CHAPTER 1

Methodology: the 'why' 'what' and 'how' of things.

1.1 Methodology : The 'why'

In my study I have conducted a Qualitative Action Research with an Auto Ethnographic, Self Study approach using the Living Theory Methodology of Jack Whitehead as a point of departure (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009; Whitehead, 1993, 2004, 2008, 2009b, 2009c; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). I have read and engaged with the educational ideas as well as the Qualitative, Action Research, Self-study, Auto Ethnographic research approaches of many including (Aaronsohn, 2003; Anderson, 2006; Bochner, 2000; Bullough Jr & Pinnegar, 2001; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Denzin, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Gallahue, Werner, & Luedke, 1975; Giroux & Giroux, 2008; Hargreaves, 1994; Hendricks, 2009; Jaramillo & McLaren, 2008; Kelley, 1951; J Kincheloe, 1991; J Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008; Koshy, 2005; Krog, Mpolweni-Zantzi, & Ratele, 2008; LaBoskey, 2004; Laurillard, 1993; Loughran, 2004; Meyer, 2008; Mills, 2000; C. Mitchell & Weber, 1998; L. Murray & Lawrence, 2000; Pereira & Taylor, 2005; Taylor, 2004; Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006; Tomaselli, Dyll, & Francis, 2008), but have chosen to follow the Living Theory Methodology of Action Research, refining my methodology as it emerged and developed as my study progressed. I used a process of Critical Reflection "in" and "on" my action in order to refine and improve it (Schon, 1983, pp. 54-55). I have included personal and educational aims and values in order to develop and expand my awareness of the interconnectedness of self and others. I have also used Visual Methodology (C. Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2002; C. Mitchell & Weber, 1999) by way of video recordings in order to assist me to critically reflect upon my practice.

I understand that

> "A methodology is not only a collection of the methods used in the research. It is distinguished by a philosophical understanding of the principles that organise the 'how' of the enquiry. A living theory methodology explains how the enquiry was carried out in the generation of a living theory" (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 107).

The philosophical understanding which informs this study emerged before and during this research. It transformed my understanding of self, flamenco and dance education. My living theory methodology is informed by the values and beliefs I expressed in my practice as I tried to "…exercise a sense of personal responsibility in validating for myself my claim for what I believe to be true" (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 108).

During my research I became aware that much of my 'knowing' is evident in my practice, and that I sometimes am unaware of 'why' I do what I do. Scholarly, critical reflection and writing has made me aware of many of the 'why's' in my practice. I have become aware of why I do 'what' I do through the 'doing' of research and have come to realise that my beliefs and values are woven into the very fabric of my practice. In this chapter I attempt to unpick these 'threads' in order to try and explain 'what' I did and 'how' I discovered that,

> Although we sometimes think before acting, it is also true that in much of the spontaneous behaviour of skilful practice we reveal a kind of knowing which does not stem from prior intellectual operation (Schon, 1983, p. 51).

I began reflecting upon my 'knowing' and practice as a flamenco dance teacher. Jousse suggests that "… we think with our whole 'miming' being …" (Jousse, Sienaert, Conolly, & University of Natal. Centre for Oral Studies, 1997, p. 346) and that "True human expression is not language, reduced to the geste of the *langue*: it is the expression of the entire being …" (Jousse, et al., 1997, p. 658) This 'entire being' mirrors the universe: "The universe plays man, and man plays the universe …" where "the Creator creates as in a mirror" (Jousse, et al., 1997, p. 669).

As I reflected on these ideas as a teacher and performer, I came to understand that my 'knowing' was manifested throughout my entire being and was not limited to my head or brain, and that my teaching practice mirrors my 'knowing' and the creative 'knowing' of the Creator. Often this knowing is intuitive where the seeming boundaries between what lies beyond me and within me become permeable. As a dancer I understand this whole being experience as holistic, where mind body and spirit commune with all that is within and without me. This whole being experience is difficult to translate to written text, "When a practitioner displays artistry, his intuitive knowing is always richer in information than any description of it" (Schon, 1983, p. 276).

Critical reflection has assisted me in this endeavour. Schon uses the examples of the impromptu action of professional baseball players and jazz musicians who adjust their performance according to their opponents or fellow musician's performance (Schon, 1983, p. 55). He describes the ability to modify one's performance while in the midst of it as "*reflecting-in-action*" (Schon, 1983, p. 54) and when performance is later further reflected upon as reflecting "*on"* action (Schon, 1983, p. 55). My experiences as a performer and teacher have involved many years of critical reflection "*in"* and "*on"* performance. I have come to realise that at times I also reflect 'before' and 'after' action as well. New choreographies or performance/teaching contexts require new inspiration which I then reflect on once completed.

Schon explains how "... each new experience of reflection-in-action enriches …" the practitioners "repertoire" (Schon, 1983, p. 140). As a teacher and performer I understand this "repertoire" of experience of Schon to be intrinsic to my practice. He explains it as our ability to see unfamiliar situations as familiar, which in turn indicate a broad repertoire of experiences which we draw on when confronted with the unfamiliar. This "allows us to have a feel for problems that do not fit existing rules … Reflection-in-action in a unique case may be generalised to other cases, not by giving rise to general principles, but by contributing to the practitioner's repertoire of exemplary themes from which, in the subsequent cases of his practice, he may compose new variations" (Schon, 1983, p. 140). This helped me to understand how 'new variations' emerge from and include elements of previous experience, but did not seem sufficient to me to explain that which comes from inspiration, and has no seeming resemblance to what went before. Here inspiration, and intuition, helped me to account for the unaccountable: when ideas 'came' to me that seemingly had no resemblance to anything that I had previously experienced.

I soon became aware of the complexities, of trying to describe my 'knowing', as a flamenco dance teacher, in order to record them on the written page. I believe this process of trying to write about action inevitably involves a process of 'translation' and inevitable 'mistranslation' or diminution. It felt much like trying to describe an African sunset to someone who is blind or the voice of Maria Callas to someone who can not hear. Whitehead offered me some form of solution when he suggested that some researchers "continue to present their theories in a words-only propositional form, but

others are now finding new creative ways of presenting their theories using multi-sensory forms of communication, such as pictures and graphics, and video and other technology. Newer forms of technology are often able to communicate living experience more effectively than only linguistic forms" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 32).

I therefore decided to use video recordings to see if they could assist my endeavours to describe and reflect upon my practice. However, after many years as a professional dancer, I have also come to realise that 'performance' often 'feels' better/worse than it 'looks'/'sounds'. I have used video recordings throughout my career in order to reflect upon my performance and what I 'felt' during performance is often far removed from what I 'see' on video, or from what others 'see' in my performance/video. In similar manner I believe that my experience of my research may have 'felt' different from how my report 'reads' and my "living experience"(Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 32) 'felt' different to how it may 'look' on video.

These challenges of translation are fully explained by Conolly who identifies the problems of using written texts to record oral tradition or performance text: "the holistic, dynamic three-dimensional nature of the performed mnemonic Oral-style presents particular challenges to the processes of recording and analysis in research" (Conolly, 2002, p. 2). Conolly further insists that "the page as used in literary and linguistic analysis and historical recording simply does not accommodate gestual-visual/oral-aural performance, which presents the researcher with most particular challenges … video and audio recordings capture the gestual-visual/oral-aural modes of performance of oral traditions, but this medium only partially captures the elements of context that impact upon the performance of oral tradition, and with which the performer interacts. The limitations of video- and audio-recordings of gestual-visual/oral-aural modes of performance are numerous" (Conolly, 2002, pp. 7-8).

These insights into the difficulties of recording three dimensional dynamic data helped explain my predicament. I became aware of the complexities of describing my multi-dimensional experience as a dancer and teacher, and the almost impossible task of 'translating' or recording it on the written page, without introducing some sort of 'mistranslation'. Laban suggests that "Pure dancing has no describable story. It is frequently impossible to outline the content of a dance in words, although one can

always describe the movement" (Laban & Ullmann, 1971, p. 4). Laban identifies the challenges of using the body as communicator where movement is so inextricably linked to the inner emotional and thinking being as well. What he does suggest is that "Man moves in order to satisfy a need" (Laban & Ullmann, 1971, p. 1). For me dance satisfies my need to commune with my 'whole being'. Challenges arise when I try to communicate this to the 'whole being' of others. I believe this 'whole being' experience defies technological replication, so while I have chosen to use video recordings to assist my critical reflections on my practice, I do not regard them as a reliable, accurate or comprehensive record of my 'whole being' experience.

When drawing on the ideas or writings of others in my report, I have frequently quoted directly rather than paraphrased. I did this because I believe individuals use words in a way that is unique in much the same way as a choreographer uses steps in a way that is unique. I believe paraphrasing (or re-choreographing) brings in my own perspectives, and I prefer the reader to refer to the 'original' rather than my 'translation' or 'interpretation'. For this reason I have only paraphrased where I felt what the origin was saying, was not what I wanted it to say, so paraphrase became necessary.

I follow the lead of Bruce with regard to referring to what is recorded in the literature: "It is usual for students to have to write a literature review as part of their thesis. This is normally a chapter appearing early in the thesis, but in some styles of thesis, may appear throughout the work" (Bruce, 1994, p. 144). I have therefore not included a separate literature review chapter as I have chosen to 'weave' my values and beliefs together with the ideas and theories of others throughout my report and evidence in practice. Throughout my research process, my reading has continually informed and transformed my thinking, 'knowing' and actions. My research experience became influenced by the ideas I was engaging with in the literature I was reading. These became 'new threads' woven into my thinking, my practice and consequently my Living Theory which continues to transform.

When I began this study I ironically began searching for a clearly labelled methodology 'box' into which I could place my research. This created an inner tension as I tried to no avail to find the perfect fit. My practice and my ideas seemed to transcend so many educational 'boundaries' that my search for the perfect 'box' seemed futile. I then discovered that in Living Theory Methodology there is no 'box' and that if I wish to, I

can make my own 'boxes', which I can continually remake if I so choose to. For this reason I have used Living Theory Methodology as my methodology is continually emerging and transforming, along with my practice, throughout the research process.

The Living Theory Methodology of Jack Whitehead which he further developed with Jean McNiff is an approach to Action Research which explores the "living experience" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 32) of individuals, where "Practitioner researchers investigate their own practice … and produce their own explanations for what they are doing and why they are doing it" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 13). These become their living theories which they constantly test for validity. They establish validity by articulating "the standards of judgement they use, that is, the way they make judgements, in evaluating whether the theories they generate actually reflect the values that inform their practices"(Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 13). Whitehead defines it thus:

> A living theory is an explanation produced by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which they love and work" (Whitehead, 2009b, p. 104).

This approach to Action Research is "a form of self-reflective practice" (Mc Niff, 2002; McNiff & Whitehead, 2002, p. 6). In accordance with this and what Schon explains as critical reflection "in" and "on" action, I reflected on my practice in order to understand and improve it (Schon, 1983, pp. 54-55). In order to refine and improve my practice as a dancer, individual critical reflection is essential for progress. It felt natural for me to transfer this practice of critical reflection on my practice as a dancer to my practice as a teacher. Throughout my report I explain my understanding of my epistemology and ontology as observed in my practice and how they are continually influenced by my experience and the theoretical ideas of others with which I find resonance. My 'cycles' of reflection are not orderly; sometimes they appear to be a spiral process, while other times they appear haphazard. They none-the-less continually inform my 'new' action and further reflections where my "… description of intuitive knowing feeds reflection" (Schon, 1983, p. 276).

In Living Theory, the methodology of an individual emerges during the enquiry and is as unique as the individual's ability to be inventive (Whitehead, 2009a). In this way my methodology emerged during my research and what I did, and why I did it became a

reflection of my inventiveness as well as a reflection of my embodied values and beliefs: my living theory. Living Theory Methodology uses a "disciplined process of problem-forming and solving" which is "an action reflection method" (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 107). I used this process of reflective action cycles to further understand the challenges I encountered in dance education, and the implications thereof for my own practice, as well as others in my social and professional context. Since "all theories can be understood as knowledge claims" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 29), my research approach uses a process of critical reflection to understand and test my claims to 'know'.

Whitehead distinguishes between the dominant approach to theory in education of the disciplines of sociology, psychology, philosophy, history, economics, management etc. and the approach of 'education*al'* theory (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 17). He suggests that the traditional disciplines of education are not able to "explain adequately an individual's educational influence in their own learning and in the learning of others" (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 104). For Whitehead "the disciplines approach" to research and theory regards each discipline as a "freestanding body of knowledge" which "create neat boxes of practice and thinking". He describes 'education*al'* research and theory as including "the imaginative creation of possible new futures and the values base of educational practitioners" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 17).

These ideas of education*al* research resonated with my own experience, and my difficulty in locating a traditional theoretical 'box' into which I could 'place' my research. I inherently resisted the 'spectator' approach to research where my 'objective' observations were supposed to align with specific 'boxes of knowledge'. Whitehead cautions that "locating oneself within a secure and given structure can be comforting, because we are not required to move out of the box or exercise our own creativity or acknowledge responsibility ..." (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 37). I value freedom to be creative and this has propelled me beyond the 'box'. Whitehead suggests that each individual teacher's learning has been and continues to be influenced in a way that is unique to them and that this in turn influences how they teach others. "Education*al"* theory and knowledge explains "the educational influences of individuals in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the social formations in which we live and work" (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 105). This report then identifies and explains the educational influences in my learning and the learning of those I 'teach'.

Whitehead argues that the position of educational theory in the profession of education is ambiguous. He suggests that while it is required to guide and support the skills and techniques of the profession, it also often finds itself in dissonance with the practice and skills of individual teachers (Whitehead, 2009a). In my enquiry I continually explore across the 'boundaries' of various theoretical disciplines in which I am interested. I do not however wish to engage in an "orgy of theoretical violence" (Wilber, 2001, p. 120) but rather search for resonance between other people's theory and my own personal values and beliefs. While I have found resonance in some of the dominant theories in education, I have also used my own experience and knowledge to counter-balance these throughout my enquiry.

I have reflected upon other people's established and current theory, as well as my personal experiences in the classroom. I have tried to understand my educational influence, as explained by Whitehead, to reflect upon my praxis. I understand that my practice is unique and I therefore do not see it being generalised or transferred in a neat 'box' to all contexts. I have come to understand my living theory and my practice as reflecting my past, my future and my present, where all dance in my choreography of endless possibility.

I have come to realise that "In a living theory methodology the individual includes the unique constellation of values that are used to give meaning and purpose to their existence. In the course of the enquiry these values are expressed, clarified and evolved as explanatory principles in the explanations of educational influence in learning" (Whitehead, 2009c, p. 112). Therefore, while exercising my creativity I explored across the 'boundaries' of what I knew, and engaged with literature and the ideas of others as well as my values and beliefs thereby adopting the educatio*nal* approach of Whitehead.

For Jean McNiff and Jack Whitehead, (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005) there are two main reasons why teachers should do Action Research, firstly to improve practice, and secondly to generate new theory. They suggest that teachers rather than external researchers are best placed to evaluate and improve their own work and that teachers should be able to improve practice as well as generate new theory and knowledge. They also suggest that sometimes research is inspired by the fact that something is working well and explanations and descriptions of what you did and why you did it may help

others see how you evaluated your work and they too can learn from it (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). My research has been inspired by my desire to see what was working well in my practice and my desire to understand it more fully in order to transform for a new context.

Living Theory Methodology insists on the use of 'I' and I have therefore done so throughout the research process. Living Theory Methodology also uses action reflection cycles of the practitioner researcher and personal and social validation where action is held up for critique. I, as practitioner researcher, have therefore used action cycles of reflection to critique my practice and thereby sought personal and social validation of what I believe to be true. I include my values, beliefs and principles which I use as standards of judgement to explain my educational influence (Whitehead, 2009a). I have come to understand teaching and learning as " a relationship of influence not one of cause and effect" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 22) and became fascinated by the relationships that emerged during my research which influenced personal learning.

I had been experimenting with flamenco classes in education for some time prior to this study. My research became my intentional intervention and action, aimed at improving my understanding of my practice through critical reflection, in order to modify it. I understand my practice is unique, but the process of critical reflection soon illuminated educational issues beyond its boundaries. I do not consider my observations and reflections as 'solutions' as this would suggest further 'boxing' which I resist. This relates to Mc Niff and Whitehead who describe Action Research as "… a form of enquiry that resists closure and celebrates life in all its uncertainty and insistence on new beginnings. You are unique and so is your practice" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 60).

I include some of the ideas of 'inclusionality' as explained by Rayner (Rayner, 2004) but found the Theory of Holism and Evolution as explained by Smuts helped me understand more fully the transformation which can take place when new knowledge emerges from existing knowledge (Smuts, 1927). As a dancer I have come to realise that often 'new' insights may appear to be like previous ones but in actual fact the 'old' often becomes transformed by the introduction of the 'new' and what emerges is 'another new'. In this progression, what emerges may or may not entirely resemble

what ‘was’ before, but there may be evidence of what was ‘before’. I used my creativity to ‘think out of the box’ in order to find new ways of teaching and dancing.

As I began to envision a possible new way forward for flamenco as education*al* in mainstream education, I started to question whether perhaps the challenges that I had observed in dance education were related to the education curriculum or teaching praxis. 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 reasoned that if I wished to embrace the diversity I had observed, 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).

In my understanding of education*al* research everyone and everything is changing including me. As I became my own policeman, my awareness extended beyond my ‘box’ and I began looking at myself and all holistically. Even the writing of this report has involved externalising in text my inner being where the barrier of my ‘box’ was removed and my practice is held up to public scrutiny. I invite the critique of others who understand that teachers need to “regard themselves as intellectual and social activists … and be prepared to stand up for their own knowledge” and that “They need to find ways of letting their voices be heard, on behalf of themselves and also on behalf of those who are not able to speak for themselves”(McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 97). Margaret Farren suggests that there is a need for individuals to have a space in education “to develop their own voices” (Farren, 2008, p. 65). This report is therefore a form of intellectual social activism, where I attempt to let my literal ‘voice’ be heard, in order to make my contribution to the challenges facing dance in education. Here my ontology and epistemology merge.

What is my epistemology/ontology and action plan?

Whitehead and Mc Niff explain epistemology as:

> a theory of knowledge which involves two parts:
>
> - a theory of knowledge (what is known);
> - a theory of knowledge acquisition (how it comes to be known)
>
> (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 23)

I believe that what I 'know' and how I come to 'know' emerges from my experience, and interactions with others, and inspiration. For Whitehead and McNiff (2006), knowledge and understanding is something we create in an interactive relationship with others. As I reflected on what I 'knew' I allowed my 'past' a place in my 'present' in order to evaluate its continued place in my 'future' and I allowed it to transform into something more suited to the situation. This required me to try and understand what was being judged, as well as the validity of my standards of judgement (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

I believe that the 'boundaries' between myself and others are permeable and I understand myself and all around me in holistic, inclusional relationship. (Rayner, 2004; Smuts, 1927) Just like Whitehead and McNiff I believe my axiology (what I value), is influenced by who I am (ontology) which in turn is influenced by what I know (epistemology) in symbiotic relationship (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

I understand my study to be Auto Ethnographic in that I came to understand my practice and learning more fully through my interaction with my surrounding community. I used my understanding of the Auto Ethnographic approach of Ellis which is concerned with the alignment of culture and self (Ellis, 2004) and Bochner who suggests that Auto Ethnography is concerned with finding meaning within an experience rather than trying to merely depict what took place (Bochner, 2000). Auto Ethnography has helped me "engage(e) in dialogue … beyond the self" (Anderson, 2006, p. 375) and for me it became a way of "seeing and being" that challenges hegemony (Denzin, 2006, p. 422). I believe too that "(a)ll theories are hypotheses created by people" (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992, p. 57) and that my Living Theory Methodology remains a unique expression of my creativity and inventiveness (Whitehead, 2009a).

How do I relate Self Study and Social Action?

I have also used my understanding of the Self Study approach of Pithouse who suggests that "part of the strength of many self-studies is a holistic approach that acknowledges the intersection of the personal and the professional. Perhaps because studying the self almost inevitably leads to reflective critique, there is a certain dissatisfaction with the *status quo* and a concern about change, social justice and professional action"(K. J. Pithouse, Mitchell, & Weber, 2009, p. 58). This dissatisfaction with the '*status quo'* led me to seek alternatives where my concerns transformed into social action. While I understand that "Self-study points to a simple truth, that to study a practice is simultaneously to study self: a study of self-in-relation to other" (Bullough Jr & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 14). I also reasoned that Self Study has social implications beyond the self and that "Social purpose refers to what we want to achieve in the social world, and why" (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 23). While I believe my study may have social purpose, it has also helped transform my understanding self, others, my environment and flamenco.

In 1989, Whitehead began to see an action plan being shaped by the individual's educational values which then become guiding principles in the research. According to Whitehead we often find ourselves in situations where we may not be able to live our lives in accordance with our values, either through denying our own principles ourselves or through them being denied by others. He describes this as living in contradiction to one's values. He regards our action plan as a means to try and resolve this tension and to try and live our lives in a way that embraces our values more fully(McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). In this report, I reflect on my own experience of living in contradiction with my values in order to try and resolve this tension where it is evident.

Whitehead outlines an action plan, which he, McNiff, and Lomax transformed still further in 2003. It is based on the following:

- I experience a concern when some of my educational values are denied in my practice;
- I imagine a solution to that concern;
- I act in the direction of the imagined solution;
- I evaluate the outcome of the solution;
- I modify my practice, plans and ideas in the light of the evaluation (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 28)

My action plan was loosely based on this outline. I became concerned by the challenges I observed facing dance education in the schools I visited. I tried to imagine how I could find a possible solution and then acted in the direction of my ideas. I reflected on my practice and the outcome of my action in order to modify my ideas and practice and improve my learning. My cycles of reflection continually overlapped with one another in a complex process of reflexive critique.

Together with Mc Niff, Whitehead developed this plan still further and they show how an action plan is related to our values:

- What is my concern?
- Why am I concerned?
- What kind of evidence do I produce to show why I am concerned?
- What can I do about it?
- What will I do about it?
- What kind of evidence do I produce to show that what I am doing is having an influence?
- How do I evaluate that influence?
- How do I ensure that any judgements I make are reasonably fair and accurate?
- How do I modify my practice in the light of my evaluation? (McNiff & Whitehead, 2005, p. 29).

McNiff and Whitehead regard this action plan as generic and that one can and should modify it to suite one's own circumstances. I did just that in using these questions throughout my research to reflect upon my actions and learning in order to make modifications where I felt necessary. They were not necessarily used in systematic order but rather when the need arose.

My research question asks:

How do I improve my learning as I use my knowledge and experience to design a course of flamenco dance that is education*al*?

For much of my dance career I have been fascinated with the 'boundaries' between personal and social experience: my research enquiry is no different. It is a confluence of numerous values: my own, students', teachers' and the theory of others. In my enquiry I attempt to find alignment and resonance.

According to Whitehead central to the analysis of data in Living Theory research is the "life-affirming energy" (Whitehead, 2009a line 413) together with the values which I

use to explain my educational influence in my own learning as well as that of others. Whitehead believes cultural and historical contexts influence our lives and the analysis of the data in living theory should therefore include the insights gained from other theorists. He suggests that traditional theory cannot explain the uniqueness of educational influence in any living theory but rather produce explanations from sets of propositional relationships which are abstract and general whereas living theories are grounded in the individual's conscious lived experience and are therefore unique. Whitehead suggests that because education is value-laden one must try to establish if what one does is mediated in the others' learning with one's own values. I therefore cannot say that I have educated anyone other than myself. I can only forward that I may have influenced the learning of others (Whitehead, 2009a).

Through this enquiry I have come to understand that my practice is influenced by my value of love. In my reflections I became aware of how I expressed love in my practice: love of self, love of dance, love of flamenco, love of children, love of education, love of knowledge, love of life. I have come to realise that I am passionate about love in all its variety of expression. My understanding of flamenco as education*al* is grounded in my desire to express and experience love. I have used various approaches and teaching techniques designed to do so. I have looked for and found evidence of my value of respect, trust, authenticity, joy, integrated experience, and passion which I now regard as variations of love.

I believe authenticity and love nourish one another. In my experience I have observed many who reject or fear authenticity, seeking 'safety' in conformity or homogeneity. I believe authenticity is the momentary expression of sincere individuality and originality. It often takes courage and effort to develop and express authenticity and I believe love can liberate in such circumstances. Authenticity should be respected and loved and not used as a wedge to divide. I believe it is in our capacity to love and be loved that we find 'common ground' and in our love of individual authenticity we approximate this. I believe in a loving, respectful environment, authenticity flourishes.

I have spent much of my childhood and most of my adult life engaging with the body as a means of communication and I have come to believe that the body is one of the most 'honest' forms of communication. I believe the spoken and written word may deceive, but the body reveals the truth. A person may better understand who they are through

reflecting on how they dance, where the truth of the individual and the momentary experience become communicated by the body. I believe all children can benefit from developing an understanding of their body as communicator and gaining control and awareness of this ability. The lifelong scholarship of Marcel Jousse (1886-1961), focused on the "original language" of man being "corporeal"(Sienaert, 1990, p. 96). He identified the "corporeal – manual" expression of the body and concluded that the whole body communicating the thoughts and emotions of the individual was "the most faithful form of human communication" (Conolly, 2002, p. 3).

In my understanding of flamenco as education*al* I have sought this environment of respect and trust in order to encourage and develop authenticity. I have used various teaching approaches to support this as I believe an atmosphere of fear encourages homogeneity. I sought to provide a loving, fun, respectful, safe 'space' for children to become aware of and develop their authenticity through flamenco. I hoped that this awareness would nourish their confidence to share with "life affirming energy" (Whitehead, 2009a) and authenticity 'who' they are, and can be, in all they do.

1.2 Methodology: The 'what' and 'how'

The educational influences which shaped my thinking, led me to take action, as I began to reflect on 'what' I could do to adapt flamenco for the classroom and 'how' I would teach it. As I reflected further, I began to design a course of flamenco for primary learners. As I did so I became more aware of my challenge: "How can /do I simultaneously respect diversity and embrace educational and professional standards?" I realised that my introduction of flamenco to mainstream education needed to be carefully considered as I did not want to instil misperceptions of dance or culture.

I reflected deeper and began by asking myself "Why flamenco?" I reasoned that perhaps it was not so much which dance 'box' I chose but rather 'how' I taught it. I began imagining 'how' to open the flamenco 'box'. I reasoned that if Outcome Based Education (OBE) in South Africa encourages cross-curricular learning, surely this allows for the myriad of dance forms available to be explored. Perhaps then teachers could choose from a 'buffet' and provide learners with exposure to as many dance styles as possible without entering into the endless debates of which dance form is worthier than any other. I have observed how the pitting of the perceived value of one style of dance against another only continues to divide the world of dance education

from within, and how this is often perpetuated by dance practitioners themselves. My question 'Why flamenco?' transformed into 'why NOT flamenco?'

This is where I began to envision the possible value of teaching a specifically designed course of flamenco as one of many possible options. I began to imagine how studying numerous dance styles could encourage a deeper understanding of a wide variety of cultures leading to further understanding of self and diversity. I reasoned that the challenge facing dance in education is how to open the 'boxes' of dance styles available in South Africa, in a way that encourages learners' respect for these differences, while simultaneously searching for 'common ground' and that the contents of each 'box' may need careful examination and adaption to suit a diversity of learners. I reasoned that the successful introduction of any dance form would require respect for diversity as well as for the dance form being introduced. Dance has many 'flavours' and I believe young learners should be encouraged to 'taste' as many as possible in the primary phase in order to decide if they would like to choose any as a 'main course.' This introduction of the various dance styles to the 'unaccustomed palate' is where I felt vision and skill would be required. This is where I believed understanding of culture, depth of knowledge of dance and teaching techniques as well as educational values was required.

I reasoned that just as the human voice speaks in many languages so the human body uses many 'languages' to communicate. Learning to 'speak' or dance in different 'tongues', helps to open the lid of many 'boxes' and reveal wonderful new opportunities for learning. I began to reflect on the educational potential of intercultural awareness which dance education could encourage and how it could possibly help to encourage respect for diversity. I reasoned that perhaps young children in a multicultural society should be introduced to a wide variety of dance styles in order to allow them to choose which, if any, they are drawn to.

I reflected more critically on the critical outcomes of the Revised National Curriculum Statement and other government policy documents. I discovered that they aim to "develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa."(Department of Education, 2002, p. 2) and that "humans are holistic beings" who require opportunities to develop and nurture their "psychological, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual expression" to realise their full potential (Department of Arts,

1996, p. 5). I began to wonder if I would be able to design a course of flamenco dance that would embrace these educational aims.

I learnt too that the Arts and Culture learning programmes endeavour to create opportunities for learners to develop a "healthy self-concept" and to work "collaboratively as individuals" to develop "practical skills" and "respect human value and dignity," (Department of Education, 2002, p. 5) as well as to "work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community". (Department of Education, 2002, p. 1) I began to reflect on how these educational aims related to what I have experienced during thirty five years of dancing and teaching flamenco. I began to imagine how I could teach flamenco in a way that would embrace the learning outcomes of the Arts and Culture learning area through creation, reflection, participation and expression.

The flamenco 'box'

It was at this point that I decided to further reflect on the origins and evolution of flamenco. I wanted to understand it more fully, using the literature that was available to me, in order to try and position my understanding of flamenco within a larger context. I discovered that there is very little scholarly literature available in English on flamenco and I was unable to find anything on flamenco in education in English. I discovered that the flamenco scholar Timothy Mitchell (T. Mitchell, 1994) identifies three types of experts of flamenco: performers, outsiders who have lived alongside performers, and intellectuals. He points to flamenco's lengthy oral-tradition and highlights the problem of documentation where much of what has been written about flamenco has been written by aficionados (people who live alongside flamenco performers) and not historians, hence the many instances of disagreement, and where little if anything has been written by the dancers themselves. This general lack of concurrence in flamenco literature tends to leave much of what is available up to individual interpretation. I discovered that flamenco literature is limited, difficult to find, and often mere subjective opinion rather than scholarly. I found nothing written on flamenco in education in the South African context.

Mitchell describes flamenco as a folk song style that has "undergone a peculiar, intense evolution" (T. Mitchell, 1994, p. 1). He describes it as a paradoxical expression of outcasts propelled into popularity by the elite and argues that although it originated

with the ‘wrong’ people, it was these elite who gave it the status of art. Thus began my questioning of why folk style dance forms like flamenco seem to have to prove their worth in order for ‘those who count’ to accord them the status of art.

During my years of performing and teaching I have encountered many who regard flamenco as exclusive to Spaniards and even more exclusive to Gypsies. Many of my conversations with others have revealed perceptions of flamenco as belonging to a select few. I reasoned that while it may indeed have its roots in Southern Spain, it has become an international form of expression performed and enjoyed by many people all over the world and as such can no longer be perceived of in such an exclusive manner. I began to imagine challenging these perceptions of exclusivity.

Mitchell suggests that theories attributing the origins of flamenco to one specific group are simplistic, and that the gypsies helped to stylize a sub-cultural otherness with roots in several ethnic or quasi-ethnic groups. “Examined responsibly flamenco cannot be traced to one source only” (T. Mitchell, 1994, p. 96). I reasoned that if flamenco could not be traced to only one source, it could not justifiably be argued that it ‘belonged’ exclusively to one group. I reasoned that if flamenco emerged from the interaction of several cultures and contained elements of several ethnic groups, it could not be regarded as belonging to any one culture specifically. Mitchell regards the idea of focusing on the suffering of one group only and ignoring that of so many others as no longer acceptable. I realised that so profound is my respect for the art of flamenco, that I was seeking justification for what I was about to do. I began to reason that I did not have to limit the ways in which flamenco is performed, and by whom it should be performed.

There is an adage amongst flamencos that “everything changes and yet nothing changes.” I reasoned that while flamenco may appear to remain unchanged that this may in fact be wishful thinking. I began to reflect on the transformations of flamenco that I have witnessed in the last thirty five years and how it may continue to transform.

Flamenco in its origin became the expression of the marginalised, and Mitchell contends that while gitanos (gypsies) may have regarded themselves as separate from the poor community at large and the originators of flamenco, they did not have a monopoly on the emotions of “love, jealousy, poverty, sickness, death, loneliness, and

pain," all themes found in *cante jonde* of flamenco (T. Mitchell, 1994, p. 96) . Don Antonio Chacon often considered to be the father of flamenco singing is quoted by Mitchell as having asked "Do you think that each race has the heart in a different place?" (T. Mitchell, 1994, p. 159) I reasoned that perhaps the common ground of human emotions could be used as my point of departure. I began to reason that perhaps only when flamenco is grounded in profound emotions, does it appear to remain unchanged and that therein resides individual authenticity. I believe authentic emotional expression to be available to all and that flamenco as education*al* could embrace this.

I began to question further what flamenco was, is and could be. I have come to realise that if any number of people were asked the question, "What is flamenco?" it would probably yield numerous different answers. From my observations all have unique perceptions of what they consider flamenco to be. I did however begin to identify two fundamental approaches to flamenco. I refer to them as the 'purists' and the 'pioneers'. I believe the 'purists' are those who want flamenco to remain frozen in time untainted by the influence of the 'modern' or 'foreign' world, while the 'pioneers' are those who use flamenco to express individuality within their contemporary society. I believe that the 'purists' subscribe to the view that art forms can and should be 'boxed' in order to retain them in untainted form whereas the 'pioneers' subscribe to the view that artistic expression cannot be 'boxed' and they continue to search for 'new' ways.

Initially, I regarded myself as a 'pioneer'. I have however come to realise that I am a 'pioneer' in that I want flamenco to be removed from its 'box' and explored beyond its traditional approaches, but I am also a 'purist' who does not want to dishonour an art form for which I have profound respect. By 'traditional', I am referring to the stylistic constraints which many 'purists' impose on a performer. I began to consider how I could find 'new' ways of teaching using the contents of the 'flamenco box' and sharing this with children who may never have had any experience of dance training or flamenco. I began to imagine flamenco being experienced in a way that resisted stylistic 'boxing' and I began reflecting on how this and other issues might influence the learning experience.

Dance 'boxes' in Education

Dance theorist Jacqueline Smith-Autard suggests that:

> Models for teaching should always be dynamic and constantly changing, so to define and promote any one model for teaching may seem over-prescriptive. Processes of change, however, often occur in practice well before any model can be defined, and indeed, new practice has to develop before it is possible to reflect on its nature. When the new practice has been tried and tested by teachers and students it becomes necessary to define and promulgate the practice and theories which underpin it that it becomes known and developed as a valued model for teaching (Smith-Autard, 1994, p. 3).

She identifies two 'boxes' into which dance education is placed: the dance as education 'box' and the dance as profession 'box'. She suggests that these two should become more dynamic and embracing of change and that a midway model approach may be more appropriate in the educational context (Smith-Autard, 1994). Friedman suggests that dance as education emphasising experience and dance as performance emphasising performance skills are often perceived to have two distinct destinations (Friedman, 2008b) and the two cannot be embraced simultaneously. It was at this point that I began to question if I could teach flamenco in a way that pursued technical skills, and embraced educational values? From the schools I had visited, the multicultural nature of many classrooms suggested to me that I should try to go beyond existing models of dance, and to possibly devise a 'new' approach.

I then reflected on some of the basic theoretical principles of dance education which I felt have influenced many 'Western' dance curriculums, as well as literature available on dance research in South Africa. As I did so I also began to identify numerous 'boxes' in dance education which resonated with what I had been observing in the schools I had visited.

I began by reflecting on the work of dance theorist Rudolf Laban who developed his ideas for what later formed the basis of many 'Western' educational models of dance education (Laban, 1948). According to Smith-Autard this approach to dance emphasised the importance of process rather than product where "the process of dancing and its affective/ experiential contribution to the participant's overall development as a moving feeling being" became the goal of dance education (Smith-Autard, 1994, p. 4). Laban devised a theoretical framework for dance that still informs the approach to much dance education in the western world.

Laban's descriptive analysis of movement enabled movement to be classified according to four principles: action, effort, relationships and space. He analysed and described all movement according to what part of the body was doing the action, how this action could be described according to its use of time and force, where this action took place in space and in what way it was related to a person or an object. His aim was to free dancers and to allow them to experience the full range of movement untainted by the prescription of styles, viz. ballet, flamenco, modern, tap, etc. His work provided an excellent system of analysis and I believe it should remain available to those who wish to analyse movement according to these principles.

I believe Laban's analysis of movement has, however, been used by many to teach dance in a way that reduces it to an analysis of its components/ingredients, and as any good cook will tell you it's that dash of salt that brings out the flavour of the ingredients. I realised that the 'flavour' of dance is not brought to the fore when it is stripped of its style or authenticity. Laban's insights remain highly influential in many dance curriculums but I believe that he did not intend his principles to be used by others to teach dance in a prescriptive way. I have observed how this prescriptive use of Laban's principles in the teaching of dance in a rather dry and cerebral way can result in one wondering what is 'missing'. I believe that when dance is taught in a way where movement is 'dissected' and analysed it can rip out its very 'heart', and defeat its object.

I tried to imagine the experience of flamenco as enjoyable as I have observed that children are more likely to engage more fully in an activity which they perceive as 'fun'. I wanted my opening of the 'flamenco box' to have 'heart' revealing a 'surprise' that was enjoyed. I reflected further on the "professional" model in dance education, (Smith-Autard, 1994, p. 6) which gained prominence in dance education in Western society during the 1960's and 1970's. As Smith–Autard points out, this highly specialised approach to dance education has been avoided by many primary educators. I began to think that perhaps this was due to the fact that it may not always be suited to the majority of learners. The professional model approach to dance education includes many personally devised dance techniques including 'Graham', 'Cecchetti', 'Vaganova', 'Cunningham' etc. I believe these, together with many other styles of

dance have become ‘boxed’ and clearly labelled leaving teachers with the unenviable task of trying to decide which one was worthy of a place in their curriculum.

I also reflected on the suitability of this approach for a diversity of learners as technical excellence in many dance styles is not always achievable for various body types. I began to consider ways to transform or adapt flamenco techniques to enable maximum participation, while simultaneously developing an acceptable standard of technical skill. Postmodern dancers like Yvonne Rainer (Rainer, 1977) attempted to show the dancer as an ordinary human being and not a semi ‘divine’ being by virtue of their technical skill. She attempted to break down previous perceptions of what forms dance should take and to redefine it as something that all can access. I reasoned that I would attempt to do the same and to devise a course of flamenco in such a way that as many as possible could access its techniques.

I further reflected on the ideas of Rainer who challenged previous notions of the power of attention. Rainer observed that the very process of being watched influences the dancer. “The very act of being in front of people transforms you … I am transformed simply by virtue of being focused upon” (Rainer, 1977, p. 2). I began to reflect upon this notion of ‘performance’ being influential in individual transformation and it helped me shape my approach to performance in the course.

My many years as a flamenco performer have made me acutely aware of the two-way process of performance and the vulnerability of that performance in a context which is perceived of as threatening. For this reason when I introduced learners to performance I tried to remain sensitive to individual progress and levels of confidence in order to avoid a mis-educative experience (Dewey, 1938). I tried to be aware of different rates of progress and only encourage learners to perform when they felt ready.

I and many of my students have learnt to control the anxiety in performance and examinations with ‘self-talk’ which allows one “to control emotion and stay calm under pressure” (van Staden, Myburgh, & Poggenpoel, 2004, p. 125). I also believe that dancers can learn to

> assume responsibility for their own performance and decisions…Taking responsibility for being on time, being conscientious…..and balance their drive, ambition with self-control (van Staden, et al., 2004, p. 126).

I believe dance encourages responsibility for own performance which is a valuable life skill. I do however realise that the skill of 'performance under stress' like any skill, is one which needs time to develop. I did not feel that eight hours of experience in my course was necessarily sufficient for everyone to have felt ready for such stress. I decided to introduce the idea of 'private performance' to assist this.

I do however realise that the skill of learning to perform under stress is worth pursuing: "satisfaction comes from accomplishment, from knowing how to work hard and handle stress" (van Staden, et al., 2004, p. 127). But I also believe, "process is as important as the product"(van Staden, et al., 2004, p. 133). I introduced learners gradually to performance, by dividing the class up into ever increasingly smaller groups, until finally those that felt ready were encouraged to perform solo. I did not want to force anyone to perform until they felt personally confident enough to do so.

The transformative power of flamenco has always fascinated me. My experience of flamenco had given me numerous opportunities to ponder its transformative power and I began to reflect on how this could become woven into my course in a way that encouraged the development of individual self esteem. I reflected on the idea of identity in motion and how identity can be transformed by movement as well as by an audience.

Barbour suggests that "through dance we can express and embody our lived experience" (Barbour, 2004, p. 31) This began to resonate with what I had read about the Living Theory Method of Action Research of Jack Whitehead (Whitehead, 1993). I also began to realise how inseparable my ontology and praxis were, who I am, is 'woven' into what and how I teach. I reasoned that my course would be an externalisation of what I perceived to have value. As I began to unpack the 'flamenco box' and use its contents for something 'new' I felt a deep sense of responsibility to ensure that what I used and how I used it was grounded in the values of other theorists with whom I found resonance as well as my own values.

I reflected further on the notion of performance. Much traditional dance is essentially a communal experience where the boundaries between performer and audience become less defined whereas many Western dance forms often focus primarily on performance.

As noted by Jonette Lancos, "Dance reflects the philosophy of an era" which can't be reduced to a formula but is "basically an approach to art in its relation to living, a point of view" (Lancos, 2004, p. 142). Lancos describes the impetus of all (Western) modern dance as "democratic philosophy" (Lancos, 2004, p. 142) which nurtures individualism. I began to reason that if flamenco had its roots in communal experience, but also embraced individualism, perhaps flamenco as education*al* could accommodate both ideas.

I have observed how the focus on individualism is suited to the individualistic majority of Western society and often informs approaches to dance education. I do not however believe that this is the perspective of all cultures or dance educators. As I continued to reflect on these ideas I decided that I wanted my course to embrace the communal experience of many traditional dance forms as well as focus on individual performance and to embrace individual as well as communal identity. I therefore tried to devise a course which was more 'non-mainstream other' and more in line with the 'midway model' of Autard (Smith-Autard, 1994).

I began to distance myself from the 'either-or' approach to education and began aligning with the paradoxical approach of 'both-and'(Palmer, 1998). Palmer suggests that it is fear and Western "thinking in polarities" (Palmer, 1998, p. 61) that destroys connectedness as we learn to "think the world apart" by our use of binary logic: "either-or thinking" (Palmer, 1998, p. 62). I reasoned that as Palmer suggests I would endeavour to think the world together and embrace not only a 'both-and' logic but a holistic approach. I believe that the essential difference between postmodern perspectives and oral traditions perspectives is that post modernism posits itself on the binary divide, and oral tradition posits itself on binary complementarity, where post modernism focuses on how 'difference competes', and the oral tradition focuses on how 'difference completes'.

Palmer describes the paradox of our human need for both community and solitude. Without relationships (connection with others) and without solitude (time to connect with self) human existence becomes imbalanced or unhealthy. Personality "types" also place us in "either-or boxes" where we ignore the "paradoxical nature of the human self" (Palmer, 1998, p. 66). Palmer suggests that education is often filled with broken paradoxes which separate head from heart, fact from feeling, theory from practice,

teaching from learning resulting in partial views of the world. “Paradoxical thinking requires that we embrace a view of the world in which opposites are joined, so that we see the world clearly and see it whole” (Palmer, 1998, p. 66). I began to imagine flamenco as education*al* where the boundaries within self as well as between self and others become more fluid. I reasoned that if the arts teach that “The either-or approach leaves little room for dialogue, little space to operate” (J Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 143) then a holistic approach to flamenco may assist individuals to commune in their social context. I reasoned that I could not hope to teach flamenco in education with any degree of success without trying to understand this interconnectedness.

I reflected on what van Pappendorp and Friedman observed during apartheid, where South Africans grew up culturally stereotyped in Black, White, Coloured and Indian moulds, creating stereotype barriers which prevented people from understanding one another and producing a prejudiced society. They suggest that dance used for healing and transformation helps to revitalise and empower learners and encourages participation unique from any other field of learning. They suggest that dance provides opportunities to understand cultures beyond one’s own which may lead to new forms of creativity (van Papendorp & Friedman, 1997). I reasoned that while in theory the idea of children being able to dance together in the classroom may seem achievable, from my experience I had observed many challenges which seem to limit the meaningful participation of many learners in a dance experience. Cultural racial gender and social issues together with teacher expertise and curriculum requirements all seemed to me to contribute directly and indirectly to dance generally remaining at the back of the line in arts education as well as general education.

I also reflected on some of the negative cultural influences of the past, where the ‘boxes’ of dance in South Africa often carry negative connotations because of their links to its historical past. Loots, examines the “hierarchy of acceptable art forms, articulated by Western traditions” in South Africa, (Loots, 1995, p. 51) where dance is placed near the bottom of this hierarchy. She suggests that dance (especially classical ballet) became regarded as a luxury easily dispensed with and, in my experience, in many ways has remained in residue form in the South African classroom. Loots notes that classical ballet is only one of the many dance forms available in South Africa and it is regrettable that so many come to view dance training only in terms of classical ballet and all the negativity that it came to be associated with during apartheid South Africa

(Loots, 1995). I reasoned that perhaps dance had suffered from a mis-educative process (Dewey, 1938) during the apartheid era and observed how this legacy still remains in many of the schools I visited.

As I continued to engage with more dance literature, I identified the on-going battle between dance styles for greater status. Friedman observes the structured and competitive nature of contemporary youth dance and that it is claiming equal theatrical status with dance viewed as art (Friedman, 2008b). Perhaps continual classification of dance into 'boxes' where one is perceived to have more importance or status than the other continues to divide the dance world from within. Friedman describes the post-apartheid dance studies curriculum being conceived in an attempt to redress the cultural imbalances of the past, where an increasingly Afro-centric approach has tried to accommodate the multi-cultural nature of South Africa in an attempt to develop a unique South African cultural expression (Friedman, 2008b). This may indeed be so, but developing a new 'cultural expression' would require shared experience. I joined Friedman in asking for answers to difficult questions. She questions what dance styles should be taught to learners and to what end dance education is dedicated in South Africa. I in turn began asking who should decide what is taught and how it is taught? What are the criteria for these decisions? Who should be teaching dance in education? What approach would embrace a multicultural society? What should teacher training for this understanding of dance include? In essence 'how' should dance be approached in mainstream education?

I realised that many of these questions were beyond the scope of this enquiry, but perhaps at primary school level a more inclusive approach should be adopted, where as many dance styles as possible could be made available to learners. I reasoned that learners may benefit from an approach to dance, where they were encouraged to discover more about self and others through dance. If dance is to be pursued as profession, then early exposure to a variety of dance styles might encourage serious training to begin at an early stage helping to raise the technical standards. I have observed that children in their primary school years often exhibit interest in a wide range of areas and that only later depth of interest tends to develop. Therefore "… many and varied excursions into movement of all sorts should constitute the structure of movement experiences for the child …" (R. L. Murray, 1963, p. 36).

Cultural and gender 'boxes'

Why do some choose to dance in a way that is not related to inherited culture? To answer this I reflected on the ideas of Sen, who resists 'boxing' identities into cultural, racial, social and gender classifications (Sen, 2007). I simultaneously reflected on what "names" us (Palmer, 1998, p. 25). Then I began to realise that flamenco had helped me shape an identity and integrity 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. 25). Flamenco gave me an opportunity to identify with something beyond my inherited culture and I reasoned that if my exposure to flamenco had enriched my understanding of self and others, then it might do the same for children growing up in a multicultural environment.

I also reflected how gender influences our sense of identity in dance. Dance pioneer Ruth St. Denis perceived humans as spiritual beings "… reflecting the masculine and feminine qualities which are truth and love" (St Denis & Miller, 1997, p. 23). Dance educator Murray proposes that masculine and feminine movements are enjoyed by both sexes in the modern generation (R. L. Murray, 1963). I see many contemporary dance styles such as 'hip-hop' and 'krumping' having emerged in contemporary society with strong powerful movements and energies, reflecting the "philosophy of an era" (Lancos, 2004, p. 142), they have perhaps enabled many males to dance without feeling that their masculinity was being compromised, while also allowing females to explore overt strength. I reasoned that perhaps the anger and aggression expressed in these dance styles which express powerful movements, may be reflective of a generation's frustrations in contemporary society which are expressed through these powerful physical movements.

I imagined how I could embrace the energies of a new generation which seemed to want to explore beyond gender barriers or 'boxes'. In my experience flamenco has the potential to encourage the individual to explore equally, what I term 'masculine' and 'feminine' energy and to open and explore the gender 'boxes'. I began to imagine how I could teach flamenco in a way that didn't compromise either energy.

Assessment 'boxes'

Shapiro suggests that dance education should embrace the cultural social and ethnic narratives that shape learners' worlds, and that one should introduce the moral discourses that she feels dance education should embrace. She talks of "body knowledge" (Shapiro, 2004, p. 11) involving a critical understanding of the way our deepest feelings have been structured by the culture in which we live, where knowledge is taken in and contained at deep substratum levels and that this embodied knowledge, is distinct from any other form of knowing. She rejects scientific traditions that objectify knowledge and draw us away from coming to know through our bodies where our deepest passions, prejudices and loyalties have become shaped by the culture in which we live. She sees this critical pedagogy of the body accounting for suffering and pain where energy is used to reshape the individual's situation into one that is more in line with compassion justice and care. This is a vision of dance education which Shapiro sees going beyond test scores and job requirements. I began to align my thinking with these ideas.

I became aware of my own inherent resistance to evaluating dance, and flamenco in particular, with a mark or test score. I believe 'body knowledge' is a way of 'knowing' unique from any other, and dance affords opportunities to come to 'know' through the body. I reflected on the difficulties of trying to evaluate or quantify this knowing with a mark? I decided to devise my course in such a way where effort, authenticity and ability to reflect critically, became my criteria for evaluation and where coming to 'know' through the body became valued in its own right.

I am one of the founder members of the organisation, Alianza Flamenca (Alianza Flamenca) which is devoted to the world-wide development of flamenco and which originated in South Africa in 1994. We adopted the policy that flamenco performance cannot be equated with a numerical mark and devised a system of assessments. An external assessor is invited to assess students' progress and provide a comprehensive report on what was observed on that particular day. Because of the subjective nature of such opinion, it was decided that performance should not be given a 'mark', but that technical and stylistic comments of a third party may assist student progress. This approach of not evaluating performance with a 'mark' has encouraged a spirit of individual authenticity in interpretation and has consequently included many dancers who feared performance being labelled and 'boxed' numerically.

As one of the founders of this system, I believe this approach to have tremendous benefits for flamenco dancers. Authenticity is encouraged without the fear of being given a mark. Consequently in devising my course for the educational system where the spirit of numerical evaluation prevails, I found myself once again confronting this notion of, 'a dance performance = a number'. I decided to use a process of immediate feedback through critical reflection to assist progress and to eliminate any numerical evaluation of performance.

I then began to reflect upon the ideas of Frege who suggests that Western thought values individual rights, where the self as opposed to the group is central, whereas in Africa (and many other oral traditional societies throughout the world) the needs and desires of the group take precedence over the individual (Frege, 2004). She sees Western values as having shaped how contemporary dance has developed in South Africa and suggests that we as dance educators should find a new more "African paradigm" (Frege, 2004, p. 73). I began to question this assertion: Why did it have to be 'either-or'? Perhaps I could find a way where I could embrace both Western and African values where the individual and the group are equally valued. I believe like Ickstadt that to teach as our teachers taught us, may not always be appropriate (Ickstadt, 2004). I began to question whether teaching dance, as it had been taught to me, or is taught elsewhere in the world, was appropriate in the context in which I found myself.

Unpacking the 'box'…

I began to 'unpack' the 'flamenco box'. I had decided on the 'what': the challenge now became, the 'how'. What emanated was a combination of my own ideas and the ideas with which I resonated in the literature I was reading. I began conceptualising my understanding of flamenco as education*al*. I realise that "a theoretical position is always open to further development through reflection, testing against experience and criticism" (Pring, 2000, p. 127), and that:

> … individual teachers … have a great deal of theory implicit within their practice. They come to teaching with a range of beliefs about what motivates young people, what they might profitably learn, how their behaviour in the classroom might be managed, what are the key ideas and concepts in the subject matter which they should teach" (Pring, 2000, p. 128).

In my thirty seven years of teaching and performing I too had gathered a number of beliefs with regard to 'what works'. I reasoned that these beliefs required continual re-evaluation in every new context.

According to Zull teachers should refrain from thinking that their ideas are gifts which they give to their students: they should rather be concerned with designing and providing opportunities for students to experience for themselves, in order to develop their own ideas, which in turn generates own theories (Zull, 2006). I reasoned that my idea of flamenco as education*al* was not 'custom made' for mass consumption but perhaps "… action research in one classroom or school can *illuminate* or be suggestive of practice elsewhere" (Pring, 2000, p. 133). I agreed with Foucault who suggests that intellectuals should not consider themselves as needed by the masses to pass on knowledge and that in fact the masses "know" and are capable of expressing that knowing without the aid of the "intellectual" (Foucault, 1977, p. 207). I found myself balanced on the edge of a finely sharpened sword between taking action and imposing my ideas and beliefs on others, but I reasoned that my idea of flamenco as education*al* would continue to evolve as my 'what', 'how' and 'why' were constantly open to revision.

I began by devising a course of eight lessons of flamenco dance for grade five learners at a girls' primary school in Durban. This was the grade I was asked to work with. I engaged in a process of critical reflection before during and after this pilot course. This involved critical reflection with self, learners, teacher and the literature I was reading. My reflections then informed the changes I subsequently made when I later modified my course for grade seven learners at a co-educational school in Durban, which was also the grade I was asked to work with. In both schools, the learners were from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds including African, Asian, and European origins and my enquiry during my research with the grade seven learners included both genders.

I will now give a description of how my approach became modified during my pilot study.

My learning moments during the pilot study

My pilot study was conducted for grade five learners (ten to eleven years of age) at an all girls primary school in Durban. During, and after my pilot study I asked the children as well as the teacher for feedback and for their perceptions of the course. I asked the teacher for written observations and gave her no indication of area of focus. I merely asked for her impressions. During the course, I often sat the children down for an informal 'chat' session where we reflected on what we were experiencing. I also asked the children to write a one page journal in which they could express whatever they felt about the course. I found this feedback from teachers and children extremely useful and began making notes for possible amendments to my course and practice. I also continued to engage with the ideas of other dance educators (Russell, 1987; Sherborne, 1990; Slater, 1974).

The journal activities of the children were very pleasing to receive. I realised that much of what I had gained from their informal reflections during the course was evident in their journals as well. There seemed to be an overwhelming sense of enjoyment and engagement which I found encouraging. They did not however, identify educational issues in a way that gave me further guidance. Perhaps this was due to their age and level of maturity. It was the teacher's reflections that I found the most useful in terms of relevance to educational aims and which I then reflected upon.

Prior to the course the teacher began by observing her difficulties in introducing dance into the curriculum.

> As a Drama teacher from a school that provides excellent support for the Arts- Music Art and Drama- I find Dance is an area that needs to be addressed. More and more children are becoming less able to involve themselves physically in 'playing out' or Role-Play. Even in a warm-up routine in Drama Class it is very difficult to get them to activate the trunk of the body. (Appendix 1)

She identified that the use of the body as means of communication and expression was lacking in many of her students and saw the need to focus on the body as expressive. I resonated with these sentiments. I had decided to approach a school with "excellent support for the Arts" because I reasoned, if I discovered what I had come to suspect (that dance is often marginalised in terms of timetable allocation and perceived educational relevance), then perhaps I could find validation for my concerns.

> "Because of lack of lesson time allotted to the Arts I earmarked Grade 5 as a year in which, for two terms (8-9 lessons) we would experience Dance Drama. But it became more Drama and less Dance, as the lessons progressed." (Appendix1)

The fact that she could only allocate 8 lessons a year to dance made me very aware of the time constraints on a subject like Dance and that the most should be made of the little time given: hence my decision to devise an 8 lesson course.

Because of timetable constraints my classes were held every two weeks. At the conclusion both she and I felt that it would have been better if the classes had been held weekly.

> "It would also be preferable for children to attend classes once a week rather than once a fortnight." (Appendix 1)

I felt the two week 'break' slowed the memorisation process and skills development as well. I know from my own experience that in order to develop technical skills it requires the body to experience regular training at closer intervals. My belief that long breaks also do not facilitate memory retention was confirmed. For this reason I decided to use weekly intervals for classes in my field work.

I was very pleased to see what skills she identified as outcomes of the course.

> The growth in self-esteem was a joy to watch. Listening and memory skills, control, focus, accuracy, rhythm, beat, pace, co-ordination, and expressions were just part of the skills they managed to acquire. (Appendix 1)

Previous teaching experience had revealed to me that these skills can be developed in flamenco and that they can give educational value to the classes. This was now confirmed by the teacher. I became more aware of the importance of the development of technical skills and reflected on how I could improve that in my fieldwork.

> Learners were able to experience the bonding power of teamwork as they joined in the stamping and clapping to the rhythm … the more the child was swept along by the beat the more the beat became the *heartbeat* of the role she began to assume. I saw her slip into another skin as her posture and attitude took on a different shape. All this even before she began to play out the story in a range of expression. Here was the achievement of physical involvement that I had been longing to see. (Appendix 1)

The teacher's observations of the successful integration of the physical and emotional in learners as well as her acknowledgement of the 'bonding power of teamwork' were indications that I had achieved some degree of success in these areas. I had come to realise the potential of flamenco to do this, and I reflected on ways of developing these aspects.

She also confirmed my belief that the intellectual and concentration capacities are challenged in flamenco, but that my use of repetition, however "served as a continual affirmation of what they had and could achieve," as they continued to "build on what they already knew." I believe that dance provides wonderful opportunities to develop the awareness of the value of repetition in the learning process, and flamenco is particularly suited in this regard. It requires rhythmical accuracy and I believe repetition facilitates memorisation and such accuracy. I reflected on how to develop my use of repetition as a core concept.

My intention had been to devise a course that students from diverse cultural and racial backgrounds could access. My previous experience had shown me how many students often resisted learning 'someone else's dance' because of the strong links that dance has to culture. I reflected on how to teach flamenco in such a way that was inclusive. The teacher's observations resonated with my idea that flamenco could be taught in such a way as to 'soften' cultural boundaries:

> I watched each little person start, naturally and without prompting to colour their dance with their own style. I began to understand and appreciate the universality of this dance form. It allows for a freedom of expression that unites yet enables each culture to feel at home. (Appendix 1)

During the course I began to reflect on how to use flamenco to provide opportunities for profound connections with the 'other' and with the 'self'. I began to teach the movements in a way where I tried to avoid 'prompting' or influencing individual interpretation. I tried to allow students to 'interpret' the movements or choreography in a way that they chose to. I began to realise that this 'freedom' was central to creativity authenticity and participation.

I reflected on the idea of using movement to share who one is with others as a means of connection. I reasoned that mutual interchange forms the foundation of individual and collective learning and possible transformation and that fundamental to sharing is

the opportunity to participate. My desire to include as many children as possible in this sharing process became the basis for two core concepts in my course: 'inclusivity' and 'communication'.

I reasoned that being able to participate, and feeling included, was fundamental to communication. This was confirmed when the teacher remarked that she:

> …. particularly enjoyed the caring pace at which she [Linda] taught, somehow managing to scoop all levels to a point where everyone could understand. Steps and sequences were regularly revised and work consolidated with great care so that no-one felt out of their depth … the vast majority did involve themselves physically socially and emotionally in the activity.
>
> (Appendix 1)

As I reflected on connection within self and beyond self I became fascinated by the idea of sharing self with others through flamenco. I reasoned that I needed to lead by example, and that I also needed to share who I was with the children and the teacher, thereby encouraging them to share who they were with me and others. I reflected on how the 'boundaries' between individuals could be perceived of as more permeable.

At the conclusion of the pilot study I reflected on what I had learnt and so did the teacher:

> I think a life lesson I have learnt was when Linda said to the children that they should count the beat for themselves - that she was not going to think for them! (Paradigm shift for me!) It made me realise that I do far too much thinking (setting up) on behalf of the learners- not allowing them to think for themselves. (Appendix 1)

It was at this point that I reflected on the importance of not only *allowing* students to think for themselves but *encouraging* them to do so. I believe flamenco develops 'speed thinking' and that this requires students to take responsibility for their learning and not rely on others to think for them. There comes a point when the teacher has to step back, for the student to take ownership of learning and performance. I began to reflect on how this could be developed. I also reflected on how easy it is as an 'all knowing' dance specialist to be tempted to merely 'transfer' this 'knowledge' to others. My ability to remain 'open' to learning from others seemed intrinsic to providing opportunities for students to think for themselves. I reasoned that this did not mean that what I had come to know as a specialist was of little or no value. It merely meant that my *knowing* is in *open* relationship with others *knowing* and that I should encourage and respect this in my classes.

Whitehead suggests that in educational relationships teachers should express "… a responsibility toward the other in a way that is intended to express a respect for the responsibility of the other for themselves"(Whitehead, 2008, p. 14). I reflected on how I perhaps felt responsible *for* students, and that this involves an imbalanced ego-centric attitude, whereas, being responsible *towards* them implied a more balanced mutual flow of energy. I became instinctively drawn to the idea of the latter.

More 'boxes'

At the conclusion of the pilot study I felt that the *emotional* expression through movement could have been more fully explored. I felt that the 'creativity' of individuals could also have been more developed. I began to reflect on how to develop them in my field work and decided to make 'emotion' and 'creativity' another two areas of focus. I reasoned that perhaps the time allocations for creativity should be extended and perhaps smaller groups could be encouraged. I began to reflect on how I would encourage more 'emotional' expression through movement through a more holistic teaching approach.

I began to reflect on the literature I was reading and on how 'boxed' emotions are a danger to the health of the individual as well as society. Murray feels that a child who is forced to resist its natural impulse to express emotions "will often explode or retreat in less desirable directions"(R. L. Murray, 1963, p. 12). She suggests that children naturally express their inner emotional life through movement, and perhaps often more freely than adults do, who may have learnt to minimise or even eliminate the expression of their inner life. Murray insists that this free expression should be encouraged as much as possible in a child's life. I began reflecting on the many social challenges in South African society, where aggression and violence often play a prominent role in many children's lives. I reasoned that perhaps finding a "safe outlet" for emotions in dance could benefit some children (R. L. Murray, 1963, p. 5). I began to reflect on how to encourage and provide an emotional outlet which was 'safe' for learners.

Belling suggests that creative outlets for anger and other emotions provide release and can promote improved emotional health, thereby contributing to the overall health (Belling, 2004). Belling suggests body awareness is key to maintaining one's health and that movement with awareness, (which is what I see dance as), provides

opportunities for emotions to move through the body. In this way they find release instead of getting 'stuck' in the body. I began to reflect the origins of flamenco which emerged out of the need to 'release' emotional suffering and helped social outcasts to deal with intolerable social conditions (T. Mitchell, 1994) and I began making connections.

Belling sees dance as holistic allowing for explorations into the mind-body relationship which encompasses the physical mental and emotional aspects of health (Belling, 2004). I too resist another set of 'boxes' that attempt to divide my being. I do not believe that I am a combination of distinct 'boxes' of mind, body and soul. I discovered that this view is supported by health practitioners such as Belling and scientists such as Pert (Pert, 1998). Pert discovered in her research that:

> … virtually all illnesses, if not psychosomatic in foundation, has a definite psychosomatic component. Recent technological innovations have allowed us to examine the molecular basis of the emotions, and to begin to understand how the molecules of our emotions share intimate connections with, and indeed are inseparable from, our physiology. It is the emotions, I have come to see, that link mind and body. This more holistic approach compliments the reductionist view, expanding it rather than replacing it, and offers a new way to think about health and disease- not just for scientists but for the lay person also (Pert, 1998, pp. 18-19).

In the findings of Pert I found scientific proof of what I had come to believe: the mind, body and emotions are connected and mutually influenced. I intuitively 'felt' that this interconnected approach to 'being' would find more prominence in my future classes. I began to reflect upon the educational relevance of such a holistic approach.
I reasoned that if emotional well being could influence physical and mental well being then perhaps I should reflect on its possible educational benefits.

According to Goleman learning how to control emotional release may be even more important in determining success than the IQ of an individual (Goleman, 1995, p. ix). Boler also recognises the importance of being able to recognise and interpret emotions correctly (Boler, 1999). According to Boler, broadening ones range of emotional expression, as well as recognition of emotions that make one feel good is essential to emotional intelligence. I reflected on her insistence on learning to verbally appreciate ones peers' qualities, and to control the expression of emotions in certain circumstances, as well as learning tolerance and respect when faced with cultural differences. These, Boler describes as strong indications of emotional intelligence. Here

I began to reflect on how I could encourage and nurture the development of emotional intelligence in my flamenco class.

I reasoned that perhaps recognition of emotions which have become 'boxed' and knowledge of how to allow for their release in a way that doesn't harm others, places the individual in the role of master rather than slave. I began to reflect on flamenco being particularly suited to this end, as I believe it embraces the expression and exploration of the full spectrum of human emotions and does not restrict the individual to only those emotions which may be socially acceptable. In its origins flamenco served that exact purpose where the 'darker' emotions of anger and depression found 'release' through song and dance. I began to reflect on my challenge: to create an environment of trust which would be conducive to the release of any emotion. I reasoned that this could only take place in a 'safe' environment where this release is anticipated and respected. I began to reason that perhaps the answer lay in how I developed and encouraged group work in relation to individual expression. I began to consider 'group/individual work' as another core concept in my teaching.

The teacher's responses during the pilot study also made me aware of the extent of my personal influence on her and on the students. She spoke of the fact that I had made a learning space which was appreciated by all who participated.

> Classes were conducted with professional ease, passion and great warmth. I never once heard Linda raise her voice and yet the children followed instructions respectfully and with great joy. It was a very special place- and time. (Appendix 1)

I realised with greater intensity the profound influence I have over the quality of experience in my classes and that this endowed me with great responsibility to provide and protect that "special place –time". I reflected on my own experience as a dancer and how I had come to appreciate and value the 'sacredness' of the learning environment. Respect for this 'space' became woven into the fabric of my classes.
In order to do this I assumed a role of co-ordinator and guide rather than the 'all knowing dance instructor' in the class. I reasoned that I wanted to 'reduce' my perceived position as an authority figure and to become more nurturing and protective of the 'sacred space' conducive for individual emotional expression. I likened my approach to that of a 'gardener' preparing the 'soil' for healthy growth.

I reflected on what Palmer suggests, that teachers should endeavour to explore a more subject-centred approach to teaching where neither teacher nor student are at the centre of attention, but rather the subject is (Palmer, 1998). I began to envision flamenco in the centre of a circle around and in which I and learners explored together. This was the perspective which I endeavoured to adopt in my field work: a subject-centred approach which anticipated new perspectives or interpretations of the 'subject' as we opened the 'flamenco box' together.

Aaronsohn suggests that teachers should develop the courage and freedom to "colour outside the lines" (Aaronsohn, 2003, p. 14). With childlike anticipation I began to reflect on how the students and I could explore the boundaries beyond many 'boxes' or 'lines'. I believe that flamenco is constantly inviting one to go beyond the given and that a step is a step is a step … I believe what matters is what the individual does with the step and if it reveals something of the individual. Palmer suggests that all that is required is the teacher's passion for the learning process (Palmer, 1998). I reflected further on my practice as a flamenco 'purist' and 'pioneer'. I realised that while the 'box' may be comfortable, I was also passionately drawn to the 'unknown' beyond the 'box': to explore beyond the boundaries of flamenco as entertainment, as cathartic experience and the exclusive property of a few and to explore its potential in education.

The teacher also observed in the pilot study, the unique relationship that flamenco 'audience' has with its performers and how it differs from that of Music and Drama. She observed the interdependent nature of the relationship of audience and performer where:

> … the audience not only clap along in time, but become so totally involved in *matching* the pace and the mood that they become part of the performance. (Appendix 1)

I began to reflect on how this interrelated connection of audience and performers could provide opportunities for individuals to connect and develop sensitivity towards one another's performance. I felt drawn to explore developing this empathetic relationship of audience and performer further.

The teacher also observed the enjoyment which was experienced by the children:

> Enthusiasm was rife with children bubbling over with excitement as I led them to each class … as soon as the music started and the exercises began, an infectious smile spread over the face of each child … I loved seeing the joy and sense of achievement in each learner. I loved the way they responded … I know they thoroughly enjoyed this deeply enriching learning experience. (Appendix 1)

This was confirmed in the journal activities which children gave to me at the conclusion of the course where their enjoyment was very evident. This reaffirmed my belief that children engage more fully, when they perceive the activity, as fun or enjoyable. I reflected on how fundamental this was to motivation in the learning process and that I would make 'fun' another 'thread' woven into classes.

My reflections before, during and after my pilot study, together with reflection on the literature I was reading, transformed into many of the core concepts and values which I then endeavoured to develop and weave into the fabric of my classes. What emerged was my idea of flamenco as education*al*.

Flamenco as education*al*

I conducted my research with grade seven learners at a co-educational primary school in Durban to which I had been invited. I decided to use a combination of informal conversations, and written reflections together with video recordings in order to provide a variety of perspectives of the learning experience. I then used these to reflect and meta-reflect upon using personal and existing theory to inform my analysis.

I taught two one hour classes per week over a period of one month. I gave each class a basic structure.

Greeting

Reflection **Warm-up**

Repetition **Recall**

Reflection **Repetition**

New Work

In my reflections and analysis of the data I give explanations of why I chose this structure and what happened. This structure emerged as a combination of what had 'worked' previously in my teaching and pilot study, as well as what I felt was necessary in each specific class. I used this to provide the framework around which I allowed creativity to flow. Each of the eight classes had a specific focus which I introduced where appropriate and which then became woven into each subsequent class in varying degrees thereafter.

1) Intellectual and physical skill.
2) Emotional expression.
3) Group work.
4) Partner work.
5) Creativity.
6) Communication.
7) Skills development.
8) Performance.

I endeavoured to make the pedagogical content of each class as physically and stylistically accessible as possible and to explore the possibilities of dancing flamenco without a singer or guitarist. I did this because in the early stages of learning flamenco I do not believe music or songs are mandatory and in South Africa many classrooms don't have access to them. I also believe that while the singer and musician are an added bonus, they are not essential to experience emotion through movement. I also wanted to use the power of the group as an incentive to achieve accuracy in rhythm.

As the course progressed and the levels of individual ability became more evident, I modified my approach. I did not impose traditional flamenco style through demonstration, but allowed learners to express their own individual style through their movements as they interpreted the choreography. I focused on developing sound through stamping and clapping techniques while endeavouring to give the learners a good physical work out. I included time for individual creativity, where I encouraged students to create their own dance/ rhythmic improvisations. I then encouraged them to perform them for the rest of the class to enjoy and give constructive critique. I allowed learners to choose to work alone, or in groupings of their choice, in order to allow maximum participation and enjoyment.

I used recordings of flamenco music as means to reflect on and explore emotional expression through the body. I used simple combinations of stamping and clapping, as I had realised from previous experience that they were often accessible to learners who had had little or no exposure to dance, and often found great appeal amongst the boys. I tried to engage those with previous dance experience in the complexities of the timing and musical phrasing in flamenco by drawing their attention to the 'counting' of rhythmic combinations. I choreographed a dance aimed to challenge and stimulate learners of various abilities and to engage their emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual abilities. I then taught this to learners during the eight hour course.

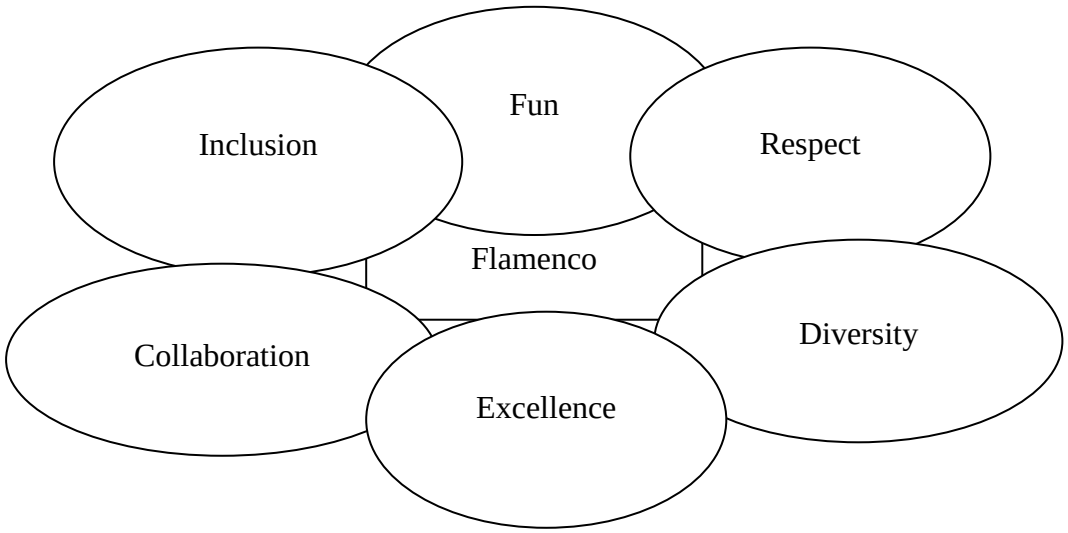
I tried to encourage respect for individual difference as well as mutual collaboration. I did this by dividing the class up into smaller groups to allow students to reflect on their own and others' progress. I encouraged them to clap the rhythm for one another and to develop sensitivity to the performers' needs and skills. I also encouraged them to give constructive critique rather than destructive criticism in order to reduce the fear of peer ridicule when students took emotional and physical 'risks'.

Because I believe flamenco dancers do not have to conform to a physical, racial or gender ideal that some may not see as achievable or even desirable, I tried to remain sensitive to this and encouraged all to participate. I encouraged learners to respect individual difference and engage with one another with sensitivity. I encouraged respect for the sacredness of the private experience within the group as well as a sense of community in the class. I encouraged them to find their 'voice' and to 'speak' as

well as provide others with support as they allowed them to ‘speak’ and find their ‘voice’. This ‘voice’ was the physical voice as opposed to the vocal or literal voice.

I linked the individual experience to the social experience in order to develop awareness of common ground and individual authenticity. I did this by incorporating many times of reflection where before, after and during action I gathered the class together and we sat down as a group to reflect individually and collectively on our experiences. I tried to create “a safe space where reason, understanding, dialogue and critical engagement are available to all …”(Giroux & Giroux, 2008, p. 188). I encouraged “critical dialogue” resulting in “horizontal rather than vertical relations of power” (Jaramillo & McLaren, 2008, p. 206) because “how I experience the world is different from how you experience the world, and both our interpretations matter” (Meyer, 2008, p. 218). Therefore, all interpretations of the choreography ‘mattered’. During our times of reflection, I encouraged awareness of the uncertainty of knowledge and how it is relative to context (Frame, 2003).

I encouraged work that was fun in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. I encouraged discipline and ‘personal best’ and wove these values into each class. While I submit a diagram of these values I feel that this only serves to assist identification. They should not to be viewed in isolation or as ‘boxed’ but rather as continually merging and informing and transforming one another.



Flamenco as educatio*nal* is my ‘new’ understanding/knowledge which emerged from my intervention. My personal interpretation of flamenco as educatio*nal* helped me to

transform many aspects of flamenco into something ‘new’ while simultaneously transforming me and others. Many purists may reject my approach fearing the ‘contamination’ of flamenco and its consequential transformation into something unrecognisable. I cannot help but reflect upon the fact that transformation is inevitable in any dance form whenever it interacts with new social influences. This is the organic nature of dance: it is continually influencing and being influenced. I believe flamenco is no exception.