: something to be celebrated alone and with others. As Ramon suggests, not only is it about feeling "part of a family" it's about "becoming one with your self ..." it is about deep introspection. I believe I cannot begin to 'understand' and respect another without beginning with myself. I believe dance is not like music or art where notes and paint can be removed and separated from the individual. With dance there can be no separation.

I have come to understand and express my 'whole being' through flamenco and I use critical and responsible introspection to support this. Other arts and writing and speaking can encourage this as well, but I believe dance does it in a completely unique way, which until personally experienced, cannot be fully understood. I love to dance and I love to watch others dancing: When I express my love through flamenco the 'boundaries' of my 'box' dissolve.

This study is my attempt to extend beyond a 'boxed' understanding of 'being' in order to understand more fully the challenges that I observed in dance education. I critically reflected upon my practice within the context in which I found myself, in my attempt to understand more fully, the values which informed my practice as I searched for 'new' ways for me to teach flamenco in education. While I realise that there may be other dance practitioners adapting their practice in order to address the challenges facing dance in education I am unaware of any who are using flamenco as I have done.

"I felt a passion to help" (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 107). I used Whitehead's approach to action reflection cycles, where I chose to combine my experience and my imagination to offer possibilities which I then acted on and evaluated in terms of its effectiveness

What emerged is my transformed understanding of self and of flamenco into flamenco as *educational* which I believe includes and transcends many of the aims of the Arts and Culture, life-skills or drama/dance learning areas. Therefore I move out of any 'box' of grades and phases and offer this work for what it can achieve for teachers (of dance or of life-skills), dancers and most of all for learners of all ages.