

## CHAPTER 6

### The Children's Journals

The children used 'simple' colourful descriptions of their experience and they evidence many of the values which I believe carry hope for the society in which I live.

Whatever our socio-cultural history I believe that educators around the world have a responsibility to enhance the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the future of humanity. This involves sharing our different understandings of what constitutes a good social formation and which values and understandings carry hope for the future of humanity (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 119).

My understanding of flamenco as educational involves "resilience" to the "risks" that are involved as I realise my values and understandings may not be fully shared by others (Whitehead, 2009b, p. 9). I have endeavoured to deepen my "understanding of the socio-cultural influences that can constrain ..." (Whitehead, 2009b, p. 9) in order to explore this 'new' understanding. My risk was a calculated one but one worth taking as in each child's journal I see evidence of my influence in their learning and evidence of many of the values which I consider to carry hope for the future of humanity.

The greatest risk is that the power relations in a culture of conformity will stifle the students' creativity integrity and freedom in making a choice to respond to their lives and the world with the spontaneity of love and productive work"[and] "Given the globalisation of movements of capital with control being exercised in the interests of a minority with damaging results for the humanity of the majority, risk taking is inherent in protecting higher education to ensure that it carries hope for the future of humanity and our own (Whitehead, 2009b, p. 22).

The values I became aware of in their journals, include my values of respect, joy, trust, self esteem, effort, love. I have indicated my observations on the journals themselves. Even though I risk rejection, I regard 'risk' as intrinsic to being an artist and a pioneer because I believe " People strive for something that has value for them" (Laban & Ullmann, 1971, p. 108). I have spent many years striving for 'value' through dance, but this is not shared by all artists.

An artist can display virtuosity for the satisfaction of his egoistic desires without bothering much about the degree of inner truthfulness which the shapes of his movement may reveal ... He does not even notice that he withholds the spiritual food for which people crave. He is content to satisfy their more superficial tastes, and is highly satisfied with external success ... Too many people today still think that all movement tuition and training consists in the learning of bodily tricks, and that the aim of such training is to exhibit the empty brilliance so highly praised in the virtuoso. This shows that most people have not the faintest conception of what

shape and rhythm of stage movement really is, and they are not aware of the deeper purpose it is meant to serve (Laban & Ullmann, 1971, p. 159).

The ‘spiritual food’ for which people crave is I believe those values which enrich our lives rather than impoverish them. In the children’s reflections I saw how this dance experience had enriched many of them and I realised that therein lies the ‘deeper purpose’ of the dance experience.

The motions of bodies and sounds seen and heard on stage stir the imagination, awaken the will to look with open eyes into that vaguely discernable world, the world of human values (Laban & Ullmann, 1971, p. 108).

I believe,

Our present form of civilisation has perhaps greater need than any earlier one to be awakened to the appreciation of our values. The speed of modern life is not only little adapted to quiet contemplation but the feeling for values seems to be steadily atrophying (Laban & Ullmann, 1971, p. 109).

I saw in their reflections evidence of the children’s profound capacity to value the dance experience and that flamenco as educational had been a holistic experience.

If an external “cause” is applied to an organism or a living body it will become internalised and transformed, and will be experienced as a stimulus, which in turn will be followed by a response. The response is not the mere mechanical effect of the cause, and this is due to the complete transformation which the latter has undergone ... the organism has made the stimulus its own, as it were ... the result is “new” in one degree or another (Smuts, 1927, p. 143).

Their responses evidenced for me transformed perceptions of self, others and dance. In contemporary South Africa, many of our children in primary education today were born into post apartheid South Africa. The change of government policy has provided new opportunities for them which were not available to their parents. Herein lies the challenge to educators: to devise opportunities to allow them to find ‘new’ ways of being, as they move forward progressively in a more humane and loving society. Maqoma suggests that “arts education and participation in arts and culture” is “the best way of improving the welfare of the people of this country” and that “(t)herein lies a challenge to develop an inspiring arts programme to appeal to children from widely different cultures (Maqoma, 2001, p. 77).

As I read the children's comments and engaged with the values which I saw evident, I realised that,

people of different backgrounds can transcend cultural barriers and create a new and dynamic culture for all South Africans ... South Africa has a diverse culture and its diversity 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).

Progressing to a "new reality" requires living with the 'old' and 'new' and trying to adapt to change while simultaneously conserving the traditional (Maxwell, 2008, p. 130). This ability to embrace the 'old' and the 'new' simultaneously seems to me to be the challenge facing dance throughout the ages and yet I saw evidence of children from diverse backgrounds engaging openly and joyously in something 'new'. Even though the "uneven playing fields" of dance (Samuel, 2008, p. 137) during the 1990's in South Africa are still in residue form in education, here I saw hope of this changing. I realised that "If we are to accept our complex urban, rural, mass and high culture differences, integrate and include one another's dance practices as we shape a tolerant, ubhuntu contemporary world then our hard work and effort will celebrate our deviance and value the individual spirit of dancing human beings" (Samuel, 2008, p. 140).

I realised that embracing the "high culture embodied in the school" but still being alert to the "challenges of including all people and all traditions and histories"(Soudien, 2007, p. 12) is not an easy matter. Soudien sees this problem as universal and "new pedagogical practices can be envisaged that have the potential to resist those forms of globalisation that are only about standardisation, homogenisation and universalisation" (Soudien, 2007, p. 13). As I read the children's reflections I saw tremendous capacity to embrace the 'new'. I saw evidence of 'high culture' blending with traditions and the 'new' embracing 'old' values of trust respect and love. Their individual unique focus in their reflections confirmed my insistence on resistance to homogenisation and standardisation.

I too had resisted conforming to old ways of teaching flamenco and their responses confirmed that "The aim of self-study research is to provoke, challenge, and illuminate rather than confirm and settle" [and] "...to be readable and engaging" (Bullough Jr & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 20) I feel the children's reflection are mini self-studies which are readable and engaging and which resist 'boxing'.

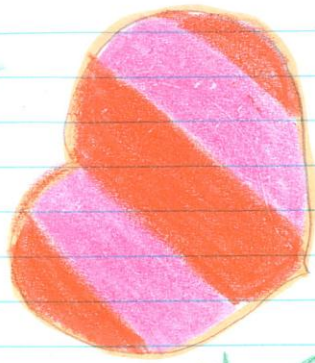
Knowledge is never capable of being reproduced faithfully and completely. It is always in a state of interpretation ... No knowledge is absolute ... Knowledge itself must, therefore, be made the object of inspection and not simply accepted or rejected because of where it comes from (Soudien, 2007, p. 14).

I have gleaned much knowledge from children and for this reason I include their 'whole' journal activity rather than edited versions. I saw in their reflections flamenco as educational seeking "a third interstitial space between the local and the global" with "people remaking meaning on their own terms"(Soudien, 2007, p. 14) encouraging "the development of deep forms of engagement with the *range* of knowledges that people have access to" (Soudien, 2007, p. 14) and allowing young people to "understand themselves critically" (Soudien, 2007, p. 15) and to think "*from within*" local conditions and not "*against*" them (Soudien, 2007, p. 16).

Their reflections may not be 'absolute' but for me they hint at the 'absolute' value of love. They confirm for me that it is impossible to do anything well, especially teach, without the capacity to love.

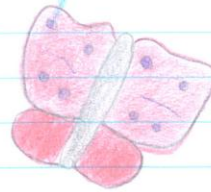
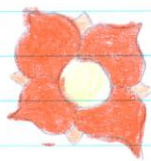
... knowledge is by definition the inquiry we make into the world, which is a pursuit inaugurated by a loving encounter with a teacher. With love, education becomes an open space for thought from which emerges knowledge. If education is to be a space where teacher and student search for knowledge, then we must strongly affirm that "Yes, a teacher and student can and must love each another." But ... it is important to make clear that, when a teacher and student love one another, they do not have sex, they do not merely care for one another, nor do they pass knowledge between each other. Rather, with love, both teacher and student become self-aware and recognise that "there is no such thing as teacher-student relation." This truth opens a space for both lovers to preserve the distinctiveness of their positions by turning away from one another and toward the world in order to produce knowledge through inquiry and thought ... If education is to be a space of thought, we must insist with Freire that "it is impossible to teach without the courage to love"<sup>37</sup>

37. Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers*, 3. (Cho, 2005, pp. 94-95)



Enjoyment

I had a really really  
great time. I enjoyed  
dancing and I appreciate  
what you did. I am not  
a good dancer but I enjoyed  
dancing with you.



Perceptions of ability did not interfere  
with enjoyment

comment on dancing

Dear Linda

I found the dancing fun and interesting, fun exciting and hard

but I found some of the steps quite difficult such as the stamp punch heel I found difficult to go fast

Some of the steps were easy and I caught on quickly but others not so much I learnt that we all have different ways of learning. Sorry I will not be making the festival due to something my dad planned for that weekend. Thank you.

From

Awareness of own learning challenges, as well as those of others.



Enjoyment

Mr Silence

Enjoyment

Awareness of own learning

Comment on dancing

For the past 8 weeks you have helped us to learn dance. But you gave us the chance to be able to look, listen and learn. It was fun and enjoyable. This will be remembered for a very long time. When we were dancing we were concentrating carefully, and we can use that in class work. So I thank you for teaching the art of flamenco.

from: /

Understanding of self in relation to others through dance.

PS: You have also given the grade 7 & 8 a way to better understand each other.

Awareness of transferability of focus in dance to class work



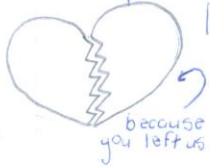
Dear Linda

I would like to thank you for all you have done for us, the grade 7s of Glenmore.



WE'LL MISS U!

Your presence here has improved my concentration and focus in many learning areas and I thank you for that.



LINDA YOU ROCK!



Flamenco made me realise that dancing is not as easy as it appears. Your dance moves were the bomb!

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO GO?



FLAMENCO  
4  
BEST DANCE '09

Changed perceptions of dance

FLAMENCO ROCKS

From

Sadness at my leaving

Gratitude for increased ability to concentrate and focus beyond the dance class



# Linda

Awareness of value of experience beyond self

\* Think you Linda for what you have done in our ~~street~~ School and I hope that what you have done to our school you do it to other school and not just schools I hope that you show it to the whole world. I am sure that I and the whole school appreciates what you have done. \*

We love You

From:

Love and gratitude

To: Linda

Dear: Linda

I am really happy that you took your time to teach me how to dance.

I hope you come back next year to teach the grade six classes.

I am a really shy person when it comes to dancing but im not anymore because you gave me confidence.

Changed perceptions of self.  
Realisation of increased confidence

I really liked the steps that you showed us and I appreciate it. I wish you could teach us longer because its just so fun.

I hope you go further in life because you are a exalent dancer and I think you have a real talent in dancing.

Appreciation and enjoyment

I know our class enjoyed the dancing lesson just as much as I did. Most of my friends don't like dancing but they did and the reason is because u believed in us.

Changed perceptions of dance.  
Awareness of my 'belief' in them

From:

THANK  
YOU

To : hinda

Day \* 16 Nov 09

Time \* 1:3:50 pm

Place \* In class

love \* 95% sure



# MESSAGE

Gratitude for my 'lovely' encouragement

Thank you for everything.  
Thank you for sharing your time with us. We love you so much. You encouraged us in a lovely way. I also liked your rhythm when you were saying "pam pam ~~para~~ param."

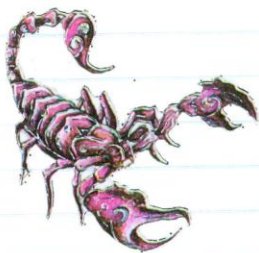


Ilu Gih

Enjoyment of 'vocals'

I also when you said the- lay, bamoh.

We had a great time with you. I wish you could enjoy your year.



WE ♥ U



Love

To Linda

Dear Linda thank you for teaching us an amazing dance. We really enjoyed it and hope you carry on teaching other people the dance. It has been fun and a really good experience for me. We really appreciate it. THANK YOU!

Enjoyment, Gratitude.  
Desire for others to experience same

Gratitude for my humour while

What I Thought About the dancing

Awareness of challenges in learning flamenco

I thought that the flamenco dance takes time to learn and needs lots of effort to perfect it. Our first section was easy but when we added extra stuff it was very confusing. We all enjoyed you being very humourise and fun so you made us have fun but at the same time we were learning. We All feel appreciated for what you have teachen us, Im sure that even the other teachers had fun by watching us.

Fun while learning

To: Linda

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Aware of benefits of group work

Gratitude to me for kindness

You inspired me to work hard and to stay determined!

Inspired work and determination

Together, we achieve better flamenco dances

Enjoyment

Happiness, we were always happy to come to dancing. Always learning more.

Now we can use this dance to achieve goals.

Kindness, you were always kind if we got a move wrong you showed us again and again and again.

You told use to be ourselves and we were.

Obedient, we listened to what you had to say.

Useless, None of us are useless.

! This ! is for our excitement 2 (twice) a week.

From: Struggler to achiever (as the serious one)

Authenticity

Self esteem

Realisation of transferability of dance skills to other activities

To: Aunty Kirpa

Awareness of life skills in dance and their transferability

Thank you very much for teaching us the dance Flamenco, It was a very nice experience. All the rules that you told us I'm sure to use in my life. You inspired me and touched my heart. I enjoyed every single practise with you and you taught me how to work as a team and think ahead. I don't think I will ever forget the dance. And I'm very sure that your students are very very happy to have a teacher like you in flamenco. We all going too miss you and your teachings and carry on at yer what you do because you do it best! I wish you and your students the best of luck for the concert.

From

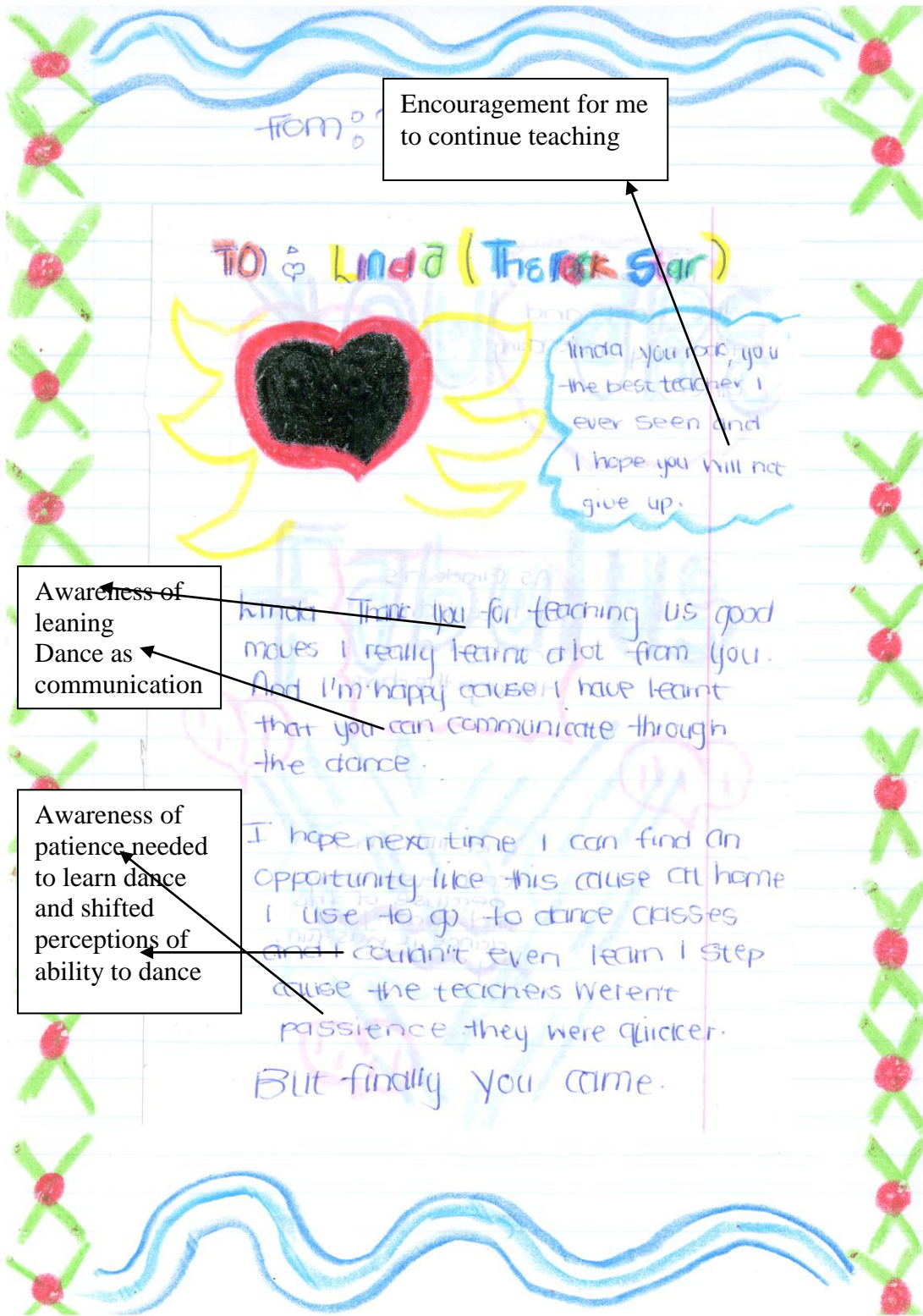
Encouragement for me to continue

Inspiration

Enjoyment

Team Work

Learning



from

Encouragement for me to continue teaching

TO Linda (Thank Star)



Linda you rock, you are the best teacher I ever seen and I hope you will not give up.

Awareness of leaning Dance as communication

Linda Thank you for teaching us good moves I really learnt a lot from you. And I'm happy cause I have learnt that you can communicate through the dance.

Awareness of patience needed to learn dance and shifted perceptions of ability to dance

I hope next time I can find an opportunity like this cause at home I use to go to dance classes and I couldn't even learn 1 step cause the teachers weren't passience they were quicker. But finally you came.

♡ Linda...♡  
My Comment.....♡

The dancing really brought out the person in me. I'm not the best the best dancer but ~~flamenco~~ flamenco really makes you special and comfortable to do. You must really carry on with flamenco it can change someone's life and boost their self esteem. I know It really changed my life and I'll never forget it.

P.S I love the clothes you wear and shoes plus you a really good dancer

From:

Description of self using body awareness

gal tall ene-ga

Awareness of dance to express the inner being  
Flamenco as means to feel comfortable and special, boost self esteem and to change someone's life



LINDA

Thank you

I would like to thank you very much  
for you done, taught me a new  
type of dance. I had never heard  
of flamenco, never seen it before  
until you came to teach us now I  
know everything about flamenco. I  
appreciate what you have done.  
I wish you could come back to  
teach us more move

OLÉ  
BIVEN

from

Appreciation, thanks,  
desire to continue  
learning

Dear: LINDA

Thanks  
Practice and work

I would like to start off with a Huge Thank You! You don't know how much I have practice, I think I have practiced so much at home my mom and brother know the dance of by heart 😊

I really didn't think I would be able to cope with dancing and didn't think I could do it. I was confused when I heard we are going to do flamenco dancing, I had no idea what it was.

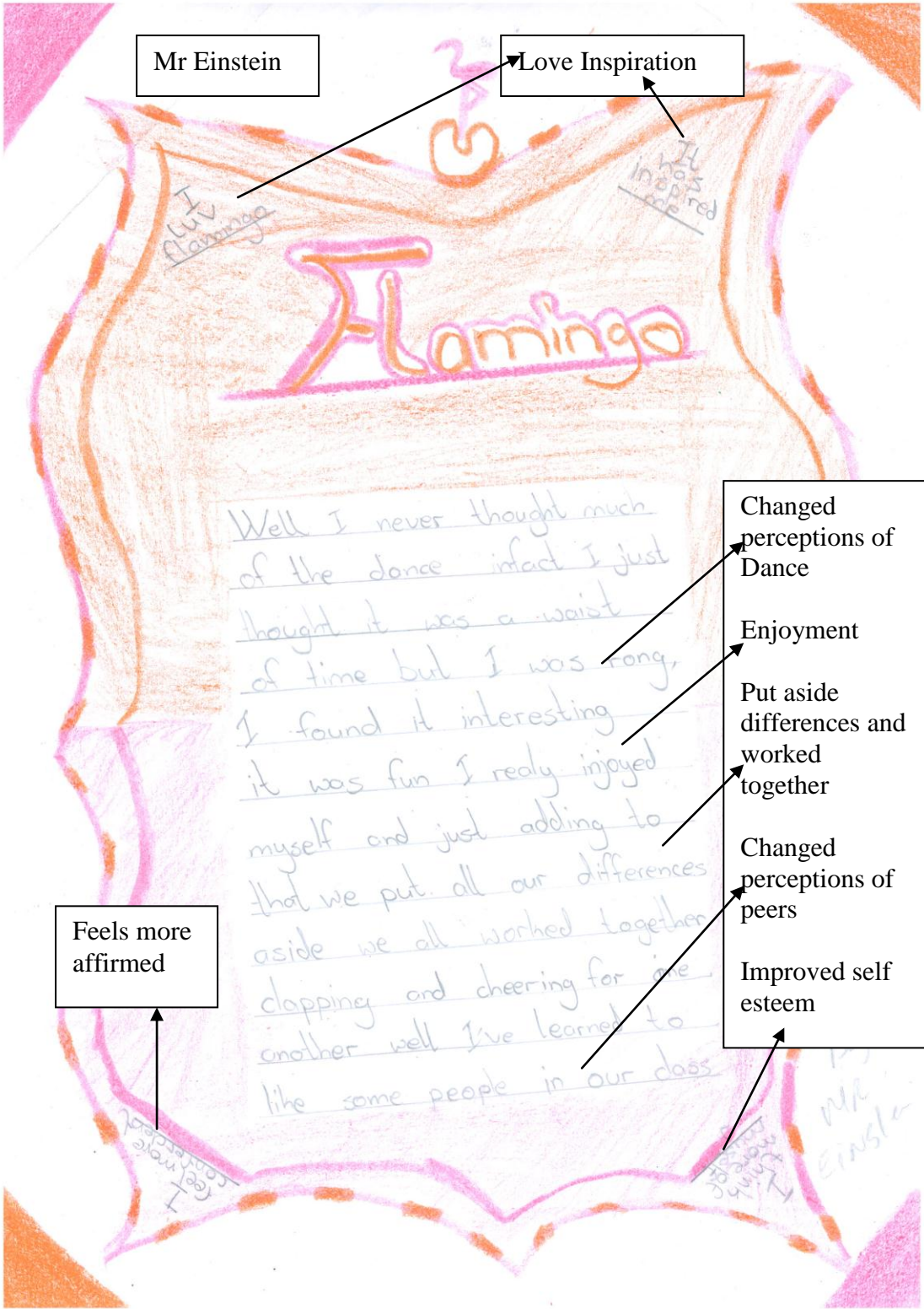
I really had fun and always couldn't wait until the next practise, I was sad when I was told on thursday that it would be our last practice because I really thought we would have had more lessons.

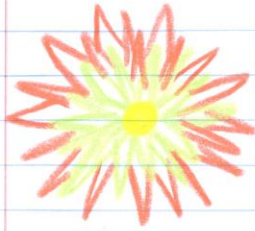
So thank you soo much!

Enjoyment  
Thanks  
Sadness that  
experience ended

From: [Name] an 7 Walker

Changes  
perceptions of  
ability to dance



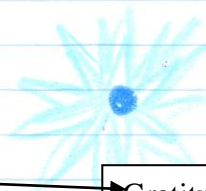


• Remember the Steps.

DANCE

• THINK AHEAD!

Dear Linda



Thank you for teaching us this lovely flamenco dance! I have learnt a lot and I thought I was actually good at dance but when it came to this, you really need to put your thinking cap on and must learn your step. Like you always say "Your mind always think ahead everytime!" We will miss you Aunt Linda not for only teaching us the dance, for the person you are to give up your time for us. That describes what kind of a person you are and may you enjoy your life with special people around you! 😊

Gratitude  
New learning  
Changed perceptions of ability

Thanks  
Wishes for my well being

From

god

THANK You!



P.T.O. plz  
Thz a Song at  
the back. 4 u.

enjoy

Dance

4rm: Mbali. M. 7w

# DEAR: Linda

Thank you so so much for all.

The time and the love you gave to us. We will always remember this year for the fun we had. You have made my last month or weeks enjoyable and memorable. I Love You Linda and thank you

- Gratitude for Fun
- Love
- Memories
- Learning

Dnt If at Lf with.

Rememba ur stepz.

Rememba haw 2 Count 2

lol!!

Fun

Boat



Fun exciting tiring  
Memorable

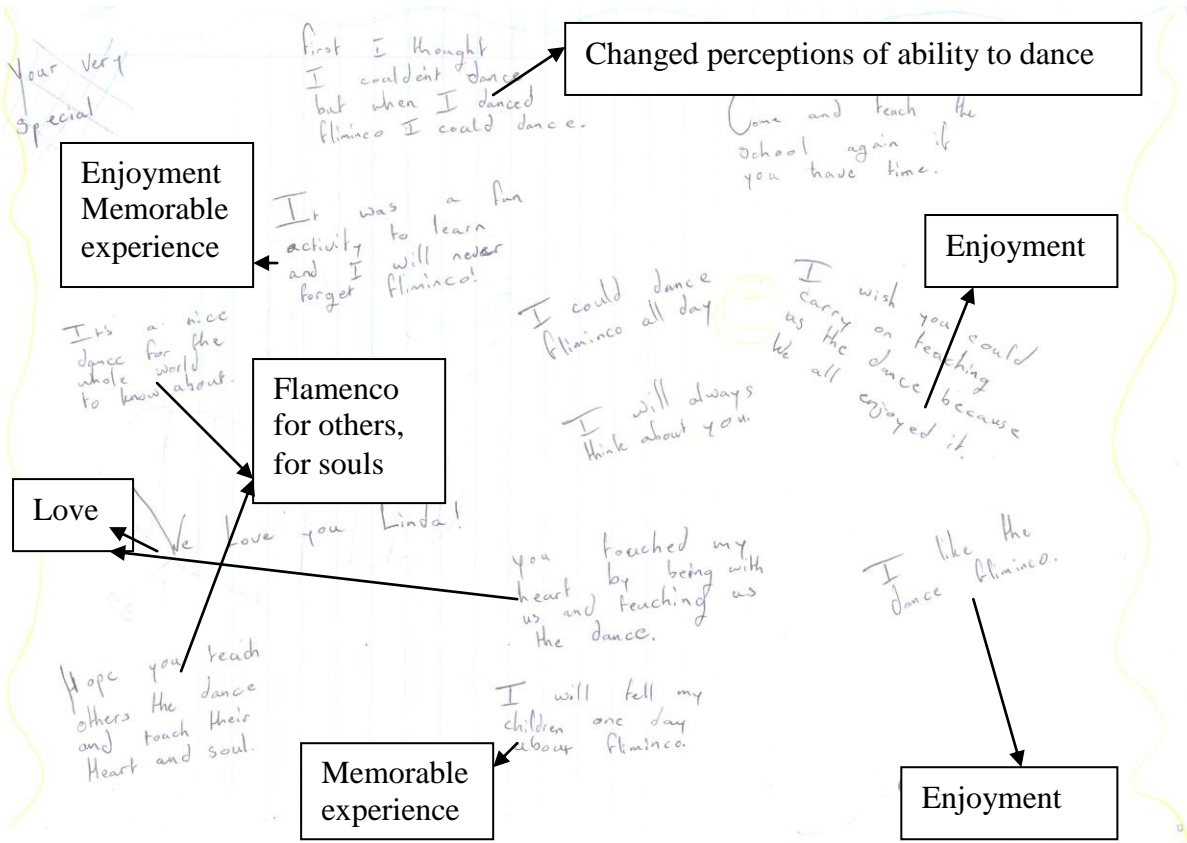
Learning to be  
energetic

Increased self  
esteem

First it was fun, exciting and tiring  
it is something I will never forget, Linda  
thank you, you taught me personally how to  
have energy and confidence and I gained  
a higher self-esteem!  
I honestly think you succeeded in what  
you came to do.



From: Thanks



# FLEMINCO

Dear Linda - We thank you for teaching us. Flemenco and all the different steps. and all this time you took preparing the Moves we had alot of fun practising and we reveled our true selfs. thank you again linda wish you luck in your life chericooooo!!

Thanks

Fun

Bien

Think Ahead

Ole

Awareness of individual authenticity

Bamo

Count to 6

Remember

Learning

From



# MY COMMENTS ON FLAMENCA

Dear Linda

When we first began dancing I was very nervous and a bit afraid. I thought flamenco was very hard but it wasn't. You taught us step by step and because of that it made it easier for us. By dancing I began to overcome my fear and I also learnt about other peoples differences. Now I know the dance off by heart and i'm also beginning to teach my sister how to dance flamenco. Thank you for coming to Glenmore Primary School to take your time to teach us how to dance flamenco, it was wonderful having you with us. Thank you very much

From

Changed perceptions of dance and flamenco due to my approach

Learning of others differences

Sharing

Gratitude

To: LINDA

Mr Rhythm

Enjoyment

Thank you for coming and teaching us  
This wonderful Flamenco dance I really  
enjoyed those 4 weeks with you. Before  
you came I was a very naughty boy  
always getting into trouble but when  
you taught us all those steps I  
started focusing on my school work  
and my behavior and you made me  
realize that there is more to life than  
just being naughty so the dance really  
changed me to be a better person  
and I love the dance thank alot

Changed  
perception  
of self and  
behaviour

From

Improved perceptions  
of self and behaviour  
through dance  
experience

Boy  
MR Rhythm  
(Miss)

~ ❁ LINDA ❁ ~

Before I go any further with this letter, I would like to say.....

WOW

Inspired by my smile

Learnt to set aside differences with others and work together

It is the only word to describe how I truly felt! You have inspired me in many ways... You have a never ending smile 😊 Linda, you have taught us to set aside our differences and work together.

You showed me how to focus and be more confident in my self.

Improved focus and confidence

The Flamenco was an amazing dance to learn. I absolutely loved it!

Never have I had so much fun as I did when I was learning this dance!

You are an **Excellent** dancer and person!

A Person so priceless

A person so true... It's gotta be me!


Oh! Oh! big deal, It's **you!**

lots Of love from:

Enjoyment  
Love of flamenco and me

# Kinda

Fear of dance and performance removed

Dear kinda on the first day when we were going to start this exciting dance, I was extremely, extremely scared as in the past I've gotten stage fright and fallen on every step, but as we worked and I enjoyed the steps I never noticed that my fear was packing up. My friends and I thought we were going to have partners so we were like eww! But you proved us wrong it was very fun, exciting and made us focus so much. The way we danced and showed it to our fellow mates was a self-esteem grower and I want to thank you!  
clap Clap <sup>clap</sup> clap <sup>clap</sup> clap Clap 

P.S. = I know that we all will miss you and your teaching to us, plus thank because I know how to count to 7!!

1, 2, 3 ... 1, 2, 3  
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

- Enjoyment
- Increased focus
- Increased self esteem
- Humour



G.P.S  
From Hype + energetic

... Linda ...

Us Grade 7's have had an  
AMAZING time! Linda,  
thanks to you we set aside our  
differences and worked together!

On behalf of grade 7W...

Set aside  
differences  
and worked  
together

Thank  
You!

Grade 7 Team

LINDA

Us Grade 7's have had an amazing time! We had experienced a fun time thanks to you.

ON BEHALF

OF GRADE 7W...

THANK  
YOU!

శ్రీ: లిండా

Our



Dance

Teacher



MA. విశ్వేశ్వరి

Thank you for taking some your  
time to teach us Flamenco Dance.  
We enjoyed ourselves that we will  
never forget, this wonderful experience  
we had with you.

May the lord Bless you and  
your family  
Love:

Memorable experience

To: LINDA

Thank you for teaching me how to do flamenco dance. Before you came into the school to show us a little bit about flamenco dancing, I thought I could dance any type of dance, and it would be easy to do the flamenco dance, but now I know that there <sup>are</sup> other challenging dances.

Changed perceptions of ability to dance

Your way of dancing has taught me how to count up to six and how thinking doesn't only occur in class.

Changed perceptions of cognitive learning

From



Dear

LINDA

Motivated to repeat and practice  
Awareness of my teaching skills  
Awareness of group

The dancing was so much FUN!  
I practiced and practiced, like you say Repeation... Thank you teaching just comes naturally to you!  
I really am sorry we couldn't do it for longer but I believe that I will meet you again because if I do get into my entertaining occupation then I hope to see you! The way we moved it felt as if we were ONE person, when our peers supported us it felt GREAT! Linda, thank you Please carry on teaching... Otherwise it would be ashame for you not to spread the SPIRIT!!

Thank you so much  
You're a rising Star!

Uplifted by group support  
Dance is spiritual

P.S. I drew a picture to show how I felt...



Drawing to explain feelings about me  
Encouragement to me

Ms I Can Dance

Changed perceptions of ability to dance  
Enjoyment

To: Linda  
I had a very fantastic time I really found it very interesting. At first I thought I could not dance but now I can. You are a very fun and inspirational dancer, I really enjoyed every minute of your spare time. I really thought it was fun.

**L**oving and  
**I**nteresting and  
**N**ever gives up.  
**D**etermined to do better  
**A**nxious to do everything you do fun.

Perceptions of me as loving, interesting, determined, Fun loving

Obrigada  
Ciao

You are like a ~~delecte~~ dedicated, and loving, caring and interesting person.

part of dyslexia  
dumb words  
hard to write



# DANCE

# COMMENTS

To: Linda

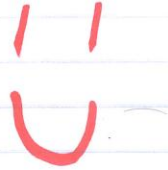
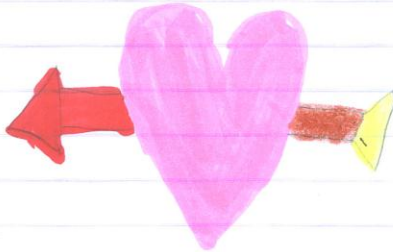
**Comment:** I really liked the dance, it brought more meaning of what dance means and has broadened my knowledge and skills on life and dance. I hope that you keep this as a memory of working with us because we will keep it in our hearts.

Awareness of learning  
Dance to learn life skills

**From:**

Heart felt experience

Boy



Empathy for Mr Silence

Comment  $\leftarrow$

Auntie Linda

Dear Auntie Linda, I would like to thank you for teaching this amazing dance

FLAMENCO

I personally know that on our last lesson, when I clapped for Andale and heard the comments tear where brought to my eyes

LINDA

Impresario at first

GALE

Inspiring

Encouraging

Motivating

OLA

FLAMENCO

Hill Ball

Learning

From  $\rightarrow$

pan pan

# My Comment...

## LINDA

After our very first lesson I knew that that was the start of something new.

Changed perceptions of own learning

I thought learning would be hard but remembering was like a nightmare! Eventually I got the hang of things and began enjoying myself a bit more. Looking back, I don't know why I thought this was going to be hard.

Now that we've had the lessons I'm able to let go a bit more.

I've learnt that it doesn't matter what others say or whether they are catching on faster than you, worry about yourself and before you know it you'll be dancing like a star!

Thank you!

Increased confidence  
Learnt to focus on own learning

To Linda

Changed perceptions of self and flamenco

Wow! What an inspiration you are to me. When I heard we were going to do dancing all that went through my head was "hip hop" but when you told us we were going to do flamenco I thought how boring. As the time went by I enjoyed it and started to see another part of me.

I hope you carry on with flamenco and keep teaching others too because you haven't only inspired me, you inspired the whole of grade seven.

Me as inspirational, strong, determined, fun

You are one of the women I look up to. When I look at you I see a strong, determined and fun woman.

Thank you for all the teaching you have done!!

Keep touching hearts because you have touched mine.

To Linda

Encouraging me to love, gratitude