

DANCING INTO UBUNTU

DANCING INTO UBUNTU:
INQUIRING INTO PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF KPANLOGO,
A WEST AFRICAN DANCE

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Thesis

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For my late father

Sydney Jeffery Pingué

Abstract

This thesis questions what it was like for pre-service teachers registered in a Bachelor of Education program to experience Kpanlogo, a West African dance from Ghana. Over a period of two years, the primary researcher introduced this dance to her peers first as a pre-service teacher, and then as a graduate student in a variety of ways: 1) practicing it for a performance at a community building talent show on campus, 2) learning it through a professional development workshop, and 3) teaching it to intermediate students at a local school, on two different occasions. Five pre-service teachers responded to an invitation to participate in a phenomenological study about their experiences. The two research questions which guided the interviews were: 1) What was it like to experience Kpanlogo, a West African dance, as a pre-service teacher? 2) What was it like as a pre-service teacher to teach students Kpanlogo? The conceptual framework of Sankofa Cyclical Waves, situated in a collectivist African Worldview orients us to the philosophy of Ubuntu, which posits that humanness is found and cultivated within community. Sankofa, a Ghanaian proverb which encourages its people to go back, physically or spiritually, to retrieve what was once lost or forgotten was used as a particular path to analyze the lived experiences of the pre-service teachers. In this thesis the Sankofa Cyclical Waves provided a structure to identify their various levels of understanding Ubuntu. Experiences analyzed as being novice in nature were awkward at the start, then as the dancer moves towards the end of the continuum, towards Ubuntu, the dancer moves through a series of waves as they become more familiar with rhythms, movements, African dance attire, and becoming a part of the whole; the Other's community.

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Prelude to Kpanlogo ('Pan-lo-go')

Back in the Day

The six foot high snow-plowed snow banks at the end of our driveway in northern Manitoba was a far cry from the sunny, palm tree-lined streets of Montego Bay, Jamaica. On the island, I was accustomed to hearing reggae music blasting from our neighbor's porch, but in contrast, in Canada I was getting used to hearing the sound of the wind blowing and rattling outside my bedroom window. Seeing snow for the very first time when I was five years old, and just beginning kindergarten, was mesmerizing, but it was not until my adolescent years that I discovered that what I was truly missing was not only the warm weather and sandy beaches, but also the rich culture I left behind on the island I used to call home.

Being of Afro-Caribbean descent and growing up in a small northern Canadian community shaped my view of myself and kept me searching for a part of me which was inaccessible in my knee-deep, snow-filled backyard, nor on my tobogganing play-dates, nor found in the love of my Sasquatch-feet fur boots. Even my exposure to Caribbean culture through a grassroots developed, Afro-Caribbean association was not always enough to quench my thirst for my culture. It did, however plant a seed of curiosity in me to learn more about African history, music and traditional African dance. Although there was always opportunity to socialize with other children and families of Caribbean descent in this quaint northern town, it only sparked a tiny flame that would grow into fiery passion for a part of my history that was disrupted when my parents immigrated to Canada for a better life.

It is the rhythmic beat of the African drum, the joyous African dancer's energetic footwork and pulsating torso that provokes me to discover more about who I am. It ignites a quest in me to inquire who my ancestors were, where they came from and my desire to

validate their knowledge and ways of knowing. I have come to realize that African dance allows me to keep alive what my ancestors lived. Though I was not born on the continent of Africa, I have often been told by newly emigrated African acquaintances that “it’s in my blood”. Indeed, African dance connects me to a culture that I have never experienced firsthand, yet it courses through my veins – a kind of sense-memory, intangible essence, only becoming visual when my choreography is seen. It is this intangible passion that is at the centre of my intrigue for African dance. It is at the core of my desire to teach African dance to adults in fitness classes, children in schools, community centres, churches, and also to my peers, who are pre-service teachers in my Bachelor of Education program.

Although Africa is a vast continent with diverse cultures, multiple languages and countless musical genres it is still connected by a few common threads that unite its people. The term ‘*African dance*’ is, therefore, a broad expression, in light of the vast amount of countries, and traditions present on the continent. This term is situated in a Pan-Africanist perspective. It is one where African dance serves the brotherhood of all Africans in a common manner for celebration, healing, entertainment, and rituals (Welsh-Asante, K, 1985). This oneness is also apparent in African Worldview as a holistic, community-based philosophy connecting mind, body, spirit in all aspects of life, including dance, faith and humanity (Monteiro & Wall, 2011). Therefore, for the sake of simplicity, in this inquiry I will refer to ‘*African dance*’ in general terms, encompassing all forms of traditional dances across the continent. (Refer to *Figure 1. African Dance Unites*, for an example of how Pan-Africanism serves as unification between two dancers from the diaspora and Africa).



Figure 1. African Dance Unites. Sophia Okafor and Kahmaria Pingue on stage at the Saskatoon Reggae Festival and Riverlanding, Saskatoon, SK (2010). This is an example of the Pan-Africanism and its diasporic connection to African dance. Sophia is of Nigerian heritage and Kahmaria is of Jamaican heritage, yet African dance unites them as people of African descent.

There are some aspects of African dance that just seem to come easily to me. When I had the opportunity to dance with a local dance troupe in Vancouver, B.C. it became apparent to my instructor who was from Nigeria, that I was able to pick up the dance sequences quickly and before long she asked me to be a substitute instructor when she was away. I understood the language of the drum and the drum cues easily and I could tie a headwrap or sarong in multiple styles like nobody's business. I could sit for hours doing beadwork and making dance costumes just because the colours of the fabrics made me so excited to wear them. I lived and breathed to be adorned with multicoloured beads and shiny white cowrie shells, whether or not I was performing. Though I had never visited any country in Africa, and had no close family or relatives directly from there, African dance and African culture, in general, intrigued me and I felt very connected to it. Many African friends and even strangers I just met often assumed I was from there; possibly because I identified with the culture as though it was my own. African dance became a part of my exercise regimen for many years and also became a

part of my healing journey during the difficult time in my life when I became a single parent. My children were very young and I needed an outlet of expression. Participating in African dance classes, performing and sharing it with others were the constant thing in my life that brought me the most joy and strength.

Call and Response

Call and Response is a traditional chanting pattern that originates on the continent of Africa, between a leader and a group of people in corporate verbal exchange. It is connected to the culture and their communal way of life. It unifies a group of people signifying verbal agreement with one another and strengthens them as a whole. For instance, as the leader of a group calls out a particular line or a verse, the body (physically, mentally and corporately) responds in unison with the second half, or ‘answer’ related to that verse. It is seen in operation on the African continent, and in diasporic countries such as Brazil, the Caribbean and North America. It is used in many facets of African society, particularly in songs, and music, and often heard in children’s songs and rhymes and chants. It is used to conjure up strength during physical labour, ignite The Spirit in church services, evoke the fierce demeanour of warriors in battle, and cue dancers synchronized movements in dance troupes. In Ghana, for instance, it is used as a universal call to action, and many are familiar with it regardless of the various different indigenous languages spoken in their country. It is used to engage dancers as a leader calls; “chobuey” meaning “Are you ready?”, and the group responds “Yey!” meaning “yes”. The leader usually calls this out three times, all the while evoking a physical and mental preparedness in the dancers.

When Culture Calls

At 7 years old, while watching a troupe of Afro-Caribbean dancers in a local mall in Northern Manitoba, I was mesmerized. I sensed the meaning of each dance step. It came alive in me, spoken through the storytelling of movement, drum beats, silk woven kente fabric, adornment of multi-coloured beads, cowrie shells, and uniquely twisted head wraps. As I watched them twirl about in full-circle skirts, I was finally home. The following figure helps to illustrate this. (*Figure 2. Culture, Identity & Circle Skirts*)



Figure 2. Culture, Identity & Circle Skirts. The African Princess Dance Troupe, are performing a Caribbean Calypso dance at the Odeon Events Centre, Saskatoon, SK, (2011). The long circle skirts and headwraps are classic costumes worn for Caribbean folk dancing, designed and sewn by Kahmaria Pingue. The girls loved to twirl around in them as the skirts ballooned outwards like umbrellas. This is an example of a present-day manifestation of a childhood representation of cultural identity.

What I witnessed in the mall that day, as a young girl, was a visual representation of self, (Hall, 1997) reflected and etched into my subconscious. It was an impressionable age for me

and what I saw propelled me subconsciously forward in time, into the future and the *fullness* of what I wanted to become. According to van Manen, “Lived time is also experienced as telos: in terms of the wishes, plans and goals we strive for in life. Our sense of identity is experienced in terms of our childhood, the periods of our working or love life, and so forth.” (van Manen, 2014, p. 306). van Manen’s words made me wonder; if one’s childhood is not exposed to representations that reflect one’s culture, will one’s sense of identity, or lack of it, manifested into something one longs for? I highlight Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) theory that consciousness and one’s own history may be connected, “Consciousness must be faced with its own unreflected life in things and awakened to its own history which it was forgetting: such is the true part that philosophical reflection has to play and thus we arrive at a true theory of attention”, (p. 36). Vision is indeterminate, according to Merleau-Ponty, but also connected to our consciousness which must be reflected upon to discover what is hidden.

Culture called me that day. Like the roots of a tree, I discovered my foundation and my truth, revealed through African dance and the culture, but what about others? Is it possible and if so, how can other’s consciousness be awakened to their own history which they are forgetting?

In this inquiry I chose to respond to the call of culture that beckoned me as a child, as I stood in front of the Caribbean dancers in a small mall in Thompson, Manitoba. Since then, all my life I have been trying to answer that call through learning about my African roots, through African dance instruction, and now attempt to answer that call through the writing of a new discourse that completes the verse that African culture, initiated.

My Passion, My Pulse

It was in speaking with another student, who was also studying phenomenology, that my passion was validated. As we spoke about orienting to the phenomenon, she asked me to write about how I came to be interested in researching through a phenomenological lens. It was then that I realized that my purpose for doing phenomenology *had a name*. She called it “*my pulse*” and “*my fire*”. I thought this was very fitting for African dance, because dancing for me was like evoking the fire within- your heart rate increases, you get hot, you sweat, you connect with your ancestors, you release your burdens, and you feel great.¹ Primus (1968) describes the freeing of the body when engaged in African dance but also makes note of the dances’ connection with spirituality.

To understand the African dance adequately, one should have some knowledge of African religions, for in the ecstasy of a religious experience the dancer becomes a god-form and the body frees itself of its structural limitations. (Primus, cited in Welsh-Asante, 1996, p. 10)

My pulse, this freeing release, which I found in African dance, became the focus of my phenomenological research, and I was now able to delve deeper into understanding the essence of it.

Orienting to the Phenomenon of Pre-Service Teachers Learning Kpanlogo

Today, as a certified teacher, African dance instructor, and self-proclaimed Pan-African Activist, I have learned through performing and instructing, that the value of African

²...dance is a physical behavior that embodies many curative properties through movement, rhythms, self-expression, communion, as well as the mechanisms of cathartic release. These properties allow individuals to shift emotional states, often times creating an experience of *wholeness*. The expression of emotion through dance is often stated to be organic, natural and immediate (Leseho & Maxwell, 2010). The rapid motion in dance is stated to be especially intoxicating often times, leading to trance.”

dance is inherently connected with its culture. I have witnessed how it is vital to embodying each dance step, particularly for a student of African descent whose culture, [very much like myself at their age], is crucial to their identity and self-worth (Franklin, 2013; Asante, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1992). When I was an Educational Assistant some years ago, as an extracurricular activity I volunteered as an African dance instructor and coached girls from the ages 7 to 14 for performances and then I watched them grow and develop into a fully independently functioning dance troupe at the ages 15 to 19 years old. Therefore, I can attest to the remarkable benefits of African dance. (Refer to *Figure 2. Student African Dance Troupe (grades 5 – grade 8)*, and *Figure 3. African Princess Dance Troupe at Saskatoon FolkFest*).



Figure 3. Student African Dance Troupe (grade 5 –grade 8) These elementary school students are wearing colourful African printed sarongs as they perform for another elementary school. This illustrates the pride they had given the opportunity to share their culture, through African dance, with others. It is also an example of the opportunity given to students of non-African descent to be able to watch and learn from them (Saskatoon, SK, 2005).



Figure 4. The African Princesses Dance Troupe at Saskatoon Folkfest, Francophone Pavilion (2011) – The troupe was performing to represent French-speaking African countries. This is an example of the growth in self-esteem and pride that the students who performed together for 5 years, (since grade 4/5) and naturally formed a dance troupe to share their culture at various local schools and events.

The personal and academic growth of these boys and girls who immigrated to Canada as refugees, many who seldom smiled, yet found a place of solace in making beaded ankle shakers, waist beads, wearing African print sarongs and dancing to music from their home countries, has been amazing to witness. Their growth as students was also celebrated by their classroom teachers who witnessed their growth. These students learned that their cultural dance tells a story about their ancestry, their knowledge and *ways of knowing*; the way their ancestors acquired knowledge, their thought processes, what they valued as a community and what they, as a society considered valuable. Similarly, Clarke (2013) discusses how dance is

an important means of teaching and preserving the culture and identity of Yakama American Indian youth.

Yakama American Indians, dance method of internalizing positive messages about their indigenous identities, thereby enhancing their sense of cultural pride (Jacob, 2012, p 466-467) such attributes of dance therapy are highly beneficial for orphans, having lost parental guidance, and displaced persons, having lost their geographical identity. (Clarke, 2013, p. 5-6)

The students I taught were particularly proud to have the opportunity to showcase their talents at various school related events, because they became the experts in African dance, and they could share their expertise with their peers. Witnessing how impactful African dance was in a school environment beckoned me to question how more opportunities for learning African dance could be accessed by all students. Little did I know, at that time, that this experience would spark a fire in me that would lead me to this inquiry, investigating the lived experiences of pre-service teachers and what it is like for them to learn Kpanlogo. It became evident in my later years that I was committed to answering the call through my own lived inquiry by becoming an African dance instructor, and classroom teacher hoping to connect with, and fulfill the needs of marginalized students.

Chapter One: Introduction

I brought out my clothesbasket full of multicolored kitenge and we all bent over it rummaging through the basket bubbling with fabric to find the colour and size we wanted to put on. “What mood am I in today?” I heard Amelia say as she tried to choose between a bright orange and blue kitenge and a brown with gold piece. I watched as they confidently wrapped it around their waists as I taught them to wear it some weeks before. They tie a knot in front of their stomachs, pulling it tightly, accentuating the curve on their hips. As the six of us stood in a circle, facing each other, we marched to the beat of the drum, first slowly and then gradually faster. They watched my feet. Every step I took, they took also. I put my hands on my hips, they followed. I moved my torso forward and then pulled it back to accentuate another rhythm in the music as I explained; “this is what makes our movements feel like dancing and not marching” I saw one of them nod and her facial expressions light up. “Oh can you feel the difference?” I ask. Gail giggled, and Amelia exhaled a long breath; “Oooh yeeeah!” We took time to listen to the double beat that accentuated the first, and we pushed and pulled our torsos in and out, in and out, as we kept our feet moving to the stronger, louder, down beat. “This is kinda like rubbing your tummy and patting your head!” I heard Aneka exclaim. We all laughed joyously as we thought about the multi-task of our dance moves. Then I bent my knees to release the rotation of my hips and they bent their knees also. “Can you feel the difference? I ask again. “Your hips are no longer restricted. The range of motion in your hips is less limited, and now you are free to dance.” I watched as all five pre-service teachers pushed their hips forward and then pulled them back. Some used their shoulders and others did not bend down quite far enough so I bent my knees lower to

encourage a deeper dip in their steps. I exaggerated my belly moving in and out to help them focus on their lower body and isolate their upper body. We took a step backwards; keeping our weight on our front foot then bringing it forward, back together as a pair with the other foot and then switched feet one at a time. "One, two, three, one two, three," I count out loud. "This is a tri-step which is the basis of dances like the Salsa and Samba from Latin America" I explain. Their eyes told me they understood the connection, and I quickly moved my body to the West African drum beat, but with Salsa-like movements. Then I stretched out my hands at my side at shoulder height, speeding up my steps to show how the Samba could easily be done with the same steps, but on a faster beat. The pre-service teachers all smiled as their eyebrows rose in amazement.

Next we swung both our arms out and upward, above our heads, as our feet moved in time with the drum beat. I asked them what it looks like (reminding them that they too could question their future students this way to make it more interactive). When I heard someone reply; "a bird, I agree; "Yes, birds are graceful creatures, just like a butterfly. Women are encouraged to be graceful and carry themselves with poise which is what you are 'saying' in this dance. You are saying you are ready for life as a woman because you have learned the ways of a woman- grace and poise, respect for yourself and can walk skillfully with confidence." I demonstrated the African butterfly dance steps to the pre-service teachers who have been practicing with me for the past two weeks. We bend their knees, lean forward, then step right, back to centre, left and back to centre again, all the while pushing their torso out to the front, then concave inward, and also rounding the back. We go through the steps slowly and then in 'double time'. "That's when the fun begins" I tell them. "When we move to the beat in double time, we begin to get the real feel of the dance because we are able to stop

'thinking too much' and just go with the flow of the movement," I say, as I encourage them to try moving faster. I invite them to clap with me as we stomp out the beat, all the while clapping faster and faster, and marching in time with our clapping. Next we add the extension of the arms again. We wave our arms back and forth faster with our faster steps. Our torso is moving rhythmically, to the drum beat. "Now we're flying!"

This phenomenological study intends to turn towards the phenomenon of teaching and learning a West African dance. These pre-service teachers are engaged in the instruction of African-derived dance movement taught by myself, the researcher, at the time of the above activity. I wonder what it is like to be involved in a discourse that uses words from languages spoken on the African continent while learning a traditional African dance. I wonder what is like to be physically learning about the cultural practices, gender roles, and values of a West African community. By listening to African drums and experiencing the flow of rhythmic movements, I wonder what it like is to move through a traditional story of identity, and womanhood. I wonder what it is like to embody the culture that is situated in a community of praxis that is an *African dance*.

Introducing... the Dancers: Pre-Service Teacher Participants

The following five pre-service teachers volunteered to be interviewed for this inquiry and all of their names have been changed for anonymity.

Amelia is a pre-service teacher of Asian Canadian heritage studying in the Bachelor of Education program. She was one of five pre-service teachers who participated in an African dance workshop and then assisted in instructing African dance at an intermediate school. She was a bit nervous at first, but still curious about learning how to do African dance and also about learning more of the history surrounding it. I found her to be someone who was not

afraid to speak her thoughts, as she was eager to articulate her perspectives on anything I asked. She was very open about sharing her experience and how the dance workshops caused her to be a little more adventurous.

Helene is a Caucasian Canadian of European descent and is a pre-service teacher in her second semester. She was just finishing up her first semester and preparing to go to practicum when her entire class participated in a one-day African dance workshop with me and my drummer. As I interview her, she seems very straight forward about her experience and relays her thoughts to me in a very matter-of-a-fact tone. Helene's dance history is extensive, being experienced in jazz, ballet, lyrical and modern dance. She is proud to disclose her accomplishments such as dancing the lead in a musical production. She explains that in doing African dance she was challenged to go beyond her comfort zone of the talent she thought she already had. I thought that she exhibited courage in this way, because to me, as I interviewed her, she did seem like the type of person with the confidence to try a dance she had never done before.

Gail is a first year pre-service teacher of East Indian descent who expressed her love of all kinds of music, but that she did not dance very much. African dance was a very new genre for her and her classmate who she paired up with for a class project. They both asked me to teach them African dance privately and she accompanied her classmate when they decided it would be helpful to observe my instruction of a children's class at a local community centre. They both participated in a spontaneous workshop I did in one of their Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) classes and became intrigued about African dance. They were both curious about their potential to learn it and write about it in their journals for a class project regarding new learning experiences. They saw it as an opportunity to try something new and move out of

their comfort zones. I welcomed them for a visit at the community centre to watch me and they also participated in another practice session with me on their own time. When the opportunity came for them to learn more about African dance and to teach at the intermediate school with their peers, they felt comfortable with the idea and volunteered. More practices would be required, but they were willing to attend each one and were excited when the day arrived to go teach Kpanlogo at the school.

Viola is a French Canadian woman of Portuguese descent who was one of my peers during my Bachelor of Education program, in 2013-2014. She was open to dancing with our *Comprehensive School Health (CSH)* cohort for the B.Ed. talent show and did not hesitate to volunteer when we were invited to go to the intermediate school to teach African dance. She was very energetic and often ready to dance in a heartbeat. I remember when we did gym activities as a class and when we had a guest hip-hop instructor come in to give a workshop that she seemed like a physically active person. She disclosed that she had some informal dance experiences and that she was exposed to hip-hop and other popular dances in public spaces, so she was not shy when it came to trying a new movement. At the time of our interview she was employed as an elementary school teacher for grade five students.

Aneka is a first year student in the Bachelor of Education program who initially seemed to view African dance as a form of exercise and a social activity for making new friends. She is of Middle Eastern descent and dances well, but was not always confident about her body image, or about her dance capabilities, but her overall perspective about participating was positive and she had an attitude of openness towards learning about the meaning behind the movements. She and another peer expressed interest outside of class time to learn more by

observing one of my children's dance classes, and that gave me confidence to ask her to participate in teaching at the intermediate school.

Introducing the Dance: Kpanlogo

Kpanlogo (PAN-LO-GO) is the name of a dance from Ghana, West Africa, which the pre-service teachers learned. It was first choreographed by youth in Accra, Ghana in the 1960's influenced by the American Rock & Roll era. (Salm & Falola, 2002) and would be classified by Welsh-Asante (1985) as a neo-traditional African dance, which exhibits the eight common characteristics of all dances that originated from the continent of Africa (Welsh-Asante, 1996). Kpanlogo is also the name of a type of drum, the rhythm, and the music originally played by the *Ga* people of Ghana which includes a *nono* (metal bell), *fao* (gourd rattle) (Salm & Falola, 2002). The dance moves through a series of repetitive sets of dance combinations, which involve fast footwork hopping and skipping, shaking of the hips, high kicks and multiple variations of arm movements that emphasize the rhythm of the feet, the bell, and the drum beat. Usually danced in a communal group, or by couples, Kpanlogo can also be danced as a performance with spectators. The dance session mentioned above was a warm-up where I utilized a West-African derived dance move referred to as the 'African butterfly' to help pre-service teachers ease into the movements that are the basis of Kpanlogo, but were not specific to the Kpanlogo dance itself.

Kpanlogo was taught from a Pan-Africanist perspective. The principle of Pan-Africanism is significant because it takes into account the indigenous knowledge systems²

² Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is that knowledge unique to a given culture that is acquired through accumulation of years of experiences by local people and is passed on from generation to generation (Wolff 2003). (Kaya, 2016, p. 130)

(Zegeye & Vambe, 2006; Magid, 2011; Kaya, 2016) which have been transported to the Americas during and prior³ to the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Due to the discourse and mindset of the people of the diaspora, we see evidence of African Worldview intertwined with Pan-Africanism such as in the said adage proclaiming that understanding origins of life, your ancestry, and your identity is conducive to your wellbeing. Therefore going back and reclaiming it is a significant part of one's life. It is therefore important to use this ideology to teach and learn African dance.

In order to gain an understanding of pre-service teachers' experiences learning an African dance like Kpanlogo, they were questioned "what it is like" in order to glean insight into this phenomenon as they lived through it. Therefore this inquiry was developed through a series of interviews, including questions informed and analyzed from a phenomenological and African Worldview lens. Questions oriented towards pre-service teachers' experiences of experiencing and then teaching an African dance, affording an opportunity to research if any meaning would emerge. Their lived experiences are investigated as each pre-service teacher engaged in the unfamiliar African-derived movements. As they learned about the culture embedded in each step, and feel the symbolism found in traditional African dance, their discourse is documented and combed through for details and information.

Cheikh Anta Diop was one of the earliest Africans to voice concern over the 'absence' of African cultural productions that carried indigenous knowledge systems within the newly created African academe (1974). He asked what Africans were being taught in schools and universities. Were they being taught African indigenous knowledge systems or the history of European knowledge systems in Africa?... Within Western thought and academe most indigenous African knowledge systems were desecrated and pejoratively described as superstition. (Zegeye & Vambe, 2006, p. 331- 332)

³ African people explored Asia, Europe, and South and North America before the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. Van Sertima, (1976, 1988).

On two separate occasions, I instructed a spontaneous impromptu workshop in a peer-to-peer teaching atmosphere and later, a pre-planned African dance workshop. I engaged pre-service teachers in an activity, which they would not normally be engaged in, in a Bachelor of Education program. I then took note of some of my own shifts in thinking which I discovered while digging deeper into my own personally preconceived speculations. Some were dispelled and some were confirmed as I taught, because intuitively, I could sense that much more was being said without words. It appeared that more than just traditional African dance is being communicated. Through each participant, I began to gather clues and nonverbal responses (through observing them dance) for my inquiry about the effectiveness of a curriculum which is more reflective of students' heritage and one which actualizes inclusion of culture as its foundation. Observing these pre-service teachers engaged in the rhythmic movements of African dance with me, I began to wonder what they were feeling when they moved. I began to wonder what it was like for them to experience his form of dance. I knew how I came to embody and understand African dance through movement and the through rhythm intertwined with culture but I wanted to delve deeper to know more about what they were experiencing. Through dance I learned it is the telling of a story, one that speaks centuries of tradition, celebration, strength of warriors and the regal reign of kings and queens. It is a language that speaks of unity within every community and the spirit of a people who are ever-changing, and evolving, and yet still enveloped in a way of life that is connected and interwoven with music, art and storytelling. African dance conveys all that the Motherland has to offer. Sharing these movements, stories and culture through a series of workshops opened up the opportunity to experience what African dance is like for pre-service teachers in a Bachelor of Education program; now to see what emerges as I delve into this inquiry.

Meaning is vital to embodying each dance step therefore, for a student of African dance to fully connect with the movements in a meaningful way, there needs to be an understanding of the meaning behind the movement. After years of dancing and coming into knowing this for myself, I pondered; if African culture is embodied in the dance, I wonder what it is like to relay it to students. I wondered what it would be like for novice students to learn the meaning behind the movements that they do. I wondered what it is like for pre-service teachers to learn an appreciation and respect for the cultural practices, and values of an African community through an African dance. What is it like to learn about African culture by listening to African drums? From this place of curiosity I developed my research questions for this inquiry.

Research Questions

1. What is it like to experience Kpanlogo, a West African dance, as a pre-service teacher?
2. What is it like for pre-service teachers to teach students Kpanlogo?

An Opportunity to Answer My Calling

One special day in my Bachelor of Education program our professor offered the opportunity to share my passion with our class. I now realize that she had noticed how important African dance was to me through my journal writing and therefore presented me with that opportunity. If my professor did not offer for me to share I probably would not have felt brave enough to introduce African dance to my peers. The experience of instructing my peers in African dance was a life changing moment which caused many questions to bubble up inside of me. It made me wonder why my peers saw African dance as something they wanted to spontaneously take part in. We had participated in all kinds of extracurricular activities, both on and off campus, just for the sheer fun of it, but it was never something we

did for marks or higher points in our GPA. Generally, we were a physically active group with a lot of talent in various areas; (from playing instruments: guitar and piano, to yoga, and hip-hop, to singing, to knitting, swimming and even great cooks, we did it all), after all, we did choose to sign up for the *Comprehensive School Health Cohort (CSH)*. This meant that we took several classes together and we were a close knit group as a cohort, but that special day was the first time we ever did a cultural dance together. We had tried hip-hop classes with a guest instructor, but never African dance. Maybe the fact that we had already all bonded as adventurous, kinesthetically inclined people, who loved the outdoors and sought to make movement a part of everyday curriculum was a factor. Maybe it was the simple fact that this was the beginning of the third semester and by then we all knew each other well as cohort-buddies, but still I was cognizant of the fact that my peers were open to the African-derived movements regardless of how foreign the dance seemed to them.

This experience awakened me to the fact that African dance in a classroom setting was inviting and engaging. It became a reality for me. It was actually possible. That was exciting, but it also became apparent to me that other classrooms on campus; other pre-service teachers and students in Canadian schools, in general, were not experiencing what we were experiencing. Our joy was confined to that isolated classroom and they did not have access. I started to wonder what my peers were thinking about it all. I wanted to know from their perspective, from the inside-out; was African dance something they would try again, or was this only my own craving?

There is also another aspect of African dance that renders the body free, it is the drum beat. As it leads, you must follow. It is important that a master drummer is trained to follow the dancer, but also that the dancer learns the art of following the rhythm of the drum. In

many cultures the drum represents the human heart beat; a rhythmic pulse that sustains us and guides us.

‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu’, and when Sotho-Tswana speakers say ‘Motho ke motho ka batho babang’, they are not merely making an empirical claim that our survival or well-being are causally dependent on others, which is about all a plain reading in English would admit. They are rather in the first instance tersely capturing a normative account of what we ought to most value in life. Personhood, selfhood and humanness in characteristic Southern African language and thought are value-laden concepts. That is, one can be more or less of a person, self or human being, where the more one is, the better. One’s ultimate goal in life should be to become a (complete) person, a (real) self or a (genuine) human being. (Thaddeus Metz, 2011, p. 537)

Similarly, like a dancer following a drum beat, it is the rhythm of phenomenology that taught me to listen to where my heart beat is leading and learn to follow.

Another African proverb says “if you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing”. This explains the reason we all move to the “beat of our own drums”. It is why we seek to vibe to our own rhythm. Phenomenology in conjunction with the drum and African dance, my pulse, my heart beat, is where I am able to wonder, to seek my truth, and to relay that truth to others.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Through the Lens of African Worldview

African Worldview is a holistic, community-based philosophy connecting mind, body, spirit within all aspects of life, including dance, faith and humanity, according to Monteiro and Wall (2011). It is a brotherhood that is apparent in many African countries and the diaspora, however a more comprehensive definition reads:

The term *worldview* is used to refer to the common concept of reality shared by a particular group of people, usually referred to as a culture, or an ethnic group. Worldview is an individual as well as a group phenomenon. Worldview is term is also called Cognitive Culture. This is the mental organization in each individual's mind of how the world works. Expressions of commonality in individual worldviews make up the cultural worldview of the group. This leads to the social culture, the way people relate to one another in daily activities, and how they cooperate together for the good of the group as a whole. ("Slideshare.net", 2018) (italics added)

It is difficult to discuss African dance without considering it from an African Worldview perspective. African Worldview is an important component for teaching African dance as it is intertwined with the culture. This philosophical way of life which embodies unification of mind/body/spirit to achieve wellness, is a general understanding many Africans share. It is a holistic, philosophical mindset which is appropriate for assessing indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as studied by Mkabela. Mkabela asserts that due to the fact that "much of the literature on African culture and education can be ideologically traced back to the emergence of "knowledge" about indigenous peoples in the context of European imperialism and expansion." (p.1), then it is necessary to repeal that trend and revert back to

assessing African theories with African-based criteria. In coherence, I maintain this conceptual framework and choose to assess the emergent narratives from pre-service teachers through an African Worldview lens as it would arguably be the most appropriate framework for analyzing the data of this inquiry. Such a conceptual framework begs to convey something profound; that the “education Africans already had and, or to the depth of the ancestral opinions, that [which] influenced African thinking” (Mkabela, 2005, p. 1) is valuable and analytically robust. Mkabela poses questions to assert the relevance of African thought within the appropriate context:

Why would this be a crucial perspective to gain insight into the data? It is important the researchers remind themselves that ...In brief, Africans were often judged in European contexts and not in terms of their own. (Mkabela, 2005, p.1)

Therefore, within this context, from an African Worldview perspective, I reflect on African dance and the value of it within the context of today’s education system. Under this auspicious vantage point I ponder, is our education system accepting of African dance and other forms of culturally relevant curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 1995)? Is there room for culturally appropriate activities with students of colour in mind? In *African Dance: Enhancing the Curriculum*, edited by Julie A. Kerr-Berry, she discusses four articles that point to African dance as an ideal addition to current modern-day curriculum for fulfilling the needs of marginalized students.

Full House Children’s Dance Company explores the value of African dance as a vehicle for social change. As an African American teacher and mother, Leigh recognized the need to develop a children’s dance company for children of colour who otherwise felt quite isolated in the dance environment. (Kerr-Berry, 1994, p. 27)

Pan-Africanism is another perspective, part and parcel to African Worldview. It is a revolutionary movement that unites all people of African descent. It is a kinship of brotherhood and sisterhood which unites people of colour due to the oppressive struggles they have, and continue to endure, on every continent of the world. It is a derivative of African Worldview, birthed in the diaspora by people of African descent, who are respectively called Pan-Africanists. They are a community of activists who are conscious of the fact that they are indeed descendants of indigenous Africans. It is a movement that is connected to returning to, rediscovering and preserving African culture. However, we must understand what African culture is, in order to find it, and return to it.

When Cultures Collide: What is ‘Culture’?

Culture, according to Barbara Rogoff (2003), pertains to an identity in relation to what people engage in, not only by their appearance. Rogoff speaks of a fluid quality of culture that is obtained through participation.

Moving from considering culture as “social address” boxes or identity categories to an examination of *participation* in cultural communities would solve some problems that currently perplex us...This issue dissolves if we move from thinking of culture as consisting of separate categories or factors, and instead describe individuals’ participation in cultural communities... we could give a more fluid description that places each of these aspects in the historical context of others. (Rogoff, 2003, p. 78-79, italics added)

Concurrently, people of African descent ‘participate’ in a unified struggle for anti-oppression. Due to their shared experience in a common struggle for equality in virtually any part of the world, consequently, working together for liberation is practical and strategic. This is a part of

Pan-Africanism, which unites a racialized group of people by their ancestry, culture and struggle in order to gain solidarity via a sense of community. “The idea is to unite Africans on the continent and those of the diaspora and eliminate any remnants of colonialism and oppression experienced in the past” (“Ubuntu is About Relationships”, Bhengu, 2013). Pan-Africanism unites people of African descent in the diaspora (people of African descent living anywhere on the globe) with people on the continent of Africa, as one family as direct descendants. This kinship is seen in several forms. It is evident in the cultural aspects that are repetitively found where ever people of African descent reside. These cultural traits are reflected in their spirituality, music, foundational indigenous knowledge systems, fashion, family dynamics, food, and yes, dance. Pan-Africanism paints a portrait of which people of African descent are, based on what they commonly do.

As we navigate towards a clearer understanding of African dance, there are many hurdles we must move through and over. Some of these hurdles are words that create language barriers, or possible misunderstanding and need clarification, thus, to further clarify some distinctions about the terminology I have used in this inquiry; I will begin with scholar, and dance teacher, Kariamuwelsh-Asante (1985). Welsh-Asante (1985), has extensively researched African dance on the continent of Africa, and in the diaspora for over thirty years. She has masterfully codified a neo-traditional African dance technique called Umfundalai (ma-foon-dah-lah), and asserts that the term *African dance*;

...can be defined as a collective of dances that are imbued with meaning, infused purposely with rhythm, and connected to the ritual, events, occasions, and mythologies of a specific people. African dance is a theatre in that it involves song, drama, masquerade traditions, and music. (Welsh-Asante, 1985, p.16)

Welsh-Asante also reminds us in her book, *African Dance* (1985), that “generalizations about African dance as an absolute are inappropriate, and inaccurate,” but for the purpose of her text, she speaks about “African dance and culture as an entity, meaning simply that these dances originated in Africa and share cultures where traditionally dance is integrated into and central to the society” (p. 16). However, in this text, and in the performance world of African dance artists, researchers and experts such as Dr. Pearl Primus and Katherine Dunham, this genre is referred as *African dance*, both from a Pan-African mindset, and from the perspective that there are commonalities in the way African dance is choreographed, and most importantly, in the *effect* African dance has on those who participate in it. (Welsh-Asante, 1985; Primus, 1966; Dunham, 2005). Additionally, in her extensive years of research, Welsh-Asante has identified eight common characteristics found in all African dances, irrespective of which country they originate. These characteristics are what makes African dance unique and distinguishable from all other dance genres. These characteristics are: 1. Ephebism (vitality), 2. Polycentrism (body isolations), 3. Polyrhythm (many rhythms simultaneously), 4. Curvilinearity (body shape and dance environment space), 5. Dimensionality (extrasensory emotion, drama), 6. Holistic Unity (wholism, solo and communal dance participation), 7. Epic Memory (Folklore with purpose, audience consideration), 8. Repetition (choreography, music and spontaneous stylization) (Welsh-Asante, 1985, 2010).

Secondly, my inquiry is written with the assertion that African dance is a unique part of the culture of people of African descent and therefore worthy of discussion. The word Kariamuwelsh-Asante (2017) proclaims that “African Dance lives wherever African people reside.” Indeed, there is evidence of this in countless forms of Black dance styles and seen in the influence it has had in the Caribbean, South America, Ireland, and various African

American dance forms, namely Hip-Hop, Krump, Calypso, Merengue, Salsa, Tap, Jazz, and the list goes on. Therefore, given these definitions, and historical facts, I assert that dance is an inseparable part of African culture which could therefore, in its absence, possibly be something that people of African descent crave. And for the sake of simplicity, in this inquiry, I will refer to '*African dance*' in general terms, fully encompassing all forms of traditional dances across the continent.

It's All in The Dance

Rhythmic stories are told through African dance and have a wide range of purposes. Each dance is multidisciplinary, engaging people in a form of healing, celebration, communal bonding, motivation and even political defiance (Welsh-Asante, 2010). If you searched these beautiful, multi-ethnic countries, all across Africa, you will discover that dancing is for every one of all ages, from the youngest to the eldest, both genders, no one is excluded. It is an expression of who you are, the tribe where you are from, and your villages' way of life.⁴

According to Keita Fodeba, unlike other forms of dance, African dance is not detached from the lives of the people, but is spontaneous emanation of the people. African dance translates everyday experiences into movement. Maurice Sonar Senghor (1971) said: before a dance can be created, an event or happening must occur. Therefore, one can conclude that Africans dance about everyday experiences in their lives which they choose to remember. (Green, Welsh-Asante, 1996, p. 13-14)

⁴ The type and style of African dance [is] affected by the geography and the natural habitat of the people (Turenne, 1985, p.33). Some of the territories along the western coast can be distinguished by the undulations of their movements. This brings recollections of the sea which is a prominent force in their lives. In territories where agriculture is practiced, the inhabitants often use their feet when dancing. The feet are anchored on the soil while the arms move towards the earth. (Turenne, 1985, p. 33; Snipe, 1997, p.66)

We can include children, teens, and adults and seniors dances about “happenings” or “everyday events” because they are the substance of those everyday events. Therefore all is included and no one is left out of the storytelling and archiving of those events. One may dance to celebrate a birth, a wedding, a good harvest, the strength of your community’s warriors, and even at funerals to celebrate the life of a loved one who has passed on to a better place. Many also dance to give thanks and praise to God for His blessings and the gift of life itself (Welsh-Asante, 1996, Monterio & Wall, 2011).

It is a common belief, even among foreigners, that African dances can evoke trances to bring about healing in physical and psychological realms (Clarke, 2003, Monteiro & Wall, 2011). Various studies show that there are dances that are known to exorcise the spiritually possessed (Welsh-Asante, 2010). It is a credence among indigenous African people that the human spirit is connected to all that is physical, and visual, therefore to heal one’s spirit is to heal one’s mind, body and soul. Many African communities, whether of Christian, Muslim, or of traditional indigenous faiths, share an understanding that a maladapted spirit can cause many physical ailments or cause havoc to manifest in their daily lives (Monteiro & Wall 2011). There is a spoken and unspoken enlightenment, if you will, about the invisible. It is also the premise of African Worldview; the belief that there are both natural and supernatural forces at play in the lives of people which affects the way they think and approach daily life and decisions.

For some, the importance of culture may be debatable, however speaking specifically about dance, according to Hanna (2008), “Culture gives *meaning* to who dances what, why, how, when, where, and with and for whom, in addition to the role of the dance audience” (p.

492), (*italics added*). A fundamental ideal that further supports a definition of culture that unites people of African descent based on what they do is the following from Baldwin (2004):

In the context of this discussion culture refers to the beliefs, behaviours, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. It is through culture that people and social groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values and contribute to society. Thus, culture includes many societal aspects such as language, customs, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organizations and institutions (Baldwin 2004).

African dance can be included as a cultural custom; hence, African dance is valuable because it is connected with its culture. Dance is a part of the lives of most African people and is connected to their way of life, and therefore intertwined. "To truly question something is to interrogate something from the heart of our existence, from the center of our being," (van Manen, 1997, p. 43). My aim in doing this research project was to provide the professional teaching community with a methodology or framework through which African culture could be introduced into the curriculum using dance. The investigation provides insight gained through what it is like for pre-service teachers to be trained in African dance, and in turn teach African dance to students. Some common threads in the pre-service teachers' experiences are considered in regards to how they felt learning a culturally relevant activity as there is a gap in the literature about pre-service teachers learning about culturally relevant curriculum (CRC) by doing it. I attempt to gain some insight into what it is like to instruct it and what it is like to give others an opportunity to have the same experience. I wonder about feeling culture while teaching an African dance. By interviewing pre-service teachers' I delve into their perspectives about their experience instructing African dance in the context of Physical

Education, and hope to get a clearer picture about the possibilities, hindrances, and their perspective about the value of culturally diverse education practices.

Holistic education involves engaging the student on many planes. Rather than neglecting the needs of the student's soul, it is intertwined into the process of learning (van Manen, 1990). African dance could be an ingredient that opens up the student's mind to not only thinking, but *feeling* engaged. van Manen (2014) states that pedagogy is the activity of teaching, parenting and educating children in practical, concrete situations and relations. In this thesis text, I refer to this holistic form of learning as meaningful learning. It is the fullest, most wholesome state of learning instead of limiting learning experiences to only absorbing rote knowledge in a classroom setting. Students are able to make a personal connection with what is being taught when given an opportunity to participate in activities, and thus find meaning (Winterbottom, & Mazzocco, 2016). This may include, but not limited to activities such as field trips, group activities, role playing and actively using technology. Therefore, this inquiry examines what happens when African dance is introduced as a gateway to meaningful pedagogy and what happens when pre-service teachers are afforded the opportunity to develop their culturally competency by doing an activity that is culturally relevant.

I gathered that the best avenue for understanding pre-service teachers' experiences would be to ask them as they lived through it, via prereflective thought. In so doing, my hope was to understand more deeply what it is like for them to experience African dance as a pre-service teacher and what it means to them. Therefore, this inquiry is developed through a series of interviews, including questions informed and analyzed from a phenomenological and African Worldview lens. The particular way I portray meaning that emergences are situated in

an African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) framework called Sankofa. The Sankofa IKS will be discussed fully later as these concepts are dissected further and given more detail.

Answering the Call

It is through a sense of responsibility to students who have been marginalized (Dei, & Rummens, 2010), that I delve into this inquiry. As a woman of colour who has experienced firsthand what it is like growing up in a predominantly Euro-Canadian school system with a lack of relevant culture in my education, I now, as a teacher, hope to answer the “call of the Other” (van Manen, 2014, p. 116). It is my hope that my research will be “the answer to that call”, and would release me from those who have “taken me hostage” (van Manen, 2014, p. 116). The innocent faces of children of African descent who beckon me to help make a change on their behalf. As discussed in van Manen (2014), Levinas (1995) captured this intense sense of responsibility to the Other as a voice who calls as a nonreciprocal, nonrelational relation. Levinas explicitly explains how through this heeding-to-the-call experience, that one’s own uniqueness is realized. Concurring with Levinas, I can attest to identifying with a unique African identity that draws me into a kinship with those on the continent and those within the diaspora. Suddenly, I am transformed into their big sister or *Auntie* (a distinct African-based term of respect and endearment for any woman older than you, especially if she is a mother) (Mashiri, 2004). Levinas describes how automatically, you know that the voice is beckoning you, specifically, and you need not look around. You seem to develop a ‘healthy’ sense of guilt in relation to the other, because you “recognize this experience in your own life: is this not what happens to us when we are claimed by our sick child or by someone in need? The strange thing is that here is this vulnerable child who exercises power over me. And I the big and strong adult, I am being held hostage by this small

and weak person who relies on me” (van Manen, 2014, p. 116). van Manen asserts that “[w]e are taken hostage by the enigma of love. The responsibility for the other is a fundamental moment of love. It is sentimental, but a duty. The human is as a first duty. Love is a duty... our responsibility. This is the otherness of the other. I pass over myself and meet the other in his or her true alterity, and otherness that is irreducible to me or to my own interests in the world” (van Manen, 2014, p. 115).

I wish to answer this call, only not with yet another physical activity, but with something that has substance. An article by Brown and Evans (2002) posits that involvement in extracurricular activities can contribute to the well-being of students through a sense of social connection with their peers and in-turn contributes to their school success (Gerber, 1996; as discussed in Brown & Evans 2002). Brown and Evans (2002) also found that regardless of ethnic origin, students who participated in extracurricular activities experienced increased levels of school success; however, their study showed that fewer non-European students were involved in such activities which seemed to correlate with a significant lower level of academic success, higher dropout rates, and problem behaviours amongst students of non-European background. The authors proposed that development of more attractive extracurricular activities that appealed to a diverse student population was needed. I pondered yet another question about culturally relevant activities in schools; if students need more diverse extracurricular activities outside of the classroom, what could it do for students within the classroom? How can we address this need for culturally relevant activity within class time?

To incorporate another illustration, I turn to my own traditional African dance classes, where I made it my focus as an instructor to enable participants to learn, not only dance

routines, but the history of the dances, and the meaning and purpose of each dance based on geographic location and traditions. They also learned about the connection African dance has to modern dance such as Hip-Hop, Krump, Dancehall and Zumba (Monteiro & Wall, 2011; Franklin, 2013). They were also made aware of the empowerment of women embedded in the African dance culture due to its inclusion of all body types, and its community-oriented participation. In my dance classes, students would be given the opportunity to see the significance of unifying the physical and the spiritual aspects of dance through African Worldview where “[g]eneral health is related to balance and equilibrium within one’s spirit...a harmonizing perspective that appreciates holism, but not at the expense of individualism” (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 235).

A dancer learns the importance of self-expression of their own unique talents in the healthy competitive aura of the African dance circle where dancers are given space to “show off” and do what comes naturally to them – as the ‘spirit leads’. This is terminology used to describe the spirit-possession that may take place as a person is worshipping God or as they are dancing. It is a desired state of mind that one strives to achieve during a worship session or dance session to alleviate the burdens or stress brought on by the world, or daily life (Monteiro & Wall 2011). This form of self-expression through dance is reminiscent of the African American *Soul Train Line* of the 1970s or the *B-Boy/B-Girl Breakdancing* circle of the 1980s, or the *Cake Walk* of the 1800s where the individual dancer is given the spot light to exhibit their unique style and skills. (Welsh-Asante, 2004; Clarke, 2013; Monteiro & Wall, 2011) It is meant to be an encouraging and joyous moment where the community encircles them and celebrates with them. Welsh-Asante (1996) elaborates that:

...the performance must be explained because of its influence on the dancers. The ceremony occurs in a set aside space in the main square of the village where daily life can be observed. (Huet, 1978, p. 16). In this instance the design of the circle in dancing patterns is of tremendous choreographic importance. The symbol of the circle is primordial because it represents the image of the infinite structure of the family and village (Turenne, 1985, p. 33). (Snipes; Welsh-Asante, 1996, p.65)

Therefore, to learn African dance from a Eurocentric perspective would be counterproductive. As an instructor I made it a priority to help students learn the dances in context. African Worldview is the key for situating their learning and their acceptance of African dance as a part of a holistic-oriented culture.

This is plenty for pre-service teachers to accomplish all at once, this I can understand. Nevertheless, to grasp the relevance of African dance, they must be exposed to the intricacies of African thought and philosophy. According to Leonhard and NASD Working Group who devised the America 2000 Arts Partnership and revision draft for K-12 teacher preparation, dance education should “leave all students touched by a sense of themselves as a whole, moving thinking feeling and culturally valued individuals” (Knowles, 1993, p. 46). It is therefore pertinent that we train teachers to accomplish this end. Pre-service teachers must be taught about the belief and behaviours, “...throughout Africa [which] include: communalistic social structures, lifestyles that encourage harmony with the environment, nature, the prominence of spirituality... the belief in the natural and supernatural causation of illness...” (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 236). This is an important aspect of a holistic community of praxis which accompanies African dance situated in African Worldview.

For example, “African societies emphasize the social causes and impact of illness in terms of the individual’s [imbalanced] relationship to the community and spiritual world” (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 236). This is the culture embedded in African dance, but unfortunately it is absent in both teacher education programs and Canadian schools. Similarly, I draw parallels to the non-inclusive, mono-cultural pedagogical practices which are mirrored in First Nations and Aboriginal education. Speaking about the latter, Vera Kirkness (1999) explains:

There has been no notable improvement in the overall achievement of Indian children in integrated schools. Studies on the effects of integration have shown that Indian children reveal patterns that can be identified as alienation and identity conflict. The Indian child is caught between two cultures and is therefore, literally outside of, and between both. The panacea of integration failed to provide the answer to education for Indian students. (Kirkness, 1999, p. 5)

Hesch (1999) also discusses a lack of indigenous culture in education in his case study which provides a concrete example for developing a culturally relevant teacher education program for the benefit of First Nations students in Winnipeg, Manitoba. His model included three components of cultural relevance which are “supporting academic achievement, maintaining cultural competence and developing critical consciousness” (Hesch, 1999, p. 369; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Hesch explains that an effective program would include these aspects *daily* (italics added) as a part of “cultural technology...which both support academic staff who do or do not work to support the growth of self-confidence and eliminate the lingering self-hatred of some students” (p. 376).

I ponder; did these students of Aboriginal descent, whom Hesch advocates, feel a craving for culture? Given that this inquiry is written with the premise of African Worldview which views African dance as a part of African culture, it is possible that the absence of African dance could be something that people of African descent may crave? Consequently, on that special day, while instructing African dance to my fellow B.Ed. peers, it awakened the origins of my passion, and served as a catalyst for recognizing that a phenomenological study could possibly help me answer some of these questions.

As I employ a phenomenological approach influenced by Max van Manen (2014), one of the most influential scholars of phenomenology today, I will attempt to uncover the essence of learning an African dance as lived by pre-service teachers. Through orienting to the phenomena, and the practice of phenomenology, the data will “speak to [my] personal and professional [life]” (van Manen, 2014, p. 69) because “... the eidetic reduction is at the heart of phenomenological reflection [and] seeks to describe what shows itself in experience or consciousness and how something shows itself...[Through this inquiry I will focus] on what is distinct or unique in a phenomenon” (van Manen, 2014, p.229), and report on the essence which was once hidden.

Cruz Banks (2009) argues that there has been “historical punishment of the dancing body in (post)colonial contexts” (p. 1), and maintains that such tactics have been used to control minds and impose cultural imperialism. Cruz Banks (2009) is adamant about “revitalizing oppressed dance forms” (p.1) and justifying it by referring to Tuhiwai Smith quest to instigate ‘the recovery of ourselves’ (Cruz Banks, p.1). The focus here being the recovery of cultural identity, Cruz Banks (2009) proceeds with her explanation by “borrowing from Freire’s notion of ‘the pedagogy of the oppressed’, and declares that dance can be

utilized as a pedagogical tool for decolonisation (p. 1). Cruz Banks (2009) asserts that dance can be utilized to decolonize education, which implies that education must need decolonizing. Why, and if it is indeed necessary, who is going to do the decolonizing? According to Hilborn, (2014) the definition of decolonization is “a process of recuperating indigenous values and culture, while removing negative aspects of colonial culture” (p. 41). He speaks of Bolivia’s current state of decolonization and creation of a “Plurinational state”. (Lucas, 2008, para. 2-3). Perhaps such an action is necessary to decolonize the field of education due to the power which teachers hold for initiating education reform.

Statistics show that 85% of Bachelor of Education graduates are Euro-Canadian females (Mujawamariya, 2004), therefore these teachers, who are a majority of that demographic must be involved in that decolonization through anti-racist education. Dei (1999) reiterates this perspective stating his “concerns cover a broad spectrum: the denial of the significance of race in academic discourse and practices; ...and the majority’s embrace of the argument that race-specific practices should receive less attention in progressive political agendas” (pp. 17-18).

An appropriate illustration of this would be the contributions which African American dancers/scholars such as Alvin Ailey, Kathryn Dunham and Pearl Primus made to the world of dance, however they are not very well known among the “greats” of dance anthology and thus their absence in dance education contributes to the continuing of marginalization of African dance, due to African American dance being derived from African dance. Cruz Banks (2009) discussed the politics involved when African dance is perceived by a Eurocentric value system as a primitive art form. Cruz Banks (2009) expressed concern that our dance pedagogy and literacy choices are embedded in a colonial legacy that dictated how meaning has been

made and defined. These disciplines share a discourse about how knowledge is constructed across cultures, how identity is realized and how people interpreted the world.

Secondly, we live in a postcolonial society that overemphasizes the linguistic text for learning and teaching (Goellner & Shea Murphy, 1995). Therefore, “historically we have undervalued dance for exploring the self and the social world of specialized knowledge” (Cruz Banks, 2009, p. 355). What if traditional African dance could be utilized to teach a combination of somatic body awareness as well as a hands-on approach to anti-racist education?

In congruence with the ideals of Cruz Banks (2009), and Goeller & Murphy (1995), Merleau-Ponty (1962) discusses the body as a medium of practical knowledge due to the body’s ability to anchor us in the world spatially, as opposed to a Cartesian separation of mind and bodily experience.

If bodily space and external space for a practical system, the first being the background against which the object as the goal of our action may stand out or the void in front of which it may come to light, it is clearly in action that the spatiality of our body is brought into being, and an analysis of one’s own movement should enable us to arrive at a better understanding of it. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 117)

It is in this context of *corpo(real)* existence that I explore the possibilities of what African dance pedagogy can bring to the world of education, marginalized students and pre-service teachers who have not been exposed to African dance and culture in the classroom. Corporeal pertains to the physical body, however in this inquiry I refer to *corpo(real)* to emphasize the sincere understanding found in lived experience as lived through the body and the meaning that that experience brings to our seemingly mundane everyday activities. The

body cannot be left behind and neither can the meaning that connected to its movements, only we often dismiss or ignore the “spatiality [which] our body [brings] into being” in order to “arrive at a better understanding of it” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and thus ourselves.

Dance Education Relevance

Cultural dance in K-12 education, according to Hanna (2008), is a key concept which demonstrates that “the relationship between dance and culture is reciprocal”. Sheets-Johnstone (2012) explains this concept best, stating that medical, neuropsychiatric (Jacobson 1929, 1967, 1970; Bull 1951; de Rivera 1977 in Sheets-Johnston, 2012) and phenomenological analysis shows:

...how emotions both move through the body and move the body to move in highly differentiated ways (Sheets-Johnstone 1999b, 2006, 2008a, b, 2009a). What becomes apparent on the basis of both the empirical and phenomenological evidence is that a dynamic congruence exists between movement and emotion (ibid.). Dynamic kinetic forms articulated in and through the qualities of movement as they are created in the very act of moving are congruent with dynamic forms of feeling as they are effectively felt, that is, as they are effectively lived through. (Sheets-Johnstone, 2012, p.52) (italics added)

However, when are students in Canadian schools afforded the opportunity to move through their emotions with a cultural dance? When are pre-service teachers afforded the opportunity to learn about culturally relevant curriculum in their Bachelor of education program by doing it?

Although some dances appeal to specific groups like warriors, the young and old alike dance in Africa...Children are taught the critical awareness of the body aesthetics, and

how to express a wide range of emotions like anger, grief, sadness, love and hatred through dance with the accompaniment of songs and drums (Thompson, 1974, p.1; Opoku & Bell, 1965, p. 1). Moreover, from infancy to adulthood the young are taught the spiritual or secular significance of a dance and so form an acute dance consciousness that is retained throughout life. (Snipes, cited in Welsh-Asante 1998, p, 66)

Although we can remain optimistic about the movement-derived teachings in today's K-12 inclusion of European folk and square dancing as a form of cultural dance (Hanna 2008), how diverse is it?

“Existing approaches to dance history, criticism, and aesthetics must be revised to include an Afrocentric perspective. Asante (1987) defines Afrocentric as an approach which places ‘African ideals at the centre of any analysis that involves African culture and behaviour’ (p. 6). Because of the retention of Africanisms into the body of American [and Canadian] dance, it seems appropriate to include an Afrocentric perspective when teaching dance in America within any setting studio or classroom”.

(Kerr-Berry, 1994, p. 26)

African dance is recommended and beneficial, but is not the norm. Does the lack of diversity in a school dance program reflect the fact that dance is most often taught by the classroom teacher? To reflect on this further, I bring to the discussion Ann Kipling Brown, chair-elect of daCi and a professor at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, who reports that the public school curriculum in Saskatchewan, Ontario, and British Columbia;

...have placed dance in the arts education curriculum, and other provinces have some dance through the physical education curriculum. In the public school system, dance teachers must hold a teaching certification awarded through the province's

department of education. In Saskatchewan, dance may be taught by the classroom teacher, a specialist, or itinerant dance teacher. The Saskatchewan Department for Education mandated that dance be part of the core curriculum and should be allocated 50 minutes per week for all students K-9. Unfortunately, not all classroom teachers teach dance, and there are no courses in the elementary programs that provide in-depth work in dance. (Kipling-Brown, 2012)

Bobbi Westman, executive director of Alberta Dance Alliance, explains that “dance in this country [Canada] is driven by the commercial studio industry and competition. It is hoped that in the future all provinces can have dance in the K-12 school systems and we can have funded and supported opportunities for youth dance in Canada” (Gilbert, 2005). The most consistent barrier to providing K-12 dance education is lack of teacher training, certification and funding (Gilbert, 2005). Possibly, a lack of opportunities in pre-service teacher education to experience and learn about other cultures should be included in this assessment.

Picower (2009) asserts that a “demographic imperative (Banks, 1996; Cochran-Smith, 2004) implores us to look deeply at Whiteness and its relationship to teaching, particularly as classrooms are increasingly filled with children of colour” (Picower, 2009, p. 197).

Statistics on the racial composition of teachers in the US are startling 90% of the K-12 teaching force is White (National Collaborative on Diversity of The Teaching Force 2004); almost half of the schools in the US do not have a single teacher of colour on staff, therefore many students will graduate from high school having only been taught by Whites (Jordan-Irvine, 2003). The immediate future will not be very different because 80% to 93% of all current teacher education students are White females (Cochran-Smith 2004), and they are being instructed by a teacher

education profession that is itself 88% White (Ladson-Billings 2001). (Picower, 2009, p. 197)

Since African dance is a cultural practice, it is pertinent that we consider it a facet of cultural studies, but also as a component that is absent in teacher dance/education. If the statistics show a lack of diversity in teacher education graduates, then we must train those who are indeed graduating about the importance of culturally relevant curriculum. I propose that we work with who we have until such time that the number of teacher candidates of colour increase.

Keepin' it Corpo(Real)

“Dance as pedagogy has cognitive emotional power [for] teaching and learning. *Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence* (Gardner, 1983) is a form of thinking and ability to solve problems through ‘control of one’s bodily motions’ (Shearer, 2004, p. 207)” (Hanna, 2008, p. 495). In fact, Hanna (2008) discusses how students benefit from dance when it is integrated into their subjects by giving a shining example of her personal experience teaching a dance-centered course at a high school in New Jersey. “Students learned the language of dance as an entry point to their subjects...studied different dances and researched their cultures and histories” (Hanna, 2008, p. 499).

Hanna also explains that dance can capture the attention of and keep students, ranging from gifted and talented to slower learners, helping them to engage in curriculum they would otherwise find boring. She places emphasis on dance benefiting boys in particular who are at risk of dropping out or alienation (Hanna, 2008). She also turns our attention to dance as trans disciplinary learning: when students use past learning in similar and new situations, (Root-Bernsteins, 2005) stating that dance fosters “connoisseurship”, a skill which teaches students

to learn “to look, to see, and appreciate (Eisner, 2002)...[and also] a key tool for thinking beyond dance” (Hanna, 2008, p. 499). All of these skills reflect the pedagogical implications of African dance in the classroom for cognitive development, in-depth academic learning through physical movement, and a cross-cultural education that is fostered through a culturally relevant curriculum.

Friesen, Henriksson & Saevi (2012) discuss the importance of a somatic source of information when a child is learning, asserting that “the body is central in our efforts to create meaning and make sense of our experiences” (Friesen, et al., 2012, p. 163). “According to Kieran Egan (1997) curriculum should involve the somatic dimension to a much higher degree and ensure that this dimension is a continuous part of children’s education and development.” (Egan, as cited in Friesen, et al. 2012, p. 163). Friesen et al. (2012) ask the following questions which I join them in asking; “But how do we develop the tools to focus on the somatic dimension? How do children [and pre-service teachers] experience their bodies in movement? And how can they express their embodied experiences?” (Friesen, et al., 2012, p.163). Possibly the answers to these questions be found in going to the source – pre-service teachers who are the primary planners of curriculum. Possibly their somatic and physical experiences of African dance may enlighten us about where to start, and illuminate for us, a somatic component to learning.

Theories by Merleau-Ponty (1962) advise that the lived experiences of pre-service teachers would be a good place to start because “our knowledge of the world – others and things- is corporeal, rather than intellectual. We know the world bodily and through our embodied actions” (van Manen, p. 128, 2014). He maintained that we do not know what we see and that we usually “act and do things seemingly unthinkingly – because the body already

knows what to do and how to do it. It is through my relation to others, and through my relation to ‘things’ that I know myself” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p 383; van Manen, 2014, p.129).

African Dance as Pedagogy

Primus (1968) and Kerr-Berry (1994) suggest that dance can be an effective teaching aid for the elementary school teachers, particularly in the classroom because it can conjure emotional as well as intellectual connections with other cultures that rote intellectual curriculum may not exhibit for attaining thorough understanding. “Through the study of a people’s dance, certain intangible, but vital parts of a culture can become alive for school children” (Primus, 1968, introduction). The *‘intangible but vital’* concepts are indeed what we need teachers to understand and in turn, teach.

Pre-service Teacher Relevance

Given the evidence from many studies, pre-service teachers are unequipped to teach culturally relevant curriculum and quench students’ yearnings for culture (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Brown, 2002; James, 2007). A Mujawamariya (2007) study, which explores how a faculty of education in an urban Canadian university prepares teacher candidates to meet the needs of a multicultural population, reports that... “most student teachers stated... they were not satisfied with the way multicultural issues were being taught...that their training was not adequately preparing them for the challenges of teaching ethnically and racially diverse classrooms” (Johnson & Enomoto, 2007, p. 52). Additionally, due to their lack of understanding about the history of African people, (Grant, 2011), many Euro-Canadian teacher candidates are unsuccessful, and even fearful about using diverse culture as pedagogy.

How progressive would our Canadian education system be if prospective teachers could equip themselves with knowledge about the survival and contributions of African Canadians to Canadian society, rather than viewing them as victims and teaching from a deficit model? Rather than beginning African studies at the point of slavery, (which constitutes only a small fraction of time on the timeline of African history, knowledge and contribution to the world), this inquiry proposes that African dance could function as teachers' gateway to teaching culturally relevant curriculum from a surplus; with a more holistic approach.

In the elementary or secondary school setting, African dance can function as an enormously rich tool for teaching children about cultural differences from an Afrocentric perspective...As an embodied experience, African dance has the power to reach and transform children on a very deep and meaningful level. (Kerr-Berry, 1994, p. 26)

Cognitive development could also be fostered via African Canadian history, while engaging students in positive physical literacy, (Whitehead, 2010), and simultaneously cultivating a community of praxis. An excellent exemplar of Hip-Hop culture, (African-American-developed music and dance that has its roots in Africa), once thought of as inferior street music, becoming a valuable part of education is seen in the:

Free Your Mind: A HIP HOP Education STEMposium [which] brings Hip Hop as critical pedagogy (HHCP) and STEM together in an exploration of innovative educational practices that seek to enhance the engagement and achievement of all students. This dialogue between HHCP and STEM also seeks to critique traditional educational methodologies that fail to connect to students and prepare them to engage

with the world around them in critical and meaningful ways. (“Free Your Mind”, 2018)

Here we see Science, and Technology, Language Arts, and dance, visual arts, and music all meshed together to create an exciting alternative to traditional education. I believe the same is possible for African dance.

It is for these reasons that I later found the courage to introduce African dance to my fellow teacher candidates for the purposes of this inquiry. Through a one day workshop, teacher candidates could participate voluntarily in a cultural dance, exercise, learn the culture behind the movements and socialize with peers. Hoping that their experience would be a catalyst for change by showcasing the power of African dance, [which I have experienced personally in my own life], I wanted to *offer* them the opportunity to see the beauty and benefits of dance in the classroom. My hope was to help pre-service teachers *feel* the vitality and culture embodied in African dance, and if so, consider including it in their teaching practices.

Culturally Relevant Curriculum

Gloria Ladson-Billings, who coined the term, in her book *Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, defines it as the way “culturally relevant teachers utilize student’s culture as a vehicle for learning” (Hesch, 1999, p. 370). The definition, “Culturally relevant or responsive teaching is a pedagogy grounded in teachers’ displaying cultural competence: exhibiting skill at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting. It is about making schools sensitive to, and compatible with their students’ cultural background, and therefore enabling each student to relate course content to his or her cultural context. It’s about teachers’ perceptions of culture, teaching materials and resources, and

using more culturally appropriate tools to help students improve their academic performances and therefore excel.

Hesch (1999), in reference to Indigenous First Nations Education, cites Ladson-Billings by listing three components to CRC including; academic success of students, cultural competence of teachers and critical consciousness of schools. If we shine a light on the second component which Ladson-Billings defines as the way “culturally relevant teachers utilize student’s culture as a vehicle for learning” (Hesch, 1999, p. 370) then we will see that the door for African dance as culturally relevant pedagogy is pushed wide open. Unfortunately, however, African dance is often presented to students merely as a form of multicultural entertainment, or “primitive” (Franklin, 2015; Clarke, 2013; Ker-Berry, 1994; Welsh Asante, 1993; Hanna, 1973).

In alignment with the proponents of CRC above, I propose that students of African descent could be in need of CRC to satisfy their cravings for culture. In Canada, studies reveal that marginalized students tend to drop out of school as a result of feeling alienated, and those who stay in school often act out through negative behaviours due to Canadian school’s curriculum failure to respond to their needs and aspirations (Bynon, 2005, as cited in Johnson & Enomoto, 2007). These marginalized students, who also tend to reject the popularly taught multicultural education, prefer, and are best served in a “democratic educational system that does not attempt to assimilate them into the mainstream, but instead provides them with an education that acknowledges their differences and that affords them equitable opportunities to achieve their aspirations” (James, et al. 2007, p. 33). An illustration of this theory in action is observed in historically African American colleges and universities where African American students thrive because they have been encouraged to choose excellence and succeed without

rejecting their “Africaness” (Ladson-Billings, 1992). For example, classrooms with predominantly African American students are offered the option of reading books with African- American characters as the protagonist and as a result they are more fully engaged and more likely to participate in class discussions on the topic. They excel when they see themselves reflected in the learning material. They are not forced to learn at the expense of their heritage and identity.

Attempting to understand the reason for the absence of African dance as a pedagogically, I ruminate on an age-old form of repression, namely colonialism, which has been successful in curbing progress pertaining to dance, music, ideas, or a nation, and which has played a role in the alienation of African dance, and labeling it as primitive. African American scholars argue that many European-based art/dance forms are given credit, but African dance as a genre, has often been marginalized, (Asante, 1993) or denied equal acknowledgment for its influence on many contemporary dance forms and often assessed through a Eurocentric value system (Kerr-Berry, 1994; Asante, 1993). This misconception has showed me that a shift in Canadian mainstream worldview to that of an African Worldview is required to initiate the possibility of African dance and culture being viewed for its pedagogically worth.

Additionally, in exploring the state of dance education in the classroom today, I assert that pre-service teachers currently lack the training and awareness need to engage in culturally relevant pedagogy. Furthermore, my discussion will expand on how dance and culture go hand-in-hand in cultivating students’ cultural identity, and why culturally relevant curriculum through dance is beneficial for all students of various backgrounds.

Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework

Triple Treat: African Worldview, Ubuntu and Phenomenology

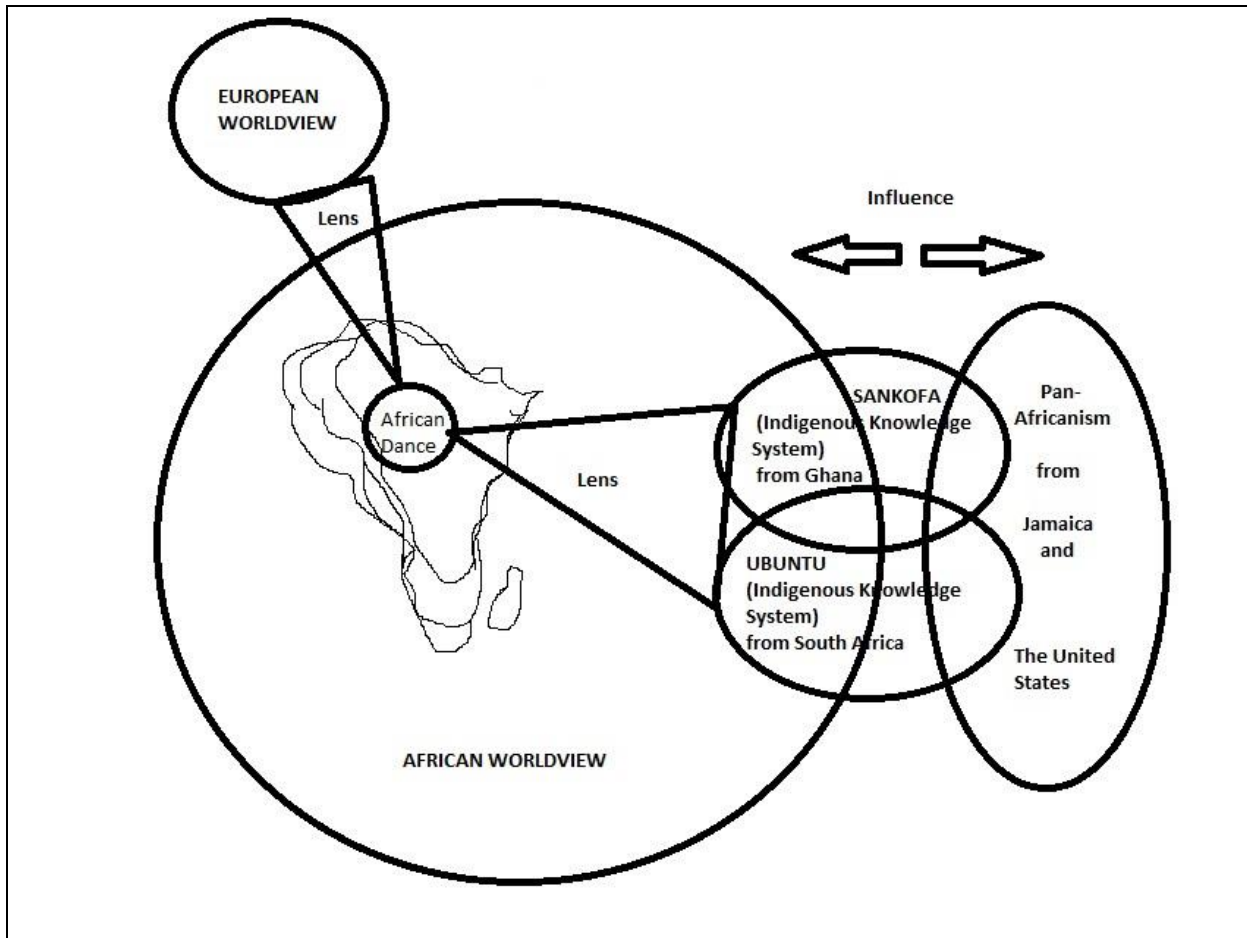


Figure 24. African Worldview African dance seen through an African Worldview lens

Often, when African dance is viewed through a European Worldview lens, it is depicted as over sexualized, pagan and primitive (Cruz Banks, 2009). In order to fully understand African dance and view it in a meaningful way, where one can glean its value and relevance to people of African descent, it is important to look at Africa dance through an African Worldview lens. (See *figure 4*). African Worldview encompasses the languages spoken on the continent, and the knowledge that stems from there. It utilizes these indigenous

knowledge systems as a reference, to more appropriately appraise the culture of Africa by African standards as opposed to European standards, or religion.

The conceptual framework used in this inquiry is influenced by the overarching concept of African Worldview. The indigenous knowledge systems that originated in Africa used to analyze the pre-service teachers' narratives; namely Sankofa and Ubuntu [OO-bun-TOO] are influenced by Pan-Africanist thought, that we must *return* to Africa to retrieve our history and identity.

Dancing on the Black Star Liner: the Significance of Pan-Africanism

The philosophy of returning back to Africa is another integral piece to connecting to the meaning of African dance. This philosophy which encourages people of African descent to return to the land of their ancestors was championed by a well-known Jamaican proponent of Pan-Africanism, Marcus Garvey. He led an investment campaign to raise millions of dollars in the early 1900's to purchase a large ship company called the Black Star Liner, to physically sail back to Africa, specifically Sierra Leone and Liberia. He was a leader of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League (UNIA-ACL), who founded the Black Nationalist organization in 1914. Marcus Garvey's efforts inspired several other prominent advocates of Pan-Africanism which include African American activist, Malcolm X, and Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana to win the country's independence of colonial rule. Pan-Africanism is significant because Nkrumah hosted the first All-African People's Conference (AAPC) in 1958 which was attended by several leaders of independent African countries including journalist and activist Frantz Fanon of Algeria. These events further confirm the common identity, struggles and national unity between African countries on the continent and solidify their commitment to fight against oppression.

Garvey and his Pan-Africanist philosophy had great global influence even decades after his death and sparked a movement known as Garveyism among countless nations including the Rastafarian movement, and The Nation of Islam in the United States.

Garvey's philosophy was so impactful that he was posthumously honoured by Nkrumah by naming Ghana's national shipping line after Garvey's Black Star Line ship, as well as the country's national soccer team, *The Black Stars*. The Ghanaian national flag features a black star in the centre to commemorate and honour Garvey's Pan-African philosophy, particularly in the 1920s, in a time when it was difficult for people of African descent to speak with authority. Garvey is most noted for the UNIA flag colours, red, green and black (Refer to *Figure 20*, The Bandera Flag, *Figure 21*. Countries of Pan-African Parliament) the colours of which have been adopted by many African countries who support the unification of Africa as one unified force, in some format in their national flag.

Garvey is famous for his quote "*A people without the knowledge of their history, origin, and culture, is like a tree without roots*" (Garvey, 1923 n.p.). This is very similar to the meaning of Sankofa which is to return and retrieve what is valuable. Marcus Garvey and many other proponents of Pan-Africanism, assert that your history and culture is a powerful vehicle for attaining knowledge of self, and knowledge of self is your identity, and your identity is a key concept for self-love and empowerment on many different levels. (i.e. economic, mental, physical, spiritual, etc.).

Another significant advocate of Pan-Africanism and African culture is Maulana Karenga. It is important to draw attention to his contributions in advocating for national recognition of African culture and African dance in the celebrations of African Americans, and the global diaspora. He was a professor of African American studies who founded the

Pan-African holiday called *Kwanzaa* in 1966. It is based on seven common principles of African community life. These principles, celebrated after Christmas for seven days, include: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, collective economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. Karenga posited that people of African descent had a common heritage and lived by a communitarian African philosophy and therefore should have an opportunity and the choice to celebrate themselves and their own history rather than that of the mainstream society in which they may reside. Karenga encourages Africans of the diaspora to utilize their ancestral languages, traditions, indigenous knowledge, art and creativity to empower themselves. The sixth day of celebrating creativity, (Kuumba), includes African dance, drumming and a feast, because the celebration would not be complete without the inclusion of every piece of the culture that signifies their African identity and unity as one people.

Re(Turn)ing to Sankofa

The indigenous knowledge system of Sankofa is situated in a collectivist African Worldview, and orients us to the philosophy of Ubuntu, which posits that humanness is found and cultivated within community. Sankofa, a Ghanaian proverb which encourages its people to go back, physically or spiritually, to retrieve what was once lost or forgotten was used as a particular path to analyze the lived experiences of the pre-service teachers. The Sankofa principle: san - to return; ko - to go; fa - to look, to seek and take, is utilized in conjunction with the principles of phenomenology: body, space, time, Other to uncover meaning or “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself” (van Manen, 2014, p. 28). The roots of Sankofa gives people of African descent in the diaspora permission to look back and re-discover aspects of their history and culture that is meaningful to them.

Sankofa is commonly drawn as a stylized heart shape, Adinkra symbol. This symbol, which is only one of over 200 Adinkra symbols, represents proverbs and values upheld by the Ashanti people of Ghana. Sankofa is often associated with the proverb, "*Se wo were fi na wosankofa a yenkyi*," (Aaron Mobley - Heart of Afrika Designs Adinkra Cloth Symbols Chart) which translates into "*It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten*". The condensed translation is "*return and fetch it*". Similarly, although the source of the original cannot be traced, the classic African American adage states "*you don't know where you're going, if you don't know where you have been*." It alludes to the suggestion that your history should be the navigation for future endeavours. The legendary Bob Marley, Jamaican singer, song writer's son Ziggy Marley wrote in his 1988 song *Tomorrow People*; "*You don't know your past, you don't know your future*," exhibiting that this proverb can be found in many different forms, and have profound meaning in several diaspora countries, and through many generations.

Additionally, Sankofa symbolically expresses the foundations of existence through the image of a bird with its head turned backwards taking an egg off its back. The egg, in the Sankofa bird's beak egg is usually gold in colour, symbolizing value, and its weighted worth, also birth of an idea, or children, and thus the origins of life. For some, life is embodied in their culture, such as African dance. It is often drawn as an Adinkra symbol reflecting the symbolic Sankofa bird in a stylized manner, reaching back to retrieve a golden egg. (refer to *Figure 5. Sankofa Adinkra Symbol*, and *Figure 6. Sankofa Bird*).

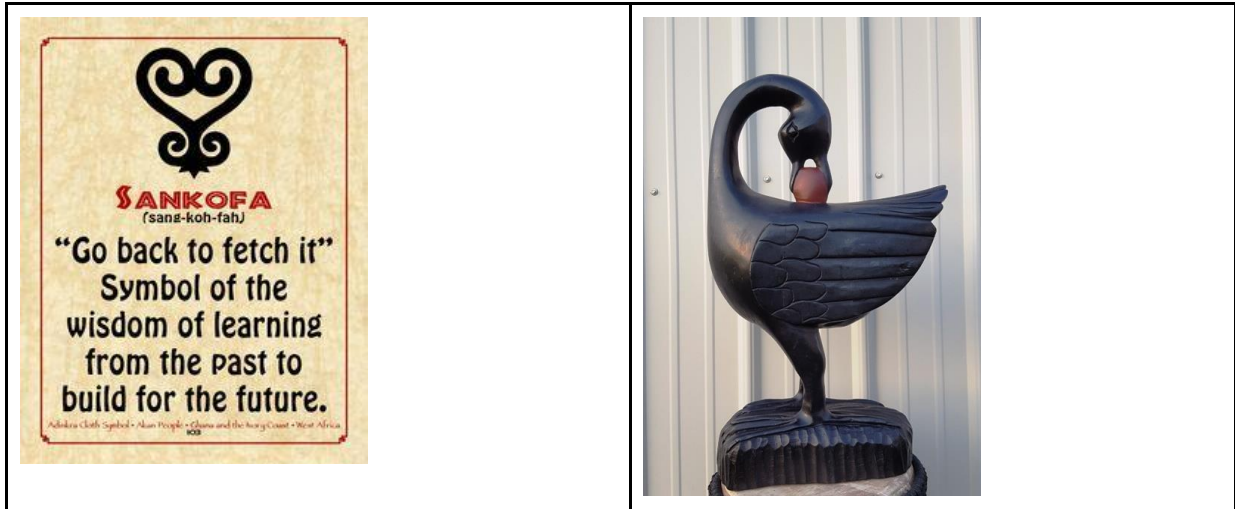


Figure 5. Sankofa adinkra symbol, (Aaron Mobley - Heart of Afrika Designs Adinkra Cloth Symbols Chart). **Figure 6. Sankofa Bird** (retrieved from (<https://www.african-import.com/http-www-african-import-com-p/sankofa-bird-extra-large.htm>))

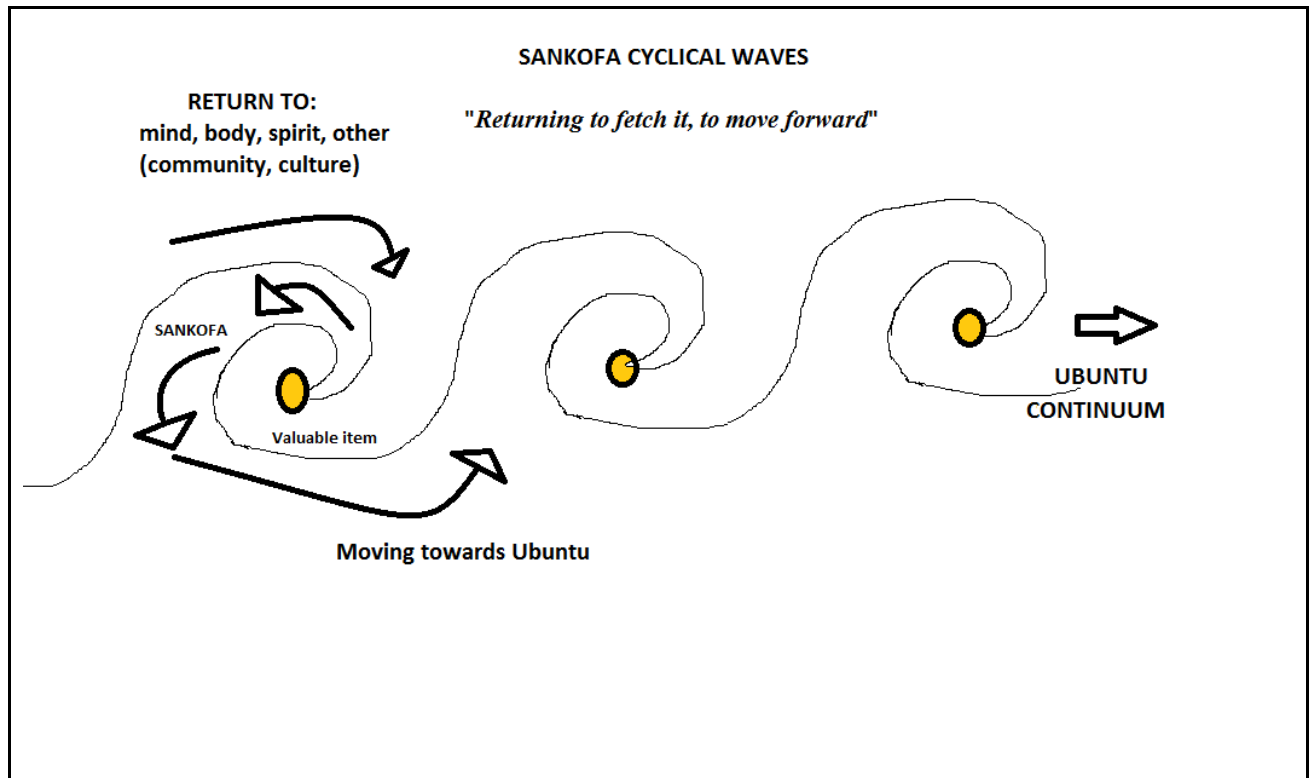
Sankofa Cyclical Waves

The conceptual framework is based on the Ghanaian proverb and symbol Sankofa, and reconceptualizes it for this research. It is given the term: Sankofa Cyclical Waves, (Refer to Figure 7. Sankofa Cyclical Waves). This conceptual framework assisted in exploring and understanding the phenomenon of learning Kpanlogo, used to analyze their experiences and delve into the question: “what is it like?” The Sankofa Cyclical Wave is a continuum through which participants return to something they are seeking. Ubuntu, located at the far right (or the end) of Sankofa Cyclical Wave continuum, was deemed the height of gaining a perspective of African dance and African culture and the ability to relate to the Other through an African Worldview lens.

The Sankofa Cyclical Waves are presented in this inquiry as *waves* signifying the gradual movement towards understanding of another’s culture. The waves are envisioned, as a curved arch which reaches back, just as the representation of the bird reaches around towards a golden egg. This backward motion signifies something in a participants’ lived experience

that they are remembering, or returning to. The wave then moves back up and around from where it entered, but makes a sharp turn down and outward, always moving towards Ubuntu.

Figure 7. Sankofa Cyclical Wave



In this analysis we see remnants of the African American adage “you won’t know where you are going, until you know where you’ve been”. The following waves of the Sankofa Cyclical Waves show the gradual process of acquiring culture through African dance in conjunction with the existential to assess the lived experience.

SAN (to return) to the Body & Things

It is difficult to explain what you do not feel. In Jamaica there is a common colloquialism that says “he who cannot hear must feel”. A derivative of it in African American Diasporic communities, professes; “he who feels it, knows”, which is wisdom that speaks to the fact that nothing is as concrete as physical understanding. The “SAN” in Sankofa beckons us to return to our bodies and feel what it is like to live in another’s shoes. In

the Caribbean and many African countries a show of flexibility and agility in the waist when dancing is considered a skill, however it was regarded as highly suggestive by colonialists, and often viewed as such by foreigners today.

Fernando Orbitz, an expert of Afro-Cuban music, dance and religion, states that dances to Shango, among other gods... are nothing more than survivors of ancient magic dances to bring rain and fertility to the land... though Africans did not acquaint sex with sin, these dances were characterized as sinful by early missionaries because of their limited knowledge of customs and heritage of Africans. (Snipes; Welsh-Asante, 1998, p. 68)

Possibly the missionaries lack of participation in the culture of those people contributed to the misunderstanding it, whereas, returning to the body through movement can offer a corpo(real) understanding and acceptance of the Other. Merleau-Ponty posits in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962; 2012) that “seeing” [is] making contact with our prereflective experience” (van Manen, 2014, p. 127). Making contact is a physical action, something you must do. You are only able to ‘see’ or comprehend what you have experienced prereflectively until you face it, and analyze it directly- head on. He refers to a similar ‘return’ to the primordial state in consciousness and the existential that is reminiscent of Sankofa:

To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language as is Geography in relation to the country-side in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is. (1962, p. ix)

Additionally:

To return to the world of actual experience... since it is in it that we shall Be able to... restore to things their concrete physiognomy...to rediscover Phenomena, the layer of living experience through which other people and things are first given to us (1962, p.57). (van Manen, 2014, p. 128)

The cultural attire in African dance which adorns the body is also *some(thing)* to be cognizant of on a culturally moral level. Discovering why certain beads or sarong wraps are worn and understanding the reasoning, on a personal level, through the way it feels on your own body is a part of the learning process.

One such cultural aspect is the printed sarong; a rectangular, colourfully printed piece of fabric, usually cotton, wrapped around the body or head in various styles. It is used as appropriate attire for African dance as it is comfortable and versatile in accommodating of various movements. African printed fabric is like the spirit of Africa embodied in colorful woven threads. Much like the Ghanaian Kente fabric, the sarong is a symbolic mirror of the community values and social lifestyle of its people. It is a symbol of labour for the women who use it wrap their babies on their backs to have their hands free to do tasks, and at the same time it means nurturance of that child. For women it may mean convenience as she uses it as a cushion to comfortably carry a load on her head, or a symbol of stylish fashion as they use it to wrap their heads to protect their hair from the heat or mold it like a work of art, into a glorious *gele* (Nigerian term for head wrap), (Refer to *Figure 17. Appendix D. Beads and Cowries*), which is wrapped in a creative way by women to express their own unique personality and symbolizing societal status.

Many dancers also adorn themselves with handmade regalia of beads, masks, feathers, leaves, and paint their faces. You will notice fluffy grass skirts and facial and body paint in

various designs which are indicative of their ancestors, tribal identification and just simply artistic creativity. At times you will view dances that resemble a sacred animal, or revered member of their community; i.e. The “Gele dance” done by a tribe in southern Nigeria, West Africa, featuring masked male dancers honouring their matriarchal society of business women who run the market places. “*Things*”, according to van Manen (2014) are also a means of existential exploration of consciousness and the experiential event (p.51). Thus, I introduce my wonder about the possibility of an African dance mode of thought being uncovered through the reflecting on an object’s *thingness*, particularly, in this case, African print sarongs, [also referred to in many East African countries as “*kitenge*” (kee-teng-gay)] to reveal our relationship with it as an evocative object.

This dance attire, a colourfully printed, rectangular piece of cotton cloth wrapped around the waist, which all was referenced as having meaning in some form or another by each participant, is discussed through a phenomenological lens as to “ respect the thing in its *whatness* and otherness” (van Manen, p. 52, 2014). When we examine the mundane or things that we often regarded as insignificant, we discover meaning as we look at them with fresh eyes van Manen, (2014).

The phenomenological reduction operates in allusive tension of the space between the object and the thingness of the thing; in naming the phenomenon, as it appears to us in consciousness, or as an experiential event, the thing is paradoxically, both annihilated and called into being precisely as it gives itself. (van Manen, p. 51, 2014)

Because “phenomenology must stand in awe at the wonder of the thingness of the thing as it acquires its meaning in relation to the other things that surround each other in the world... [which]... demands the same kind of respect (wonder) as the person who is encountered in his

or her otherness,” (van Manen, 2014, p. 52), this process of reflecting on the nuances of African dance, through the framework of phenomenology has been utilized in conjunction with *Sankofa*.

Ko (to go) Through Time and Space

Authenticity takes time and the environment where you are learning to dance is also plays a role in your learning. You cannot rush cultural understanding any more than you can compress learning all the facets of a foreign language into a few workshops. African dance is meant to be a gateway to understanding and the participant’s height of cultural awareness happens with the more exposure they have with that culture. It is natural to teach a child how to swim, but their level of expertise develops after several lessons and over several years. There are those with natural raw talent and those who need more practice, but the generally the process is a journey of patience and time. Learning African dance on the continent, in the sunshine, on the red earth, in dance circles of villages with multiple types of drums played by live drummers, with the original tribes who live and breathe dance in their daily life, as opposed to in a gymnasium with recorded music, probably makes a difference as well. The dancer is likely to feel through their senses and the culture around them, and gain a better understanding because they are immersed in it.

Fa (to look) for the Other

African dance is a community event. It is a strength giving, unifying, joyful, healing activity. There are Others involved. The dances are created to include people of all ages, sizes and genders. To dance is to be engaged with others; harmoniously at times and sometimes via healthy competition. What is meant for the individual is to allow them to shine by showcasing their skills, yet still this is in parallel with others. African dance is done in relation and in

connection with the Other. It is a stage in the Sankofa Circle because coming into understanding of another's culture requires connecting with the people of that culture. African dance requires cooperation with other dancers and collaboration with a leader, and the drummer and humbling yourself to take instruction and practice until you get it right. It is a discipline as much as it is a joy, and therefore a necessary stage in the Sankofa journey.

Dancing Into Ubuntu

This central location of Ubuntu represents both the traditional communal African dance circle space where the healing, vitality and mental transformation happens, but also the centre of the mind where the dancers now can shift their thinking and transition into seeing the world from an African Worldview perspective and relate to the Other. African Worldview (Mutema, 2003; Monteiro & Wall, 2011) dictates the values and cultural norms of African people. This perspective is situated in a mindset which is oppositional to North American values of individualism, competition and the Cartesian dichotomy of mind-body. African Worldview, instead, nurtures a holistic approach to thought and consciousness with a communal, collectivist framework (Monteiro & Wall, 2011). Boyd and Tom (1985) in Ladson-Billings (1999), list the following nine dimensions of commonality between people of African descent regardless of where they reside, whether living on the continent, or in the diaspora, and despite the atrocities of slavery, language barriers, or customs, these include: conceptualizations of spirituality, harmony, movement, verve, affect, orality, communalism, expressive individualism, and social time perspective (Ladson-Billings, 1999)

South Africans refer to this collectivist mindset as *Ubuntu*. Translated: “*A person is a person because of other people*” (Bonn, 2007; Bernhard, n. d.). Ubuntu is a complex philosophy suggesting that *humanness* is found and cultivated within community. Reciprocity

and helpfulness is foundational, and is reflected in the language in an Ubuntu-oriented society:

[An] aspect of ubuntu is to give and take. In the proverbs “*Ukuph’ ukuziphakela*” (giving is to dish out for oneself)...Giving is seen in the context of reciprocity... With “*Adla ngandoda*” (They (men) eat through other men). Nyembezi explains that the mutuality was not only observed towards eating and drinking. Also the work was done together and help was expected from everyone passing by, even [a] little. “*Wadlula ngendi’ isakhiwa kayibeka qaza*” (He passed by a hut being built and did not tie a knot). (Bernard, n.d., p.11)

This is evident in many aspects of their traditions particularly in dance. Dance is included in their celebrations, self-expression, storytelling, acting, art, mimicking politics, conveying gender roles, and preserving their cultural norms. Both Ubuntu and African Worldview incorporate interconnectedness between mind, body and community which is also reminiscent of Merleau-Ponty (1962) ideals about the body being inseparable from nature, (the world) and influenced by it, (culture).

Therefore the body is not an object. ...Its unity is implicit and vague. It is always something other than what it is, always sexuality, and at the same time freedom, rooted in nature at the very moment when it is transformed by cultural influences, never hermetically sealed and never left behind. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 231)

I particularly appreciated Merleau-Ponty’s sentiments regarding the body “never [being] left behind” because the body, according to African Worldview, cannot be left behind as it is intertwined with the mind and the spirit. In the same fashion, culture is intertwined with African dance and thus intertwined with the identity of those who created it. Because

phenomenology is a philosophy which “focuses on human perception and experience, particularly on what many characterize as aesthetic qualities of human experience” (Willis, 1991,173-174), I felt it was appropriate for this inquiry. According to van Manen (1990), one of the most prestigious phenomenology scholars of our time, “phenomenology can only be authentically understood by doing it” (Pinar, 2000, p. 407). This is an uncanny parallel to the praxis of African dance which I employ in this inquiry; if they (pre-service teachers) do it and keep it *corpo(real)*, I wonder what is it like to feel it. I wonder what it is like to connect the culture. I wonder what it is like to gain a sense of thoughtfulness “which is a kind of heeding, or attunement to what it feels like and means to be human, and to be alive?” (Heidegger, as cited in van Manen, 1984).

The *corpo(real)* body is a place enveloped in meaningful information about our humanness. The body’s intermingling with the mind and spirit could reveal something about human nature, however, only if we attune to it, and approach it thoughtfully in its oneness. In order to extrapolate the essence of what it means to be human we must heed to “keeping things real”, i.e. genuine, which is essentially, our lived experience in *corpo(real)* form. That is the place where the realness of self lies. That is where Ubuntu is located. African dance can assist us in keeping life *corpo(real)* with movement as the vehicle that propels us towards understanding.

It is this same “realness” that will assist us in our understanding of the Other. In agreement with the existence of a connection with Others in the world, and the possibility of coming into full understanding of each other, Pinar (2000) suggests that “such comprehension requires knowledge of historical, cultural and political traditions” (Pinar, 2000, p. 407). I propose that through this inquiry, this concept could be fully examined through the *essence* of

pre-service teachers' reports about their experience *as they live through* learning African dance. According to Husserl "a universal or essence (*Wesenschau*- [a German word meaning] to see, essence or eidos of a phenomenon) may only be intuited or grasped through particular instances as they are encountered in lived experience" (van Manen, 2014, p. 229).

Anne Green Gilbert (2005) affirmed, "Creating dances increases self-esteem, which is necessary for learning to take place" (p. 21). Therefore, learning within the context of an interconnected community, creates a safe environment where being an *individual is to be a part of the whole*, which is key to learning African dance as well. Noe (2009) maintains that lived experience is the basis of human consciousness, therefore to understand and teach African dance you must do it. One must *participate*. Participation increases a sense of belonging. "Culture is not static. It is formed from the efforts of working together using and adapting material and symbolic tools provided by predecessors and in the process creating new ones...people contribute to the creation of cultural processes and cultural processes contribute to the creation of people" (Rogoff, 2003, p. 51).

Dance can also help to improve cognitive development. Noe (2009) contends that consciousness is *not* something that happens inside of us, but rather something done, made or *achieved*. It is uncannily similar to how Ubuntu is perceived by Sindane (1995) who holds that Ubuntu is something to be *achieved* while living a life "that positively contributes to the sustenance of the well-being of a people/community/society" (p. 9). Also according to Kamwangamalu (1999) Ubuntu is the "*art of being human*", (p. 37). Art is after all, something that must be practiced continuously. The more time and effort you put in, the more mastery is achieved.

I wonder, in the context of education, if Ubuntu is something that can be aspired to, is it possible that we could *dance into Ubuntu*? I wonder about the possibility of educators accomplishing a community of praxis (Sim, 2006) through a cultural dance that respects all. I wonder about the possibility of creating an environment of humanness that inspires compassion in students and teaches them to assist each other in their daily learning. I wonder about the creation a new, amalgamated identity based on what we participate in, collectively as a class, as a school, and as a community.

Rogoff (2003) argues that “human development is a process of people’s participation in sociocultural activities of their communities” (p. 52). An interesting connection is again revealed here in relation to African Worldview and the rejection of Cartesian dichotomous split of mind/body. Equivalently, Noe’s (2009) position that “[t]he locus of consciousness is the dynamic life of the whole, environmentally plugged-in person, or animal [and that] our consciousness, is actually happening *out of our heads*” (Noe, 2009, preface), shows the potential universality and applicability of Ubuntu to our North American education system.

Current research documents the importance of exercise on the brain and supports what dancers have known all along: the body and mind are connected in vital ways. According to Ratey (2008) physical activity has a huge impact on cognitive abilities: “It turns out that moving our muscles produces proteins that travel through the bloodstream and into the brain where they play pivotal roles in the mechanisms of our highest thought processes”. (Gilbert, 2005, p. 5)

Without participation we will remain outsiders and thus ignorant of other cultural systems. Morality is one such cultural system which tends to differ from community to community. For instance, Navajo people’s perception of competition in school and life

success is counter to mainstream North American mainstream values. They achieve individual success in education not for themselves, but for the benefit of their community (Rogoff, 2003).

The very individualism that is second nature to much of the middle class is unethical from a Navajo perspective. Whereas the middle class expects individuals to earn their rewards through hard work and often feels no obligation to people who have not earned their own subsistence, many Navajos would think poorly of someone who focused upon their own economic advancement and did not take care of others. (Deyhle & Margonis as cited in Rogoff, 2003, p. 350)

A shift in priorities seem key to attaining Ubuntu. A Zulu proverb says, “Isandla sigez’ esinye” (the hand washes the other) because hospitality, reciprocity and mutuality is ingrained within the language, the very fabric of Zulu society. Could it be that Ubuntu is also reflected in the English language, living undetected beneath the surface of our own North American thought? The metaphorical examination of morality reveals that Ubuntu philosophy is embedded in the very fabric of our language, yet disguised and perhaps forgotten as a result of consumerism, globalization and individualism. Lakoff and Johnson posit:

...morality is concerned with well-being...People are better off in general if they are strong not weak... These correlations give rise to metaphors of morality as strength and immortality as weakness, morality as uprightness and immortality as being low... Since you are better off if you have the things you need rather than if you don't there is a correlation of well-being with wealth. Hence, there is a wide spread metaphor in which moral action is conceptualized as increasing another's well-being, which is

metaphorically understood as increasing their wealth. Immoral action, therefore is conceptualized as decreasing another's wealth. (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p.250)

If we as teachers could reach a state of understanding where awareness of another's culture is indeed an increase of wealth, there may be a possibility of establishing a real connection with one another. A utopia of *corpo(real)* mindfulness through physical movement, and acceptance of the Other through communal connectedness may be achieved if we could *step in*, deep into the center of our beings, into the center of the Sankofa Circle, and into Ubuntu.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Max van Manen's approach to phenomenological methodology requires an understanding of "lived experience", or the realities and lifeworlds⁵ (van Manen, 1990). Utilizing the principle of intentionality, the inseparable connection humans have with the world (Max van Manen, 1990), I have attempted to explore the significance of the phenomena of learning African dance, and in particular discover I wonder what it is like for pre-service teachers' to experience African dance. To understand this I have utilized Max van Manen's guidelines which suggests, looking deeper into seemingly mundane activities via;

(a) "Turning to the lived experience" to answer my questions; what is it like to learn about an African dance and what is it like to enhance pre-service teachers' learning experiences with African culture, and

(b) "Existential investigation", which is defined as looking deeply into the experiences of human beings living in the world pertaining to lifeworld existential themes (lived time, lived space, lived body, lived other), (van Manen, 2014).

Phenomenology was implemented as per van Manen's "Doing Phenomenology" (2012) which included;

1) Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us, 2) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it, 3) reflecting on essential themes which characterize the phenomenon, 4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing, and

⁵ "Primarily, *Lebenswelt* (*lifeworld*) connotes the 'world of experience' (*Erfahrungswelt*), as immediately given, already there, 'taken-for-granted' or 'obvious' (*selbstverständlich*)... it connotes a thickly experienced context of embodied human acting and knowing that is not completely surveyable, not fully objectifiable, and which has an inescapably intersubjective and 'intertwined'" (Moran, 2011, p. 225). van Manen reiterates van den Berg's (1972) view; "if we want to understand someone's world we should look, not inside the person, but to his or her world" (van Manen, 2014, p. 204).

rewriting, 5) maintaining a strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon; and 6) balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (van Manen, 1990, p. 31).

Five pre-service teachers were interviewed after participating in either; teaching African dance to intermediate school students, or participating in an African dance workshop.

1. One pre-service teacher interviewed was one of four who participated in the 2013 instruction of an entire intermediate school.
2. Three different pre-service teachers participated in instructing at the same intermediate school African dance instruction in 2014.
3. Lastly, the fifth pre-service teacher participated in an hour and a half African dance at the workshop with her class.

Due to my interests in African dance expressed in journal writing for a particular class, my professor encouraged me to share my passion for this cultural form of dance with my peers. No other university professor ever recognized this fire I had in me for teaching African dance so one day, feeling brave, and seeing an open window of time, I decided to give it a try. I taught one pre-service teacher in 2013 the *Kpanlogo* (a dance originating from Ghana West Africa), on two different occasions: once, in a classroom, during a 15-20 minute break, and once in an hour long practice during lunch hour. We had been invited by our professor to take part in a bachelor of education talent show. At that time, she and her peers also decided to volunteer to be co-instructors with me when our professor invited us to organize a positive physical activity for an intermediate school in the coming weeks. They expressed interest after trying the dance for a few minutes and thought it was enjoyable. We had a drummer accompany us to the school and we also used recorded music. The drummer was able to slow

the speed of the drum at certain parts of the dance and play faster when necessary, which aided in the learning of the dance.

The second group of four peers in 2014 became interested in African dance after they paired together to do a class project where it was required of them to report about experiencing something new. They approached me to teach them African dance, after I did an impromptu African dance demonstration in their class a few weeks prior. After a one-hour long session and finding it enjoyable they too volunteered to participate in teaching students at the same intermediate school, one year later from the first outreach African dance workshop. I also taught them *Kpanlogo* in two, one-hour sessions to prepare them to assist with instructing it at an intermediate school. We used recorded music only as a drummer was unavailable.

Both the 2013 pre-service teachers and the 2014 teachers learned how to wear an African printed sarong, and make beaded ankle shakers for dancing with. They also all learned the *Kpanlogo* dance in its entirety, but I had them choose one specific movement they were most comfortable with to practice well and teach only that segment at the intermediate school. At the intermediate school the dance was first performed to students by the pre-service teachers, to show their ability and competency to the students. Then each class of grades 7 to 8, combined of approximately 50 students, during 40 minute-sessions were divided in four sections in the four corners of the gym. One pre-service teacher in each corner taught the students the segment of the *Kpanlogo* dance. The students learned one segment at a time for a duration of 5 minutes in each corner then rotated to the next corner. Once they went through each segment of the dance, a finale was performed with all the students together; the pre-service teachers and myself.

The 2015 pre-service teacher, who participated in the African dance workshop with her peers, learned various movements, and a section of the Kpanlogo dance, however not in its entirety. Their group was taught about the balance of learning the physical dance and well as the meaning behind the movements. They participated in culturally relevant games and crafts and wore African printed sarongs. They danced with a live drummer who tailored the speed of the drum to their movements. Additionally, at the end of the workshop they were given time for a question and answer period with the researcher. They were able to view other culturally relevant craft ideas geared towards primary-junior students and were able to touch and feel the various instruments, along with a djembe drum, (refer to *Figure 8*. Introducing the Djembe Drum, for a visual of the djembe drum and drummer), cowbell, calabash shakers, Ghanaian flag, popsicle stick doll crafts and artifacts I had on display, (refer to *Figure 7*. African Princess Dolls, for examples of African culture-based art samples).



Figure 8. African Princess Dolls made by children learning African dance instructed by Kahmaria Pingue in a local community centre. The sarongs and head wraps that the Popsicle stick dolls wear are examples of hands-on learning and representation of a positive self-image. It also introduces children to the idea and acceptance that princesses may look different and wear different attire in other cultures (photo credit: Kahmaria Pingue, 2015).



Figure 9. Introducing the Djembe Drum. Visual Artist / Drummer, Hamid Ayoub, assists with teaching pre-service teachers about the drum's significance in African dance through activities that help participants to listen and *feel* the drum beat. (Retrieved from CSH blog, 2016)

The Interviews

An invitation poster, which I designed, was displayed in various locations on the university campus, addressed to anyone who had participated in any African dance workshop, at any time during their studies. It was posted in the teachers college to notify pre-service teachers of my interest in their experience of learning African dance (refer to Appendix A. 1 for a sample of the poster). Secondly, I sent a message to the CSH cohort 2014 who participated in the workshop to ask for feedback about their experiences. An email was also sent directly to all pre-service teachers (seven) who volunteered to teach dance at the intermediate school (2013 and 2014) asking them to reply with a paragraph description of their most memorable moment about learning African dance and teaching it; (a lived experience description, (LED)). After their response, a subsequent email was sent to them asking about their possible interest in elaborating more about their experience via an in-person interview. Upon their agreement a consent form was given and signed by each participant.

Gathering around the Dance Circle: Data Collection & Analysis

Utilizing purposive sampling, participants were selected who meet the following criteria: pre-service teachers who have participated in an African dance workshop during their Bachelor of Education program within the last two years, and have had an opportunity to teach an African dance they have learned to others. Interviews were utilized from a small sample size of 5 pre-service teachers. Although many quantitative inquiries would require a much larger sample size, on the contrary, a small “example” size is sufficient in phenomenology. According to van Manen (2014), in-depth knowledge about participants’ lived experiences is required and best obtained from a small group of key participants. Unlike quantitative sampling, where generalizations can be made in reference to common characteristics found in the data, in phenomenology, generalizations are not the focus. Rather, “phenomenology attempts to gain examples of experiential rich descriptions... [and]...aims at what is singular and a singular theme or notion may only be seen once in experiential data” (van Manen, 2014, p. 353). In fact van Manen (2014) asserts that “too many transcripts encourage shallow reflection” (van Manen, 2014, p. 353). Instead, “phenomenology is a meaning-giving method of inquiry” (p. 28) which utilizes a “philosophic method of questioning, not for answering or discovering or drawing determinate conclusions” (p. 29), thus a large sample is not necessary.

During the in-person interview, questions were asked pertaining to what their experience was like while learning and teaching African dance by evoking temporal, relational, corporal, and spatial existential. These questions sought to bring out prereflective thought, or ideas that were not commonly thought about at the moment in time that one is living through a particular event. As asserted by van Manen, “prereflective experience is the

ordinary experience that we live in and that we live through for most, if not all, of our day-to-day existence' (p. 28) The purpose was to evoke a sense of wonder about their experience and assist in conjuring up a reflective perspective from a new, fresh vantage point. According to van Manen "wonder is the stepping back and let things speak to us, an active-passive receptivity to let the things of the world present themselves on their own terms" (p. 223). To expand on these steps in more detail, the following is the process at which I followed as suggested by van Manen.

1. Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us

Can a teacher Return and Fetch it? (Sankofa; Return to that which what was forgotten.)

As a pre-service teacher beginning my journey into studying the art of teaching, I was asked to write a letter to myself prior to my first practicum stating my goals and my philosophy on teaching. I wrote about the responsibility I felt towards students of colour in particular, because I had a special connection with them. I vowed to be more of an "auntie" than an authoritarian figure. I wanted, like many of my pre-service teacher peers to have a special connection or bond, if you will, with my students. I believe the purpose for this exercise was based on our professor's experience that once you are in the field, looking back, you come to the realization that your initial expectations, and goals not only change, but are maybe even regarded as unattainable, "when reality sets in". At the heart of my inquiry is my "wonder", ("a pathos that creates an openness to the world and a wondering attentiveness that is the trigger for phenomenological inquiry"(van Manen, 2014, p. 36)); about returning to that "first love" of teaching, and the possibility of activating the desire to bond with your students on a professional, but yet on a personal level where their learning can flourish, because of an intimate level of comfort that their teacher really has their best interest at heart. Could that

desire be reactivated through a cultural dance experience that affects them at their core? What if they could return and fetch it? What would happen if pre-service teachers could re(turn) to their first objective to provide more than just an academic school experience? I wondered, if pre-service teachers could bear the same burden I carried and not only understand, intellectually the importance of culturally relevant curriculum, but what if they could actually feel it?

Because students are no longer “faceless”; rather, students and teachers are now “face-to-face” (Aoki, 1993, p. 212), teachers can fully see their students, and become conscious of their “unique Cultural identities, developmental growth and change patterns... [and] their particular needs, interests and curiosities” (Aoki, 1993, p. 113)...Phenomenological pedagogy. Like Aoki, van Manen (1991) explains that to become a teacher, one must learn multiple techniques and methods of instruction. Yet, if we reflect on the daily responsibilities of a teacher, we recognize that “the essence of education is less atechanical or production enterprise than a normative activity that constantly expects the educator to act in a right, good, or appropriate manner” (van Manen, 1991, p. 9). In this sense, van Manen explains that becoming a teacher “includes something that cannot be taught formally” – this “something” is “the most personal embodiment” of pedagogy. (van Manen, 1991; K. Knowles, 2015)

Stepping Off the Shore: How We Met

In the first year of my Bachelor of Education program a spontaneous opportunity presented itself where I jumped up from my seat during class and invited my peers to learn an African dance called Kpanlogo. Although they did not know the name of the dance, nor which specific country in Africa from which it originated, they were eager to give it a try. I showed

them how to clap to the rhythm of a dance from Ghana and they got it right away. They were hooked! Some clapped out the rhythm, taking the place of a drum, while about four or five of us danced at the side of the room. Since our professor invited us to perform an African dance routine at an upcoming faculty talent show, this turned out to be a good first practice. Six of my peers volunteered to learn the dance and we scheduled practices that day. It was interesting to see their willingness to learn and so when our professor decided it would be great to introduce African dance to students in an intermediate school I realized since we had already bonded and had a working knowledge of the dance, we would be taking it just one step further to teaching a group of middle-school students.

We practiced two more times before the teaching date, but this time I noticed my peers approached the dance in a different manner. They were now the teachers and no longer the students. I felt this was a change in perspective worthy of investigation.

In my second year of the Bachelor of Education program, I was invited to conduct an African dance workshop for the pre-service teachers of the following year. They asked several questions at the end of the hour-long workshop that made me realize that they too had an understanding of African dance only theirs was acquired in one hour. Their experience was much different than with my peers who danced with me for the talent show and learned the Kpanlogo enough to teach it. I pondered about their internal understanding compared to my peers of the previous year. (refer to *Figure 10. African Dance Attire*, and *Figure 11. Hips and Handkerchiefs*, and *Figure 11. Baskets and Balance*.)



Figure 10. African Dance Attire. A pre-service teacher pauses from dancing to pose and show off her sarong. (Retrieved from CSH, University of Ottawa Blog, 2016).

Figure 11. Hips and Handkerchiefs. This gymnasium full of pre-service teachers are engaged in gross motor activity while using props. They learn to wave their colourful handkerchiefs while moving hips and feet in time with the music and beat of the djembe drum. (retrieved from CSH, University of Ottawa Blog, 2016).



Figure 12. Baskets and Balance. Pre-service teachers engaging in a game of carrying a basket on your head and walking in time with beat of the drum. It is a game of multidisciplinary value that teaches kinesthetic balance, rhythm, listening skills and coordination of the body with the beat of the drum, somatic literacy in posture and one that also introduces respect for those in African societies who do this daily. These pre-service teachers are carrying mere plastic grapes in their baskets, but they are provoked to consider the many women and children who are capable of carrying much heavier loads for long distances (retrieved from CSH, University of Ottawa, 2016).

I then decided to pursue this inquiry more assertively and arrived unannounced to the class of 2014 pre-service teachers, armed with African print sarongs and Kpanlogo drums on my iPod. To the surprise of my professor (who was very gracious of course), I simply walked in and invited anyone who wanted to try, to come and dance with me. I handed out the sarongs and showed them how to wear them and played the music. Both males and female

per-service teachers were shy at first, but after one brave soul stood up others followed. We shook our hips and waved our arms and stepped to the rhythm of the drums- right there in the classroom, behind their desks. Four teacher candidates later signed up with me to teach dance at the same intermediate school that my peers and I taught at the previous year. We practiced during our lunch hour once in a vacant classroom and once in the living room of one of their apartments, but space was all we needed.

We danced, but only on the periphery of meaningful understanding of the culture we were engaged in therefore, I saw a need to document these pre-service teachers' experiences. These participants' voices and opinions are important and necessary to my inquiry because "it is [their] words concepts and theories [that] inevitably shape and give structure to [their] experience as [they] live them" (van Manen, 2014, p. 58). How they experienced African dance in the world, in the "living moment of now or existence" (p. 57) is a priority and worth exploring deeply. How a "patient experiences illness, how the teacher experiences pedagogical encounter with a child, how a student experiences a moment of success or failure, how a lover experiences the touch of a caress, friends experience having a good talk, how a child experiences the admiring glance of a parent, how we experience being in touch with someone online" (van Manen, 2014, p. 58) is the real value of phenomenology.

2. Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it

I conducted interviews in-person and also via email to gather pre-service teachers' thoughts on what their experience was like learning African dance. Several questions were posed that range from why they decided to participate, to how they felt while doing African dance to "bring forward the notion that what phenomenology aims: 'to let show itself', [that which is] concealed or hidden...Heidegger (2010), but that 'belongs to what shows itself so

essentially as to constitute its ‘meaning and ground’” (van Manen, 2014, p. 28). Merleau-Ponty explained that it is through bodily experience that we experience the world therefore it is only through a detailed description of a lived experience of another’s body that we can come to know what an event was like for them.

Whether it is a question of another’s body or my own, I have no means of knowing the human body other than that of living it which means taking up on my own account the drama which is being played out, and losing myself in it. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 231)

Losing oneself in another’s lived experience is necessary to analyze that experience thoroughly enough to find its meaning. Hermeneutic analysis is necessary in phenomenological research because “meaning is embodied and embedded in the text” (van Manen, 2014, p.46). Like the meaning evoked in poetic language, “it is the structure of phenomenological texts [that] helps to communicate forms of meaning that are unique to phenomenological understanding and are impossible to mobilize in texts in any other way” (van Manen, 2014, p. 46). (Refer to Appendix B for list of questions).

3. Reflecting on essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;

Audio recordings of each interview was transcribed verbatim and analyzed for similar emerging concepts. The participant’s interviews were then analyzed again for meaning and similar themes that emerged because “phenomenology orients to the meanings that arise in experiences (van Manen, 2014, p. 38). After reading and re-reading interview transcripts, I documented emerging themes which I noticed in each participant’s responses. I designated the responses to each existential category and discussed their relation to the IKS I chose, which is Sankofa.

4. Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing, and rewriting;

Through analysis of each participant's response I have written about their experience bringing their thoughts to life by allowing their voices to speak their truth. Line by line, and as a whole, I applied hermeneutic analysis to each participant's responses and looked for meaning in their experiences. To write is to uncover that which is hidden or to draw out what Heidegger (1998) in van Manen in refers to as *Aletheia* (van Manen, 2014).

...aletheia is the ancient Greek term that means disclosure, unconcealmentWithdrawal, and openness...the truth of aletheia is derived from the study of meaning and meaningfulness. Reflection or inquiry that is governed by aletheia involves a heedful attunement to the things that present themselves to us in order to let them reveal themselves in their self-showing...Separating the essence from the counter-essence (1998, p. 132). (van Manen, 2014, p. 343)

The researcher writes to explore the unseen. The more one delves into writing, the more digging, and the more is unearthed. According to van Manen, discovery is made through a process of “phenomenology [which] aims to express, in rigorous and rich language, phenomena and events as they give themselves, and aims to investigate the conditions and the origins of the self-givenness of these phenomena and events” (p. 61).

5. Maintaining a strong and oriented relation to the phenomenon;

I did this by showing the connection between the participants and how they relayed their experience in conjunction with African Worldview. In doing so, I connected the participants' learning curves to African Worldview to emphasize a natural progression which tended to naturally flow in a direction similar to the principles found in African Worldview. Their ideas were closely related to the cultural values of the communities where the dances

originated therefore, I explained in this inquiry how they gained a meaningful connection with African dance depending on the amount of space and time in which they were exposed to African dance.

6. Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole

Because I was able to step back and let their *aletheia* speak, I was able to allow the participants' journey to bring me to a place of understanding. That place is expressed by terminology that reflects IKS (Sankofa and Ubuntu) and a journey into a place of understanding where I did not expect their experiences take me. It is a new eye-opening place that reveals that Sankofa is *how* they get there and Ubuntu is a state of mind that culminates from a deeper level of cultural understanding, through meaningful movement and pedagogical goals. What each participants' individual experiences helped to reveal for me, as a person and as a researcher, is an intangible essence, drawn out through African dance. What was once displaced or forgotten, is *re(turned)* to a relation to The Other, space, time, and body.

Chapter Five: Participants' Lived Experience Narratives

Gail Steps into the Wave

Gail had little experience in dance, but felt that since we were going to the intermediate school as a group that made it more comfortable for her. Although it was something that Gail had never done before, she saw it as an opportunity in the B.Ed program and decided to participate. She disclosed that she thought getting involved with different age groups of students and teaching them something she has never done before would help her and the students in the long run. She also expected it to be fun.

It was my first time doing African dance. I felt nervous and excited to learn it at the same time. Just because I'm not a good dancer and it was kind of scary to teach everyone and myself. but I got it in the end, and I enjoyed it (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016)

Vignette 1: Gail is feeling timid, but excited at the same time. She has an idea of what to expect, because she has seen African dancers at cultural festivals before, but still unsure. Her body is reminding her of her inability to coordinate her movements. She tries to move like her peers, but she keeps starting with the wrong foot, and stepping out of time with the drum beat. As she practices the Kpanlogo steps for the first time in the small university classroom with her peers, her mind drifts, and she starts thinking about her lack of expertise as a teacher. "If I can't get this dance, how am I going to teach it?"

Stepping into the Sankofa Cyclical Wave (Sankofa Wave) can be an uncomfortable experience at first. Gail is willing, but there is something she must contend with that is pushing her back, and so her ascent up the Sankofa wave begins. She starts her journey towards Ubuntu which seems far off into the distance, with many hurdles she must overcome.

SAN (to return) to the Body & Things

“I feel like there were some movements, like getting low to the ground... “It felt foreign like learning a new language. You feel foreign in the new culture. Once I understood it more, the movements came to me faster - with the music” (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016).

Vignette 2: With each movement of her arms, shake of her hips, and dip in her stride, Gail begins to notice how foreign she feels in her own body. She watches the others move with an air of confidence while she is still trying to learn a new step they learned a week ago. The dance is low to the ground and she must push her body to get low, and to bend. She learns that there is a story being told. She wonders what her body movements look like; are they honouring the earth?

In African dance the body speaks and tells stories. Gail is sharing about an earth-connecting dance movement that she learned in Kpanlogo, an expressive dance honouring the life-giving provisions from the earth. Her body needs to adjust as she learns what that language is. She is learning to express her body to speak in a way that is indeed foreign to her. She is new to this culture of speaking with the body and must be open to learning dance movements that speak.

“I feel like I would need to feel more confident about it, to teach it. It wouldn’t be so much the dance movements, [but] I feel... it would just [be the] questions from students, just about why you do this, why you wear this” (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016).

Her ability to teach African dance is restricted by her insecurity surrounding her inability to answer questions the students may have. Her teaching skills are important to her,

and it is also important that she have all the correct information. Her confidence level weighed heavily on what the students thought of her. Gail is remembering what she personally envisions a competent teacher to be. In her mind, a teacher is all-knowing and ready to be the source of information of her students at all times. She sees herself as a less-than-perfect teacher and this perception adds resistance as she moves further up the wave.

Sensual Sarongs

I felt really nice wearing it. Is it appropriate to say I felt sexy wearing it? That totally put everything together and made me want to show off my dance, especially with that on. It's just something a part of the African culture, I believe. So it's just nice... especially with the children wanting to wear them as well, to [know] how it felt and dance with it as well. I felt like myself, just more feminine wearing it. Just showing off my body more, showing off my features (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016)

Vignette 3: Gail ties on a bright pink sarong that accentuates her hips. During practice a discussion develops about how many African societies regard a woman's hips as a flattering feature on her body. Aneka commented that it is one part of the body that makes you physically distinguishable as female. Gail feels comfortable, because wearing something she thought as sexy, or 'showing off her body' does not bother her. She is comfortable with her sensuality and her body image. She stands tall in front of a gymnasium full of students at the intermediate school and confidently demonstrates how to tie on a sarong and watches how the students eagerly raise their hands to volunteer to try on a sarong.

Gail's perspective is similar to the way women are viewed in Africa when they are engaged in African dance. They are viewed as sensual, but still respected as such; in a sense, they are view as gifted and appreciated for their varied body shapes and sizes. Women who

roll their hips when engaged in dance, in both the Caribbean and many African countries, are not viewed in the same light as their North American counterparts. This type of movement, to have flexibility in the waistline, is considered a dance skill in African dance and people of all ages, including children and men, all learn to move this way from a young age. Anatomically, men do not have hips like women do and therefore the part of the body that makes you look like a woman is being highlighted by the sarong, but it is showing off a quality about you that is feminine, which is a quality to be proud of. By participating in African dance, Gail is learning to feel free to dance as a woman with all the giftings of her feminine body. She learns to be free by wearing some(thing) and that allows her to have the confidence to move up further and over the Sankofa Wave to return to a valuable part of herself.

“I felt like I was lighter for some reason. I felt more just open and free to do what I can with it on, that type of feeling”, (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016).

What a wonderful feeling to feel free. Gail’s freedom is connected to some(thing) wrapped around her body. She feels a sense of weightlessness, with the sarong wrapped around her. This is a description that says heaviness or burdens are lifted. Feeling weightless means gravity is working with you, and not against you. Now she is moving with the current, not against it. She has already moved up, and over, but now, she flows down the wave and closer to her golden egg. Her self-image is closer to a reflection of African Worldview where the healing aspect of dancing prevails. Here, at this point, there is one of freeing of burdens and letting go of what worries you. Gail has given her burdens over to the sanctity of the drum as she dances. She shakes, she steps, she sweats and she sheds all that ails her. She is only left with joy. She is *re(turn)ing* to her body through African dance. Monteiro and Wall (2011) elaborate:

Given the importance of the body in diagnosing various symptoms and disease through traditional African healing methods, it would be essential for rituals to incorporate *movements* to not only access conscious and unconscious processes, *but to offer a direct vehicle to address and transform their underlying causes.* (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 238), (italics added)

KO (to go) Through Time and Space

I wouldn't say it went fast. We had time to get it down and move on to the next. Hmm, well I don't know if this would count, but when we were teaching in our little groups at the school, there was a sense of, I guess, losing myself as in I'm getting a little tired, like because it was really fast, like when we moved off from group to group. It was really quick. I feel like if there was a bit more time, I guess, for a breather, it would have been a little better. (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016)

When Gail had an opportunity to teach the students she could feel time pass quickly. She did not feel there was enough rest time that she needed to get a better sense of her progress with the dance and the students' progress. She time seems to be desired. Perhaps this is another golden egg in Gail's journey. Perhaps she is remembering the time constraints that come with the territory of teaching. She has learned the dance, in a sense this is the curriculum, and is now faced with the task of instructing several groups of students, of a wide range in age, but does she have enough time to do it? What it is like to dance when you are tired may be what it is like to teach when you are tired. Fatigue is a real bodily emotion brought on by a lack of space and time to accomplish what you set out to do in life and in your classroom. It is a physical state that indicates your physical condition when you are fully absorbed in dance, and the telling of the story that is *Kpanlogo*. Through her fatigue, Gail

becomes disconnected and distracted with the task of instructing the dance and it becomes easy for her mind to drift and to think about other things, like the overwhelming fast pace of each group of students arriving for her to teach the same dance lesson, over and over, and her need to “*take a breather*”.

But then Gail’s perspective shifts. Her imagination is awakened. She opens herself up to a different realm of African dance.

“I felt... is it okay to say I felt like I was in Africa sometimes? I know even though we practiced at school, but I feel like the atmosphere, the music around the people, around me and you, really brought that out in all of us”(Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016).

The space within the gymnasium where we are dancing is no longer a limitation for her mind. As Gail takes in the sights and sounds of the moment it takes her to the origins of the culture. Gail is transported to a different space and time as she listens to the drums and claps to the rhythms and watches the vigorous movements of the crowd of students and pre-service teachers. She creates a space in her mind where, although she knows she is physically in a gym, the music brings her out, and into different environment. Gail can visualize where the dance originated, and the culture behind the music as she takes a golden egg of understanding about the impact of the atmosphere and spatial environment when teaching African dance. Even though she is fatigued, Gail found a way of connecting with the dance and its origins, and now she can step out of the wave and move gradually closer to Ubuntu.

FA (to look) for the Other

I think bringing in any kind of diversity into schools is a big thing especially now that the school boards are opening up to being more diverse. So I feel like dances such as the one we did, just helps students become aware of different cultures and diversity

and it's fun at the same time as they are learning it. (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016)

Vignette 4: Gail thinks about the expectations placed on her as a teacher by administrative bodies, she remembers that it is her responsibility to make lessons more diverse. She thinks about the awareness of her students about other cultures and what that means. How can she do what the school board is requiring of her and still be an engaging teacher for her students? She realizes that teaching about others cultures may not be fun for students and she worries about 'diversity' being an uninteresting topic for her students.

For Gail, diversity is important, but what does that look like in a classroom? Making diversity fun has become a weighted, valuable golden egg for Gail, which she must go and fetch.

Another part of the journey to Ubuntu is finding unity through connecting with the Other.

"It would definitely be towards the end, I guess when we gathered up all the students from each grade and danced together" (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016).

Gail notices in the workshop's finale how inviting the Kpanlogo dance is as everyone joins in. There are no gender biases or physical limitations, or ageism in African dance and Gail finds herself dancing in unison with all of her pre-service teacher peers and her students all at once. She has become a part of meaningful culturally relevant curriculum; dancing with everyone in a space usually designated for sports. *"I feel like dance is not a major subject in school unless it is gym class. Maybe in class you play games, but I feel like if it was to be in gym class maybe it would be incorporated. Students would be more excited about going to gym class"* (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016).

The feeling of community and togetherness is feeding her spirit when she as she dances in a communal setting with her peers. Gail is opening up her thoughts to new possibilities for a space that includes more communal interaction with others. She has a new appreciation for the excitement dancing Kpanlogo together can possibly bring for her future students, and it energizes, and pushes her up, as she hurdles over the crest of another wave.

A Reflection of Me in You

I feel like the rhythm and the beat I kinda relates to my own cultural music, so like India. So it kinda, made me recognize my own culture inside, Just the music itself. The connection would definitely be the rhythm and the beat, based on my own culture. That's what it reminded me of. It made me want to take a look at other types of music out there, and dances out there from other cultures. (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016)

As Gail dances to the Kpanlogo drums of Ghana she is surprised to hear similarities to the music of her home country of India. She is surprised because India and Ghana are two different countries and quite a distance away from each other geographically. Gail's connection with the music helps her to identify with the people who play the Kpanlogo drums. Through the rhythm of the drums Ghanaians have now become similar to her and her heritage. Kpanlogo drums have helped her remember home.

Through the familiar beat of the Kpanlogo drum she can open up her thoughts to others around her that she cannot see directly in front of her. Gail is opening up her ears to music she would not normally listen to. '*There are other types of music out there*', she remarks, as she applies some 'cultural logic' inferring that since Kpanlogo is a cultural dance connected to her cultural music, then there must be other types of cultural music genres that

she may possibly enjoy. Gail's new appreciation propels her downward in sync with the flow of the current, taking a positive move towards the Other. She now has acknowledged that the Other exists.

The Message in the Music

It made me feel, I guess joyful and happy because I was really, really excited. Not to just learn it myself, but to teach it to other students and having them [sit] there looking up to [me] and them thinking, I guess in their minds, this is somebody who is a pro at this. But little do they know, I don't dance. I'm not a dancer. I just learned this a couple weeks ago. I guess that was the best feeling, I guess. (Gail, personal communication, Feb, 17, 2016)

Gail knows she was timid about her dance abilities when she first started practicing Kpanlogo. After teaching the dance she is tired, but joyful as she thinks about how the students recognized her dancing skills. Now she is feeling proud about the way the students are looking at her; as if she was an expert dancer. Looking back to the beginning of the semester, she remembers how that was an important goal for her; to appear competent in what she was teaching. In a limited amount of time and just a few practices, she could feel proud of her accomplishment, but also in that she was able to convey with teaching a dance from a culture that was foreign to her. Perhaps African dance is not as complicated as she thought. Maybe she can do this. In the past, she never considered herself skilled in African dance and certainly not skilled enough to teach someone else, yet now she can stand in front of students appearing as someone who has been dancing for a long period of time. This is a moment of personal victory for her as she affirms her leadership skills.

Anthropologist E.E. Evans Pritchard noted in his doctorate that “...peculiar to African dance is that it necessarily generates leadership since someone must organize participants into groups and direct them in movement” (Clarke, 2013, p. 13-14). Gail can now take this golden moment of triumph in leadership with her as she steps out of the Sankofa Wave and confidently moves on towards Ubuntu.

Chapter Six: Helene Steps into the Wave

I thought it would be something that I could use when I become a teacher or even in my practicum. I never felt like I was being judged or unwelcome[d] or anything. But, just the way it was set up in a big circle, it just felt like [the instructor] was never like, staring at one person and just making us practice them and kinda like perform them, it was more like if you get it that's fine, if you don't, like keep trying. (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016)

Vignette 1: Helene knows that it is required for her whole class to participate in this African dance workshop and she already has an idea of what she wants to get out of it. It is the only opportunity in her B. Ed program to see what it is like to learn Kpanlogo and she wants to approach it with a purposeful attitude. She was a dancer. She knows what it is like to walk into a room of other dancers, line up in rows for a dance class, and face a wall lined with mirrors. It did not matter to her if they were judging her dance skills or not, she knew what she came there to do and she never let it affect her. But, here, in this dance circle, things felt different. She noticed that there was an atmosphere of ease. There were no judgmental glares. There was a welcoming feel to the big circle, and the instructor was not singling anyone out, forcing them to 'perform' on the spot. Instead, there was an air of encouragement to keep trying; and with that realization, Helene steps into her first Sankofa Wave and begins her journey to Ubuntu.

SAN (to return) to the Body: Use it or lose it

I thought it would be something that I could use when I become a teacher or even in my practicum because I am a part of the Comprehensive School Health cohort, so we are always looking for new ways to integrate like healthy living and the different

pillars. I just thought that that would have a really big impact on my teaching, personally. And it [has] always sort of been something that I have been interested in, but I haven't actually taken, like specifically an African dance, course or classes, so it was nice to expand. (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016)

Vignette 2: It has always been in the back of her mind. She had curiosity to learn African dance, but was never offered the opportunity. Now here it was, finally, a chance to expand on the dance experience she already has and maybe even learn something she can take back to her practicum. Growing up she had extensive training but it was something that brought her joy, people could see it on her face as she talked about dancing. She was confident that her experience learning Kpanlogo could help increase her dance skills and even develop her skills as a teacher. She is eager to use her dance skills, but she knows that her teaching skills have to be on point when she goes on her practicum, and she wants to equip herself with everything she can get her hands on. She recognizes the importance of healthy living and being an example of what she professes, why would learning about another culture be any different?

Helene sees her journey to becoming an equip teacher ahead of her at a distance, but believes that what she wants to attain is not too far off - after all she was already a good dancer. She already viewed African dance as a valuable discipline. But still, she wants to make sure she can make a good impression on her practicum supervisor. Helene's ascent up the wave begins as she strives to glean all she can, in preparation for her teaching placement.

When I was younger, we used to go to workshops, but it would be different kinds of dance so sometimes, like the contemporary styles [classes], they'd mix in elements of that, like those kind of moves, like more soulful, I guess. But it wasn't specifically like,

this is African dance now, you know. I think it was kind of...blended. when I was about 7 or 8 up until I was until the end of high school I took jazz, tap, ballet, hip hop, lyrical, musical theatre, all that kind of stuff and then after high school I was into productions more. So we did a production of RENT. A few other things like that where I was more of just of a principal dancer so I guess that would be more jazzish. And I had to sing which was terrifying. (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016)

Vignette 3: Helene dives right into the movements. They feel familiar to her. She has experienced these soulful body isolations before in Jazz and Tap. She knows how to find the beat in her body and change at a moment's notice if the dance instructor changes the pace. She can dip low and move her hips with the best of them. As she dances Kpanlogo she is beginning to see the differences between what a contemporary style of dance is and what is cultural, but she can also feel the similarities. She does not know exactly what to name it, but she can feel it. She is remembering the traces of African-inspired dances that were "soulful", and classes that were labeled "blended": *"they'd mix in elements of **that**, like those kind of moves... But it wasn't specifically like, this is African dance now, you know?"*

Through Kpanlogo movements, Helene is taken back in her mind to a subtle reminder that African dance is the origin of many contemporary dance styles, only sometimes hidden, or not given credit. In her body's memory she is becoming aware of dances she did not know had a long history. Helene senses that there is more behind what she was learning in her studio-run dance classes - perhaps it is the *meaning behind these movements*; meaning that she should return to. The history and understanding cultural dance genres becomes a golden egg that Helene must fetch in her journey towards Ubuntu.

Vignette 4: As she waves two colourful handkerchiefs in the air back and forth, above her head like a tree swaying in the breeze, she steps confidently to the rhythm of the live drummer's djembe drum, switching her ankles up and down, in a heel toes fashion, alternating between both feet. She counts each rhythmic step in the Kpanlogo pattern; one, two, three, four, one two, three, four, she shifts her body around, making quarter turns; first to the right then back around to centre and then the left side. All the while she bends her knees, alternating her feet back and forth. She listens for the kpanlogo bell at the end of each turn, and she remembers to emphasize the bell sound with a flicking of her arms above her head. Helene starts to feel energized. The ease of Kpanlogo dance steps makes it fun. The circular formation she is standing in with her peers instead of standing in rows makes her feel welcomed. It makes her feel open to practicing the African dance steps regardless of how foreign the movements feel. She wonders; how would her students in her practicum feel if she taught them in a circle instead of sitting at their desks in rows? As she dances alongside her peers she doesn't feel singled out at any moment, she is no longer one single, 'principal dancer' as she once was in a previous dance production; she is now a part of a 'oneness' where everyone is learning together. It is exciting because she realizes that her mere presence is supporting the learning of the others. Her very willingness to be there and dance was encouraging the person next to her. Their 'glue' is in their numbers. Their unity is a part of their learning. She feels the excitement of her friends as they learn to tie a sarong around their waists. She hears their laughter as they laugh at themselves struggling to step in time with the drum. She watches them attempt to isolate their torsos and mistakenly push their shoulders in and out. She smiles as her eyes meet theirs as they dance facing each other, instead of a facing dance studio mirror. Helene's heart rate and emotions increase with the vigour of the steps.

Dance, especially used in rituals, has also played a role in the spiritual and social development of many communities throughout the world, particularly in African cultures... dance is... a symbol of the personal, communal and social narrative of these societies...it is embedded in a pervasive socio-centric worldview that focuses not on the individual per se, but as integral parts of communities (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 327, 239).

The exchange of energy between her and her peers builds, pushing her wonder “what it would be like to teach her practicum students with a community-centred learning model?”, moving her further up the highest edge of the Sankofa Wave.

Helene begins to focus on including dance in some format or another. She is already visualizing teaching African dance and how she would incorporate it into a lesson.

I think I would like to, but I think I would maybe feel more comfortable if I had someone like you, or like the people you were with come in and help teach most of it. I just wouldn't want to be disrespectful. I would wanna make sure I was teaching the moves in the right way. The same [way] that I would if I didn't have as much training as I do in jazz or ballet, or something like that. I would want someone else to come in and even talk to me before to make sure I was doing it in the right way. (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016)

Suddenly, Helene realizes she must bring her ideas down to earth. She must embody those thoughts into a classroom setting, and it is only now that she has considered her comfort level and whether or not she was able to do it the ‘right way’. She would prefer to have assistance from someone like an African dance instructor who is an expert in African dance. She is a dancer, but she feels unqualified to teach about what goes along with each dance step. Even

though her abilities to dance are not restricting her, she feels her lack of knowledge about the culture was limiting her confidence. Helene must go and fetch her confidence as a competent culturally relevant educator.

She finds herself asking; “Do I know what makes the dance meaningful? How do I teach it without being disrespectful? What if I teach it wrong?” She knows she would be especially nervous if there happened to be a student in the class of that culture where the dance originated. She could see the benefits, physically and culturally for students, but how does she know she won’t offend someone? What would happen if a student’s parents were offended? To avoid these scenarios Helene keeps telling herself she will just have to make sure she was being respectful.

Helene is cautious about cultural appropriation and most of all about teaching it incorrectly. Helene’s self-imposed priority to ‘do it right’ has made her ascent up the Sankofa Wave become a stagnant plateau and is not yet able to overcome it.

[That did] not so much worry me. I would just want to make sure, like I said, that I was being respectful. Especially if there were students in the class say, who do have background in that, and know more about it than I do. And if I said the wrong thing, or if I taught it the wrong way, I would just, I wouldn’t want to go about it like that I guess. (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016)

This self-doubt and her self-consciousness is an added opposing force in the current restricting Helene as she attempts to hurdle the crescent of the Sankofa Wave.

SAN (to return) to Things: Wrapping up the Body & Wrapping up Fears

“Sarongs, yeah, so we were wearing those, like the bracelets on our ankles with the bells and stuff, so I think it helped to make me feel part of that whole environment. It felt different like,

because I never really danced, like wearing something like that and... I felt like I was being kind of accepted or being part of the dance, of the African dance.” (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016)

Vignette 5: Helene enjoys the dancing but also the sarongs. She watched carefully as the instructor demonstrated how to wrap it around their waist. She remembers back in Ballet class how much she like wearing the soft sheer wrap skirts over her leotard. It was light and flowed with her movements. Now in this African dance workshop she is wrapping a bright, multicolored fabric around her body, it's thicker, but still adds something special to their dance moves. The bells on her right ankle jingle with every other step she takes, adding a little accent on the beat and interesting feeling to become a part of the music. Helene feels included, like she is contributing to the whole atmosphere of the dance circle, helping her make her descent down the Sankofa Wave and taking a golden moment of interconnectedness to kpanlogo through her body as an instrument.

Adorning the body is an important part of African dance much like many other dance genres. In ballet, specific attire is expected to be worn, and also in Hula dancing a raffia skirt is donned. It is similar in an African dance, there are also accessories worn such a beads and brightly coloured fabric wrapped around the body in various styles. Monterio and Wall (2011) explain this connection to things found in African Worldview.

Specifically, the African axiological focus on Man-Man, places the highest value on the interpersonal relationship, which offers individuals a “feeling of being interconnected to the existence of everything else.” (Nobles, 1978), (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p239)

Helene talks about what it was like wearing a sarong and “*to move with it*”.

I think what made the real difference for being connected was putting on the sarong and having all of the other stuff and having a chance to see all that, and to move with it, because it was something that just made it authentic to that style of dance (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016).

The “authenticity” of the experience seemed to help Helene connect. Wearing the sarongs were something unique to this particular dance and it made it memorable for her. The real connection for her seemed to happen during a time when the originality of the dance could shine through.

You had us put the baskets on their head, and try to do that kind of walking? It was little things like that, that had a lot of meaning to me. Because it again brought back where this is all coming from and the, like deeper meanings behind it than just learning the moves (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016).

Carrying baskets on their heads while walking to the beat of the drum was a fun exercise I introduced her cohort to, (refer to *Figure 11. Baskets and Balance*), that would help her and her peers ‘walk in the shoes of an(Other)’, and help them gain a sense of ‘chewing gum and patting your head and rubbing your tummy’ type of experience- as I relayed it to them. They experience what it it’s like to be required to multitask with their bodies: balance the basket, walk to the rhythm of the drum, whether fast or slow and pass the basket without spilling it off to a partner on the other side of the circle. Helene remembers how skilled you had to be to accomplish this, but in the end when I asked them to image the weight of 40 to 50 lbs of water of other cargo on their heads, their minds were open to a new level of respect for those who do this on a daily basis. However that respect was born out of getting physical with their

learning, rather than telling them directly. This a *re(turn)* to the body that helped them to embody the meaning of the dance and thus develop respect for it as a byproduct.

This seemed to trigger a deeper meaningful connection in Helene's mind about *who dances this dance and why*. She realized there was more to it than "just learning the moves". Helene also spoke about the feeling of being lower and closer to the earth, another 'thing' which plays out in the storytelling in African dance. Helene shares:

"I felt lower, than I do normally. And some of the hip movements were a little bit different, than just like switching your hips back and forth. Those things are not, like something that I am super used to doing." (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016)

African dance is a type of dance that is earthy in nature meaning, low, deep movements are often a characteristic of the dance. The knees are often bend and hip movements, are emphasized and regarded as a skill depending on the area of the continent you are from. Even with Helene's extensive background in dance she still was learning to move her body in a new way. This reveals that African dance is not only for the novice dancer, or elementary school student, but it can be taught in an environment of adept dancers, and they would also have something to gain.

KO (to go) Through Time and Space

"Probably not, like, right away, like when we first started, but by the end when we put all the moves together, a bit more, yeah." (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016).

Helene is bending as she dances as the instructor demonstrates, but she is not used to this scooping up of imaginary energy and dipping deeply with her knees. She is listening to the story of Kpanlogo and all about the country it comes from and trying to make a mental

connection with the movements and the story. It is not quite making sense to her but she keeps going. Watching, dipping, scooping, and shaking. It reminds her of gardening, as she would bend over to till the soil with a hoe, or reaching to picking fruit. She is tries to imagine which words would go with these body movements. What kind of story is she telling with her body?

Helene is moving up another wave as she tries allow herself time to understand the symbolism about the earth that is incorporated in some African dances. She realizes over the making connections with the accessories, sarongs and the dance's origins were more feasible during the short time learning in the workshop.

FA (to look) for The Other

I think even just talking about it would really help them to get more of a background. Especially if it fit into something, like what you were saying [when] talking about different cultural dances, like, First Nations' dances and how different [they are compared to other dances]. I think that would be beneficial (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016).

Helene thought it would be beneficial for pre-service teachers to learn about other cultures through dance, not only students. She mentions feeling that, just a simple conversation that could take place about different cultural dances is beneficial to pre-service teachers. Helene saw it as a connective extension to learning about other cultures. She also touched on the possibilities for learning for both students and teachers. Her comments are reminiscent of community of praxis guidelines, when the lines between student and teacher are blurred and both are engaged in an exchange through the learning process.

Um, at the end, like once it was all done, you had kind of everyone putting their stuff away and you had everything laid out in front of you and I think you had a flag out, and you had different pieces out, and you let us all take a look at it. That was

something that really stuck with me because it was like oh, the bracelets with the beads, maybe that is something that I could do, like with my students, or go and buy those pieces of fabric. It was the biggest thing to me that I could take away from that. Maybe it's because I already, like know dance, the steps came really easy, but that was something super new to me (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016).

Tangible experiences seem to solidify a student's theoretical education and the fact the Helene and her peers were able to touch, and feel, and interact with the fabrics, and put on the beaded anklets, and colourful handkerchiefs made her experience *corpo(real)*. Helene was not restricted to only looking at pictures of the items in a book, nor was she forbidden from touching them, but instead she could actually wear them. She viewed it as a new experience a part from dance that she would actually consider sharing with her future students.

The Other Dancers in the Circle

I never felt like I was being like judged or unwelcomed or anything and I think even if people weren't kind of not into it, they weren't rude about it or, you know. It was just kind of like well, oh, this isn't for me and you could tell, but it wasn't in a way that they were being disrespectful (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016).

Helene noticed that African dance was not going to always be everyone's cup of tea, at least not all the time. She mentioned a couple times that she knew of specific people who were just not into it, but for her that was ok. She still found the workshop as an opportunity to connect with like-minded peers who were enjoying it. Helene noted that her peers, who she would normally study with, were the same people who were focused and engaged in the African dance workshop on the same level that she was. This was interesting because it caused me to ponder if those pre-service teachers perhaps had a slightly different mindset than her other

peers. Possibly when it came to learning different things or just dance in general they were resistant. It was hard to speculate, but the fact that the pre-service teachers that Helene tends to connect with were as engaged as she was seems likely that they may be more open to the acceptance of the Other and extensively, towards other cultures.

Sharing Ubuntu with Others

...and that's why I think if they have something like that to explain the meaning behind it, the second they put that on, my hope would be that they would be more respectful. Like instead of not doing [any] of that [explaining]and [only] teaching them the moves, I could see boys in my practicum class right now, who would be, not disrespectful, but they [would] just joke around and not take it seriously, whereas I think if you give more meaning to something, [and] they put it on, it would help them. Hopefully [they will] be thinking in their mind okay, this is where this comes from I need to be respectful of that. I hope that they would do that (Helene, personal communication, Jan, 24, 2016).

Helene was very focused on the pedagogical value of African dance. She seemed to understand the importance of teaching the meaning behind the movements as well. She felt strongly that the dance itself was not enough. Simply telling students to be respectful of the dance was not enough, but if they knew the meaning behind it, they might be more inclined to act respectfully. She alluded to the idea of having someone, knowledgeable about the dance and the culture come into the classroom and share the meaning behind the movement so that when students put on a sarong they would immediately get a more concrete understanding of where it originates and the people attached to it and thus be respectful to the culture. The purpose of various pedagogical strategies such as field trips and variety of outings allow

students to experience the subject they are studying on a personal level. It is similar to bringing the textbook to life, and so it seems fitting that if a teacher could share African culture with students in a real life setting, making it come alive thereby making it tangible to them. Helene seems to believe that the teacher would offer that experience if it were feasible.

Additionally, the teacher could also share the culture without leaving the classroom. A Teacher could conveniently have an instructor come to them. In a similar manner, as do First Nations and Indigenous Peoples of Canada who send elders to schools to stand as gatekeepers of their indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). Helene was also aware of this and mentioned it earlier in the interview. She equated the value of First Nations and Indigenous culture with African culture and saw that they both deserved the same respect and pedagogical application.

Chapter Seven: Aneka Steps into the Wave

“I thought it would be a good way to kinda get some physical activity, but also make some new friends, and also do something fun” (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Here she talks about her first time jitters as she steps into the wave;

I felt nervous, but excited to try it for the first time. The first time I felt a little... out of place, the way my body moves, and [when I noticed] how the instructor was teaching the steps, I felt ... my body was... not moving the same. So I felt a little bit weird doing the steps, but as I continued doing it and [with] the tips the instructor gave us, I felt more at ease (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Wave Ascent: At this point, Aneka seems focused on mimicking the dance instructor’s movements and compares her body movements to the instructor’s. For her, learning the dance means focusing on steps and less about how she feels doing it. Her idea of having the ability to do African dance is geared towards how closely she can dance like the teacher and not on what the dance can bring to her consciousness. This is indicative of a novice of African dancer, because the understanding of how to allow the drum and feeling of each movement to move body/ mind/ spirit is yet to be tapped into. Aneka at this point is trying to mirror, but not *become* an African dancer. This a current that pushes back as she moves up the Sankofa Wave.

This was not Aneka’s first encounter with a cultural dance, however. She spoke about her experience with Chinese dancing at school when she was younger. *“It was more about ... slow movements... you use your hands and ...you’re taking a few steps at a time... Someone had come in for a cultural event and was teaching us that”* (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Albeit a brief, one-time lesson, it is etched in Aneka's memory. She remembers the pace of the dance, the hand movements and that someone with expertise, apart from her classroom teacher taught the dance. Maybe Aneka's hands-on experience became memorable for her, because it was an experience that connected her body, mind, and spirit. This is similar to African Worldview in that dance is a tool to help us *re(turn)* to the body and remember what we forgot.

SAN (to return) to the Body: The Beat and The Body

In the beginning it was a little bit hard because it was [hard] getting that beat and the movement at the same time. I've done piano and I'm pretty good with beat, but I'm not ...very in tune with my body to move to the beat (laughs). I can keep the beat in my head and clap to it but, once my body starts moving it kinda brakes a part. So it's all kinda weird at the beginning (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Aneka mentions her musical talent and seems to think her musical skills should transfer to African dance and should qualify her for understanding how to move her body in a skilled way, but her physical literacy seems to fail her. Clapping and dancing, she learns, are a different skill and it initially makes her feel out of place and a little awkward, however what Aneka has not learned yet is that the beat of the drum is what tells you what to do and learning to listen to its language is a new skill that African dance requires. The drummer and dancer must become one and Aneka's awkward feeling may be a result of not yet having an understanding of what it is like to disregard the 'classical musical notes', so to speak, or the 'counting of beats' and instead, flow with the rhythm.

That intangible sense of culture, in the beat of the African drum, is commented on by Aneka;

The thing I like about the African dance is it's very physical [and] a lot of people don't have that physical ability to, you know, move their bodies in different ways, so this is helping them to... just try. Everyone may not be good at it, but at least you are attempting the movements and [it's] kinda helping you to learn about your own body while learning about other cultures and about the dance and the movements. [It is teaching you] more than just about the culture, but about music and rhythm and beat, so it's teaching you a whole lot. I think it's very encompassing of different skills. You can learn a lot from it (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Wave Crescent: Aneka anticipates students benefiting in a multidisciplinary way, referring to physical literacy, musical skills, and cultural awareness. Aneka seems to draw parallels of own experience with her future students by gathering that there is still value in African dance even for those who, like herself, are not expert dancers. She saw dance as an introduction to a new way of moving for those who are limited in movement if they would take the opportunity to “*just try*”. She mentions “*getting to know your body*” as if to implying that the body needs our reacquainting. Possibly this is a *re(turn)* to the body needed for novice dancers. She also indicates that the movements are indeed a beneficial way to learn about another culture. This seems to suggest that through her experience, Aneka feels not all cultures move the same way, and doing the dance of that other culture is a viable means of learning about the Other.

She also mentions that those who partake in African dance and are in fact musically inclined would also get something out of it as well. It is teaching you “*different skills*”, she

notes. Possibly this statement stems from prereflecting on her own acquisition of something new in African dance in spite of, or in addition to, her talents in playing piano.

As Aneka expressed what African dance felt like in her body and she responded in a way that was surprisingly in sync with a familiar image:

What I loved about it was that beat. In the beginning we took time to kinda find that beat, clapped to the beat and find that beat in your body. I think we do have that internal beat in your body. Like with our heart and with the rhythm so it kinda felt like you're matching the music to your internal body beat. You know, you can find that feeling inside you, the beat inside you (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: Aneka connected with the beat of the drum inside her heart. This “internal beat” was something she felt we, as human beings, all possess. She talked about a connection between the music and our internal beat. It was interesting to hear how she acquired it on gradual terms; first clapping and then “*finding*” the beat. It seems that the beat was somehow lost and needed to be *re(turned)* to. African dance instigates the *turning* back to the body, to a rhythm it once had. This is *Sankofa*, returning to fetch something of value that you once possessed, but have lost.

This particular movement that Aneka describes is referred to by many as ‘The African Butterfly’.

I really like when we were using our body...our hands were close to our body and then moving away - it kinda felt good. I remember it was kind of an opening up type of movement. I remember that feeling...you're using all your muscles and so it kind of, it felt good. I don't know exactly how to describe it, but it just felt like an opening up type of feeling... You are in a ball and then you open and kinda spread your arms out.

I feel ...bigger and more confident from just spreading [my] arms out and you know, kind of like [I'm] taking in all that energy (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: This movement is appropriately named because of its physical resemblance to a butterfly spreading its wings, but this is also the energy that is evoked emotionally for the dancer. As Aneka expressed, she felt good “*opening up*”. Her ‘opening up’ could be interpreted on so many levels. She opens up to the physical feeling of being bigger and more confident - which is often equated with a larger size, and she may also be opening up on a level of acceptance of new cultural norms. Aneka was opening up to African dance movements that opened her mind which is connected to her *re(turn)* to the body. No longer is she crouched in a ball, a position of closeness and feeling small, possibly vulnerable, and closed to the outer world around her, but now she is allowed to spread her wings, her horizons and perspective, and open up to receiving “*all that energy.*” Perhaps that energy is the essence of African dance.

Not yet being informed about the premise of African Worldview, Aneka describes the coming together of mind, body, and spirit, and community (Other):

...you know what, when breaking [the dance] down, I felt very much in my head... because I was trying to get the beat and the movement and remembering how many times [to do] each movement. So I was very much thinking about it. Putting it all together and [then] dancing with everyone, I felt very out of my head and more into the moment and, [in the] experience, and the feeling of you know, [like I was] doing something together with everyone. I felt I wasn't [trying to] remembering how many times I had to do it, you know, because if I messed up then I had people I could watch,

[then I could] kind of self-correct. So I was not in my head. I was more in my body
(Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Through the coming together of all the African dance movement she learned in *Kpanlogo*, Aneka speaks of a gradual breakdown of steps which made her concentrate on counting beats, which she seems to imply she now understands was not the ideal format of learning the dance. However, when she speaks of putting it all together, Aneka refers to thinking less and feeling more. Knowing when to change sequences as she became more grounded in her body and dancing with others became more apparent. She felt her peers' moral support which gave her energy to dance in sync with them. Dancing with others was not a time when she felt self-conscious about doing it 'right' or doing it 'wrong', for that matter, she was more confident that she could '*self-correct*' and keep going. Aneka was stepping into the second Sankofa Circle. Through movement, Aneka could now *feel* what it is like to connect mind, body, spirit and other, and thus feel comfortable in her own 'skin', and she takes that golden moment with her, onward towards Ubuntu.

Aneka comments on her experience with the African printed sarongs, her self-confidence, and body image.

I liked having it on because, it kind of [brought] more of that cultural aspect to it. You know it was kinda nice like, it was tied on tight so that you could feel it on your body. It wasn't feeling so much of an exercise as more [of a] dance...I remember even at the school everyone was rushing to be able to wear one... the colours and the fabric, like they're very bright and welcoming and opening. So I think it [is] something a lot of people were very drawn to and liked to wear. It kinda brought me closer to that feeling

of being a cultural dance and not just a physical dance (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Here Aneka is candid about her personal body image:

Well for myself, I know I find, my waist area, like I'm very self-conscious, so having a sarong, for one, I felt very comfortable doing the dance because I felt I have something covering, but it also felt, good because I feel the tightness on our waist.... kind of like a tight hug type feeling, where, you know, everything was together. I wear a lot of black clothes...to conceal my body, because I'm not very confident, but with the sarong on, I felt more powerful and more confident by just having that on. That feeling of having it tied tight on me (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Aneka gives more detail about internalizing a more natural body image through African dance

I feel like with our waist and body image, the media [has] put like a negative aspect on what our waist should be, and our bottom, and you know, how we look. I feel when we put on a sarong it's taking that negative aspect and kinda putting on a positive outlook. Like you were saying, you were teaching us about those movements in the waist; it's not about shaking your bottom [like] on TV. It's more about, kinda getting back to the basics... like why do we have hips, and why do we have big hips, you know, natural causes. Natural things. It's natural to have the body that we have. So I think it's kinda getting back to that like, it's okay to be like proud of your body, type thing (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Wave Ascent: Aneka is very candid and open about her struggle with self-confidence and body image. She welcomes the sarong as a cover up, but gradually accepts the new cultural perspective of emphasizing her body shape, and seeing it as a gift. She learns through the

meaning behind the cultural attire that it is “*natural*” for her to be shaped the way she is, and that the sarong is actually an accent, not a cover up. Aneka begins to shift her thinking as she learns about how the female and the female body in African dance, are seen through African Worldview. It is different from a North American perspective, and what may be portrayed in media. She notes how the North American view can sometimes be overwhelmingly negative towards a woman with a certain type of body shape or features. However, through the *meaning behind the movements* she learns to *re(turn)* to the “*basics*” and to the “*natural*” reason she has hips and thus to an acceptance of the truth about her body and herself.

She notices how Others react in a positive manner to the bright colours and the novelty of trying it for the first time and she can relate to their joy of seeing the fabric as “*welcoming*” and inviting. Though it is only a small piece of fabric, Aneka recognizes how it transforms the movements from a ‘regular’ dance to a cultural one, as there is meaning behind the attire. It has the power to change the look of a movement into something special. In the same token where Ballet dancers look different in a tutu, than when doing the same movements in their everyday clothes, there is something official or ceremonial about wearing a sarong that distinguishes African dance from any other.

The weight of Aneka’s body while doing African dance is explored:

During ‘normal’ dancing I never really paid attention to that, the weight of [my] body. I remember this one move where you were [teaching us] “you gotta stomp and you gotta put all your force, all your weight into that stomp!”, and I really felt like, okay, I have power in my body. Not more of... [an amount of] weight but, it's the weight that's giving me power. I felt more weight in that stomp... It felt good to do that. Even with

bare feet, I felt more of my body by just being barefooted (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Aneka discusses her thoughts on what it feels like to dance in bare feet:

The first time that we did it, where you're teaching us in one of the rooms upstairs, I remember like thinking oh my gosh the floor is so dirty and my socks are going to get dirty, you know kind that aspect, but as we kept on practicing I remember thinking this feels so much more comfortable, like being barefooted. You know, like I felt good being flat of the ground. Because usually most of our lives, like when we are in a building, when we're [in] public we always have our shoes on, so to have that feeling, of the ground on your foot, felt really good (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: Aneka shares that the thought of taking off her shoes was quite revolting at first, but it was something she actually grew to prefer. The idea of dirt on her socks was not initially appealing and the ground felt foreign to her. The thought of taking off her shoes in a public place was a socially awkward thing to do, nonetheless Aneka was brave and truly ventured out of her comfort zone to make a concerted effort to engage in the culture. She did not voice her opinion at all during our practices, so it is interesting to hear now that she actually felt good with her feet “*being flat on the ground*”. Being grounded is a term commonly used to describe in-the-moment, bodily experiences. Here we can use it in both a mindful and a literal context. Aneka was *re(turn)ing* to her connection with the earth and returning to her commitment to venture out of her comfort zone and try new things.

KO (to go) Through time and space

The atmosphere in a space is often set with music. Aneka discusses her changing atmosphere and changing her daily music playlist.

Well at the beginning I just felt like I was listening to it as a cultural song and you know, being an ECE, I've heard different CDs that have cultural songs on it, without words to play for the kids. So it's something I [have] listened to, but not listened to in my everyday life. But then through learning the dance and teaching the dance I felt I was listening to it more as a part of my playlist like a part of my everyday music which was kind of refreshing to listen to something else. Even without words or with words that I didn't understand. I remember you were teaching us a few of the words but it was nice to listen to it as a part of my everyday music (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Aneka seems to suggest that there is a difference between listening to a song simply because it is 'cultural' and listening to it because you personally enjoy it. She seems to agree with the benefits of children having exposure to different cultural music, but she, herself, seemed to be only playing it as a means to go through the motions to fulfill her duties as an Early Childhood Educator, not truly taking it in or appreciating it. It seems it was not until Aneka began to move to the rhythms of the West African song we practiced to that she internalized the sounds. She was able to connect with the rhythms and decided to add it to her daily life. The language barrier in the song did not matter. The music was what mattered. She found it refreshing. Her atmosphere is shifting as Aneka moves deeper into the *Sankofa Cyclical Wave* and closer towards Ubuntu.

Aneka begins to create a visual of what it feel like to dance in bare feet and compares it to a feeling of 'being home'.

I feel at home, you know you take off your shoes and you are barefoot so it feels like a home. [It] feels like your place. When you're in a building you are always with your shoes so I feel like there is less of a connection to the building because you're just in the building but it's not a place of home. It's not a place of comfort because you're just there for a period of time, but I feel like if you can take off your shoes, it was more comfortable and felt more [like a]I place I could spend more time in because I didn't have shoes on (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: Aneka realizes that some of her everyday actions can constitute routine and comfort. One of those routines is taking off her shoes when she gets home. Because she is connected with that space which she calls home, her actions change to reflect that space. Home is a space of comfort where you take your shoes off, relax and be yourself, so as she gradually becomes connected to the Kpanlogo dance, the feeling of the floor under her feet and moving in a space where she feels comfortable being barefooted, it becomes a place she can call home - she is making it home. In a way, she is claiming that space. She becomes familiar with it and becomes attached to it.

FA (to look) for the Other

We have the knowledge of this dance and we [are] giving it to them. It just felt so good to see kids [dancing], especially kids that you wouldn't expect to dance and want to learn. The boys too; I really expected the boys to totally not be into it and you know, be standing there, but there was some boys who were totally into [it and] wanting to learn and wanting to wear the sarong. So to be able to give that knowledge to someone

who wants that knowledge so much, it felt so good. It felt nice to be able to share that experience with them and ... to see them have so much fun (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

Aneka desires to pass on knowledge, only this knowledge she describes is one that consists of a cultural dance. She wants to share her knowledge of African dance and takes joy in seeing them dance and learn. Aneka seems to have accepted the knowledge she has of the dance and wants to ‘give’ it to them. She recognizes that although there may be some who may not engage in African dance she is excited to ‘give’ the knowledge to those that want it ‘*so much*’. Her emphasis on “*so much*” seems to be acknowledging the urgency for the students’ wanting that knowledge and I sensed that she is ready and willing to answer *that Call*.

Aneka also discusses her surprise to see boys involved, open to wearing the sarongs and having fun. This is another shift in Aneka’s perspective about African dance and what it can potentially do to challenge gender biases about males in dance.

Aneka speaks about what it was like dancing, and teaching the dance with her peers.

I was so happy when people signed up to do it. One of the girls, I actually didn’t really talk to a lot in class, so being able to have some of that out-of-class time with her was really good. I got to know her a lot better. I think just learning together, [I saw that] some people had different strengths and different weaknesses. So to see all that, and to work on it together was really good. Just made me feel closer to them. It made me feel closer to the program and kinda created that sense of community (Aneka, personal communication Feb 8, 2016).

“In African Worldview, dance is a conduit of individual and communal healing” (Monteiro & Wall, 2014, p. 234). What Aneka is experiencing paints a picture that resembles the process of

healing through communal rituals like African dance. She and her peers worked together in a classroom, yet were not familiar with each other on a personal level, but when they were learning the dance together Aneka was exposed to the Others' weaknesses and strengths and that process brought them closer together. She was willing to 'work on it *together*', and in doing so created a sense of community.

The symbolic meaning-making dimensions of African centered healing practices with spiritual and transformation and the availability of sacred space, allow individuals and groups to become equipped with restorative properties necessary for optimal heal to occur (Csordas & Lewton, 1998). These mechanisms not only provide an avenue for symptom reduction, but allow individuals and groups, and communities to commune with each other... which is believed to be fundamental to the process of healing (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 238).

Aneka is relating to the Other and accepting the Other in an sincere way. Together, they are healing each other as they dance they are seeing each other as they truly are, thus taking another step closer to *Ubuntu*.

Chapter Eight: Amelia Steps into the Wave

It was something I never done before and especially in teachers college. My colleagues at the time we were all sitting in a classroom and just reading from a book and power points and so on, and so forth. There aren't a number of opportunities for us to get up and sort of do something physically, so learning cultural dance I found was a much more relaxing and [a] funner learning environment; a great sort of bonding exercise (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Vignette 1. There is a social aspect for venturing into the African dance workshop and that seemed important to her as a new student on campus - getting to know others. Amelia seemed to be looking for an exciting learning environment that was outside of her normal, typical class structure. She is open to the dance workshops because doing a physical activity is more appealing to her. Perhaps, Amelia is craving culture.

“Learning a new thing has never been so exciting, yet so much out of my comfort zone” (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

It was compelling to explore *Sankofa* through the eyes of Amelia’s lived experience as she reflected on what it was like learning African dance for the very first time. She goes on to show her enthusiasm;

I am excited about experiencing something new and learning from my peers. Seeing as I don't know the other pre-service teachers very well, I thought dance might be a good way to make some friendly connections. The dance community is of special interest to me, so I guess I thought African dance would be a unique cultural experience that wouldn't cost me anything. (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016)

Amelia seemed to be striving to connect with her peers on a social level beyond her Bachelor of Education coursework. It is interesting that she expected to learn from her peers as much as the dance lessons. She seems to automatically approach the experience with a communal-oriented perspective. This is a mindset that is reflective of African Worldview as she places value on The Other's knowledge and what she has to gain from being in their presence.

What's more, she expected to learn from 'a dance community', suggesting she relates dancers as a belonging to separate community, holding knowledge that she is able to acquire. At this point, dance for Amelia is considered a separate compartment from her everyday live, but in African societies, dance is integrated into it. Despite this separation, she is however, holding the knowledge that dancers have as something valuable and worthy of her time to obtain. This opens up Amelia to accepting what she is about to experience in a positive way.

Vignette 2. Returning to Remember

Amelia also expressed her experience with her own cultural dance, although her knowledge of it was something too vague for her to discuss. It seemed that her knowledge about her own cultural dance was fading with a lack of participation. *"I'm not an expert at it. It's essentially more costume and more fan waving that I understand or have practiced, I but that's what I have done so far which is about all I can say really"* (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016). She did not learn it in a formal class of any kind, but she compared the different ways she was required to move her body in her traditional dance with what she learned doing African dance.

SAN (to return) to the Body and Things

I am not certain about the way my own cultural dance is supposed to look, because I have not practiced it regularly, but compared to African dance I can say that I don't typically move my body in the ways that I learned from the workshop....Moving my hips in a circular motion was difficult...I am usually quite a rigid person with not much range in my hip movements but doing African dance changed that. I had to be open to being freer in my waist. (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016)

Vignette 3: Sankofa Wave Ascent: African dance requires its participants to loosen up and begin to find freedom in movement, particularly in the waist and lower back. Amelia found herself to be rigid. African dance showed her that there were body movements that she would need to adjust to, both in her body and in her mind. Amelia had to loosen up to the thought of rolling her hips, because it was outside of her cultural norms.

Amelia shared how she noticed her self-consciousness about her physical body gradually melted away and how African dance helped her to find “*balance*”.

It was quite different than what I was used to and I it took a little while - a few practices for me to loosen up. I did get more accustomed to it in the end, however, I would love to learn more about African dance because I experienced it as having a rhythmic fluidity. I am quite stiff and I haven't been practicing any cultural dances of any sort, so it's like I am getting a bit of balance. Although I feel welcomed by the other dancers, I still feel a little nervous, it is foreign to me. I want to get into the flow of things and become more a part of it. Kinda like a harmony, you go and you fit right in (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: Amelia seems to be visualizing a union, or coming-together of the rhythm and flow of her body within the confines of the dance and culture inherent in African dance. She speaks of “*harmony*” and wanting to be a part of it. Even though it is foreign to her, she understands it as a welcoming place. She wants to “*fit right in*” implying she desires to be included within that culture, undetected as different. Amelia does not want to be an outsider who is just visiting; she wants to fit right in.

She is aware of her body and its stiffness, She knows that she is off balance and wants to *re(turn)* to balance and tries to attain a “*rhythmic fluidity*” that she feels is attainable with African dance. “*...Learning more of a cultural dance and more of African dancing is becoming more fluid in it, because from what I experienced, as cultural dance, it’s very fluid, it’s very rhythmic*” (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Amelia mentions that she hasn’t been practicing “*any cultural dance*”, possibly recognizing that she needs practice and that it will take some time to fully be “fluent” in that dance discipline, but she is also showing insight that the same “fluidity can be achieved through any cultural dance. This is a perspective that is accepting of the equal value of all cultures. She realizes that not only one culture can offer the harmony, and balance she seeks.

Golden Egg Moment: She understands that all cultures can be utilized to teach culturally relevant curriculum. Amelia inferred that her lack of movement made her stiff. She seems to realize that it requires time to practice and learn to loosen up in order to attain the rhythmic flow she speaks of.

Amelia’s following description is very telling of a transformation that takes place when she puts on a sarong.

I felt pretty. I felt very pretty. All the prints looked really lovely; all the colours, all the swirls, and the different patterns. Every time you brought the bin out I was just like, “which one today”? I actually like the fabric itself. When the colours were vibrant, I felt like I was much more like; ‘Oh I need to amp it up a bit more’, or try to move a little bit faster or more overtly so that it exaggerated the fabric... [I wanted to] live up to the fabric. But then a lot of times, I [found] myself drawn to the more subdued fabric; more blues, more ‘huey’ sort of things... something more mellow more suited to my personality - my dancing personality. I find that the fabric, looking at other girls, [that] the fabric brought out the attitude of the person and it allowed them to ... it gave them a bit more personality- more dancing personality (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Crest of the Wave: She is captivated by the colours and the various moods it provokes in her and what it reflects about her. On any given day, as she ties on this *thing*, she sees how the sarong can be utilized to express her mood and its power to change it. Likewise, she notes that not only was her own personality brought out, but her peers’ personalities were also on display via this intangible essence that the fabric possesses. The sarongs had the power to “allow” and “to give” a “*dancing personality*”. This implies that there is a separate or new personality that can be experienced. Amelia discovers that her “*dancing personality*” is something she can step into as she puts on a sarong.

Golden Egg Moment: She appreciates the beauty of the fabric and that it makes her feel pretty. The idea that the cultural attire from a different culture could look good on her and that it makes her feel pretty is an indication of level of acceptance that is indicative of African Worldview. She no longer sees the fabric as *some(thing)* only for the Other, but *some(thing)*

she also can be adorned with and that this is okay. Amelia is stepping into the third circle of the *Sankofa Circle*.

Amelia shared her experience on finding the courage to teach her friends outside of the school environment what she learned in the African dance workshop.

I pondered what it is like to have this kind of courage. I wondered what it is like for this pre-service teacher suddenly become excited enough to about a cultural dance, and teach her to friends. Amelia elaborates:

It was interesting and I was surprised to find myself teaching the African dance moves that I learned to my friends after the workshop. I was slowly coming out of my comfort zone. I actually showed my friends and even they had a good time! It is fair to say that I don't know everything there is to know about its cultural history or the story that they tell, but everyone had fun and found it very engaging. I wasn't sure how much my friends would retain after just one encounter with African dance, but I was certain that they were all engaged and we were doing it together (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: Amelia's courage seemed to stem from "*slowly coming out of her comfort zone*". She is feeling more secure with just a few practices. She wanted to share what she learned with others which exhibits that she considers what she is learning valuable; both for herself and valuable enough to share it. She ventures out, not knowing how her friends would respond and had them engaged in foreign movements that she did not quite master yet. No one asked her to 'evangelize' the benefits of African dance, but Amelia's excitement seems to be bubbling over, out, and beyond the confines of her classroom. Amelia is

voluntarily helping to spread the word about African dance and the joys of its movements as she takes her golden egg and moves closer to Ubuntu.

Sankofa encompasses *re(turn)ing* back to the physical or kinesthetic aspect of the body through African dance. It was interesting to hear Amelia talk about her body's lack of flexibility and how she felt that it moved contrary to how she, in her own mind, thought it should be moving.

The movements, I found were, I guess the word I'm looking for is foreign. I don't typically move my body in ways that I learned from your workshop and it's not a bad thing it's just not something I would regularly do by myself. I'm very blockish [and] there was much more hip movement than I [am] used to, so I was rather rigid at first. It was quite different but, it grows on you. I got used to it, and I got more accustomed to it, and it worked out much better in the end (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Sankofa Wave Ascent: Amelia's unfamiliarity with the movement feels "*foreign*" initially, as she is observing them as an outsider looking in. She has not had very many practices at this point and has not had a chance to allow the movement to "*grow*" on her. In contrast, however, by the end of her teaching experience, there seems to be a shift:

I was much more confident with my body...so being able to you know, spread [the] legs and bend the knees and roll my hips in a circular motion ...being able to do that without [thinking in my head], "oh um, ok my bum is rotating in a circle and it seems relatively provocative and how would I do that in front of a row of students" ...[made me think]; "I can do this! As an Asian girl, I can do this!" (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Amelia was over thinking the movements and contemplating how it would be construed by others, particularly the students. She seems to be analyzing the connotations of moving your hips in a circular motion from a North American perspective. From that vantage point, she becomes worried about it being deemed inappropriately sexual for an intermediate school and she starts feeling insecure about presenting it to students.

Golden Egg Moment: However, Amelia seems to gradually discover what it means to be present in her body and accept that particular movement as an accomplishment, even celebrate it. She is gradually arriving at a stage where she can just allow the drum to move her and not over think, or second-guess what Others may think. Amelia is learning what it means to be free, and grounded, in a body that is ‘really’ her.

KO (to go) Through Time and Space

Time and space played a role with Amelia’s gradual growth process of learning and slowly gaining confidence in African dance.

I think at first I felt quite small, that goes with being out of my comfort zone, doing something I'm not comfortable with, things I am not familiar with. I tend to feel small because I want to be unnoticed. Then as we [stood] in a circular [formation] and learned the moves more, I felt, like a puzzle piece almost, like I fit. It's difficult to describe, but it was more the sense that it didn't matter who I was standing by, or how different in height [we were], because we all just fit. At that point in time we were all sort of on the same wavelength. So I didn't feel smaller [or] insignificant. I also didn't feel that I was bigger, or that I was you know, in charge, or I didn't feel like in a leader type of role, we were all being our own leaders in our own individual [spaces]. At the end though, I felt like, taller, because I knew what I was doing. I was standing

up straighter because I was trying to present myself in a sort of overt type of manner... I [felt] that having mastered the moves and the sense [of] being more familiar with the moves, or accepting [of] what I could do, I felt a little taller in the sense that I was presenting myself with more confidence (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Sankofa Wave Ascent: Amelia's mindfulness about her body size tells a story of growth. Much like a plant being watered by its surroundings, Amelia grows taller, more confident in stature, mind and spirit. "The body is a sacred space where one lives out both the joys and sorrows of life. Movement comes from within the body and has the capacity to touch us emotionally at our roots, provoking the deepest emotions, from love to fear to joy to abandon" (Snowber, 2007, p. 1450). Amelia is honest about her anxiety to face the unfamiliar and it is expressed through the body as "*small and insignificant*" in the beginning, but by standing beside her peers in the dance circle, she gains a sense of owning her special place in the world. She is significant right where she stands - individual, yet a part of the whole. Her height is unique, as the space she occupies, but still important to the whole.

Wave Crescent: Her presence was validated as a member of the dance group. She "*fit like a puzzle piece*", therefore, she belonged as part of the community, and this gives her confidence- having a space in the community.

Another example of Amelia's personal sense of storytelling space is connected to her past ideals of dancing and how it has changed since her involvement in African dance.

I grew up in a typically sort of white girl community [and] dancing was more of a very stand-alone, sort of shaking or bopping or whatever, and I don't dance normally, in general, so I noticed almost immediately with African dancing that you're more down

low so you're legs are much more [wider] spread, so the space I'm occupying is more bigger than I had anticipated, or than I am familiar with, and then movement is much more exaggerated in the sense that it's telling a story versus standing still (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Amelia is sensing that there is a cultural difference, not only in the way that personal body space is used in African dance, but also in the interaction between dancers. The space, for her, is utilized in a grandiose way. She speaks about herself as a “white girl” and makes the point that, that form of dancing was individualistic as she was used to dancing alone, and she seems to alluded to a lack of meaning in the movements as she labels them ‘*bopping, shaking, or whatever*’, with almost a dismissive tone.

Golden Egg Moment: At this point in her journey Amelia understands the significance of different movements that tell a story and compares it to the non-meaning of simply dancing in a one spot on dance floor.

Cue the Music, Feel No Pain

In Jamaica, an international entertainer named Bob Marley wrote some famous lyrics for a song which, naturally in the spirit of our African ancestors, has become a staple Call and Response tradition. He sings about the healing power of music quoting “When it hits...” and the listener responds by completing the sentence “... you feel no pain”. Amelia’s descriptive recollection of her lived experience with learning Kpanlogo with African drums is reminiscent of feeling no pain as the pulse of each beat moves her into a new sense of self.

I think the music really spoke to me because it sounded really happy. It felt very joyful. It was like the support I needed. It allowed for my movements to be more fluid. I was following the sounds [as] I was hearing the music and the rhythm. I could hear the

music in my head because I heard it so many times, but it was ever-present all the time. I knew some of the movements to the song so long that it was intuitive almost. That, [the music and the movements], paired together, allowed for me to synchronize. It was more like “come on you want to do this, you know you want to! Show me what you got!” (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: This was a (turn)ing point for Amelia. She was not feeling any pain, (hindrances, limitations, and self-consciousness); she was moving towards a sense of freedom in her body. The music in the atmospheric space was shifting her inhibitions. She could hear the music ‘speak’ to her. She now had a connection with the movements that were “almost intuitive” and she was becoming more ‘fluid’ as she, supported by the sounds, followed the rhythms. Amelia’s joy was becoming *full* as she gradually, through time and space, was attaining meaningful understanding, stepping into the *Sankofa Cyclical Wave* and forward in her journey to Ubuntu.

FA (to look) for The Other

I now *re(turn) back* to, and delve deeper into Amelia’s decision to spontaneously share the African dance moves she learned with her friends. It was an explicit example of Amelia reaching out to the Other, as well as an act which was reflective of the peer-to-peer pedagogical strategy where teachers allow for opportunities in the classroom to develop where students can both teach and/ or emulate their peers (Goodlad, & Hirst (1989)). Amelia felt that these new movements she could perform were of value, brought her joy and decided to share it with friends who were not pre-service teachers. She knew her friends were not privy to the story behind them and acknowledged that she herself was still in the process of learning about it too, but, thought the movements alone were enjoyable.

Golden Egg Moment: To her surprise, her friends were not only enjoying it, but were also giving her pointers. They were telling her to loosen up here and there, and bend this way and shake that way. Amelia was coming out of her comfort zone and so were they! She taught them, as a new student of African dance, but they, also being novices were able to also teach her. There was an exchange of dialogue about African dance, in a space between non-African people, who were not by any means experts, but were learning together and helping one another. They were building a community of praxis through a common activity, which was African dance.

This experience is significant for the role that relationship, comfort and trust played in Amelia venturing into displaying an action she would not normally do. van Manen discusses the role of relationships and relating to the other, defining the etymological meaning of relation as ‘what people return to... the intimacies that draw us to return and reunite’, (van Manen, 2014, p. 303). It seems Amelia’s lived experience with African dance caused her to *re(turn)* to people she cared about and with whom it meant something for her to share it with.

Ubuntu Bound: Amelia also had a similar connection with her peers who were a part of the pre-service teacher crew who went to the intermediate school. She elaborates on what it was like doing the dance as a group, all together. *“I guess the difference is that I was with a group of people that I could converse with on the topic outside of what we were covering in the workshop, so it allowed for I guess, an [emersion] in our community, in itself”* (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016). Amelia and the other pre-service teachers seemed to form a bond with African dance being the centre. They created their own community with a common connection and formed their own little *circle*. Amelia and her peers are exhibiting a prominent principle of African dance which is *comm(Unity)*, as it is all about sharing the story

portrayed in the dance with *Others* and the exchange of energy between people for achieving healing and bonding. This is a significant shift toward African Worldview, to learn in conjunction with others, as she pushes onward towards Ubuntu and takes others with her on her journey.

The More the Merrier: In another instance, when a practice session was held at the home of one of the participants, there was a moment of bonding as the dancers all became in sync. The enjoyment in the atmosphere was expressed here by Amelia: *“It was fun, it was physical, there was music, there was dancing. It just felt like a group of girls having fun. You know dancing in an apartment, and just having a small party!”* (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016). It brings happiness and joy to all who partake whether it is a family dancing, friends, or an entire community village. Many villages had their own signature dance that told the story of their region, and traditions (Welsh-Asante, 1993, Asante & Asante, 1998). Amelia seemed to gather this;

*As I got to know my colleagues or the people in my [dance] group and I got to know the dance moves and the understanding that we're all out of our comfort zones here, and we're all learning to adapt to these dance moves, it was then [that] my comfort level grew in the sense that we're all trying to occupy the same amount of space and the space doesn't demonstrate possessiveness - it's a space to demonstrate or display a skill, or a challenge or to tell a story. I keep going back to telling a story. You're not taking up space to be selfish, you are taking up that space to show, **to share*** (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016). (Emphasis added)

This is a very communal oriented understanding of African dance as a space for sharing. Amelia recognizes their common struggle and bears it with her peers as they struggle through

it together. Amelia is awakened to the thought of occupying, not only body space, but a communal space that includes Others; unselfishly. That space is one of sharing a story and also *listening* to Others share their own. This is reflective of an African Worldview mindset, as Amelia takes her *space* in the SCW and takes another step closer to onward to Ubuntu.

Seeking and Finding The Other

Some were better dancers than I was, so of course it was slightly a bit different. Ah some of them were actually better than I was so they were telling me 'you should loosen up this way so that your hips move, you know, and, so forth. So it was actually kind of a different learning experience outside of that workshop, and it was really fun (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

The relational aspect of learning in a community-oriented manner seemed to stand out as Amelia spoke about her experience teaching her friends, but also learning at the same time from her friends who seemed to catch on quickly. I revert back to this is a key peer-to-peer learning concept to elaborate on its prevalence in many African dance circles. Peer-to-peer scaffolding, if you will, is also taught in the Bachelor of Education programs and implemented in classrooms, rather than strictly in a teacher-student dynamic (Assinder, 1991). This practice seemed to have come about naturally in Amelia's non-pre-service teacher peer group African dance instruction experience.

Bestowing Honour to the Other

Clothing for me, I find holds a lot of meaning. It made me feel honoured to be part of it because I am being bestowed something that makes me part of a community. It allows me to look, or resemble parts of the community that I am not familiar with. I was presented with this fabric and now [I] have to uphold what this sarong, what this

fabric means. You have to kind of embrace it. You have to appreciate it, and you have to respect it. You gotta do what it [was] meant to do, sort of thing. And if you're not committed, you're not here for it, then don't be, sort of idea. So I personally felt honoured in the sense that I was ...being accepted as capable or trusted to be able to do that; to uphold what I'm supposed to while wearing the sarong. For someone to say; I believe in you, you can do this. So do it (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: Amelia's own culture places importance on clothing and she equates that naturally to the sarong that she wears. She sees the parallels because she has been exposed to the respect that is connected to a cultural garment. She sees this offering of one community to allow someone seemingly from outside their community the opportunity to wear their cultural attire as a gesture of honour and one that should be appreciated as such. Amelia equates it to *trust*. Wearing an African print sarong is a show of being entrusted with *some(thing)* of value from their community and therefore an open door to their acceptance of her, the Other. Because Amelia chose to accept the culture of the Other, and give it honour, it seems the Other has accepted her. *Ubuntu* is recognizing the Other for who they really are and respecting them. '*I am because we are*' is reflected in knowing the Other as you know yourself.

For Amelia the role of the dance instructor was also significant in her learning. She expressed gaining a new perspective about what it means to learn to teach through the role of a student. How she gleaned this point of view as a student-teacher was interesting because I felt that understanding the perspective of a school aged student in a pre-service teacher's future classroom was fundamental to understanding the importance of cultural dance in the

classroom. Amelia seemed to gather that studying the instructor's unique way of teaching from a student's perspective was important in how the dance was being learned. She spoke about her learning being through a physical, kinesthetic, and I might add, somatic literacy. "...so you're taken out of that teacher role and you're learning how to teach through the instructor, through instruction, through learning. So you're taking learning from a different perspective especially something that is much more physical... especially dance (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016). It was compelling to hear Amelia speak of what she felt students may gain from learning African dance in a classroom setting. She saw the students developing a sense of expertise, enveloped in their sense of pride. They would become 'the teachers' and she and their peers would look to them for guidance. Amelia saw that they as teachers needed to switch roles to see what it feels like to be a student and thus become better teachers.

If students are the primary focus in this research, then a large part of African dance is not only about its preservation, but about what it can do for students of African descent. Amelia's statement is reflective of hope and what can be accomplished in a state of *Ubuntu*. If one could *feel* what it is like for someone else then a mutual understanding could be reached. Amelia seems to remind the teacher about what is on the other side of their role switching if African dance became a part and parcel of education, and if it was readily accessible to students. African Worldview suggests that positive self-image and cultural identity could be the product of that. As expressed by anthropologist E. E. Evans Pritchard, cited by Kate Ashley Clarke (2013); "...Also peculiar to African dance is that it necessarily generates leadership since someone must organize participants into groups and direct them in movement (2008, p. 6)", (Clarke, 2013, p 14). To have the means for any student to be championed in the

classroom setting is a special tool that could be utilized, or at the very least, explored in today's pedagogy.

Here, it seems Amelia recognizes the fun and excitement of African dance as an open door to introducing African culture, and to engage primary junior students, in particular.

I think teaching in the primary junior section it's easy to incorporate dance into your health education, sort of unit where it's much more fun. It's different from the ordinary. You are allowed to learn something new that they don't or might not normally see before. If they are a student that [is] familiar with this particular cultural dance, or any cultural dance it allows them to become an expert in the classroom which is nice because instead of being a learner, as a student, they are now referred to as someone who has knowledge and it is [being] tapped into as a knowledge bank. [It] then gives them a sense of... competency like being able to contribute, being able to [advise] and being able to [teach] (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

The thought that the culturally-based meanings within the dance movements could be appreciated by Amelia to the point of envisioning how they could be implemented in the classroom, and particularly by a teacher of non-African ancestry, is indicative of the potential African dance and the possibilities of culturally relevant curriculum in education.

Cultural dance I find, [teaches] about different cultures as well. Like understanding certain hand movements refers to giving to the earth or taking things away or you now taking your, well with this workshop in particular it was you know, hand gestures out from your body is releasing bad energy and taking in towards your body is taking in new. So even various symbolic movements are very simple for primary junior students to understand and story-like for them to learn a lot of the physical movements. It's

beneficial in the sense that they get to sort of understand simple things as simple as hands going out and allows them to be physically active in an environment aside from gym and running laps (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Above, Amelia spoke very casually and effortlessly about how she would use what she learned from an African dance workshop in her physical education (P.E.) class. She recognized the value of the cultural meaning behind the movements and the story which is attached to each movement. She also touched on the kinesthetic benefits. She was able to explain in detail the story that some of the hand gestures meant and how physical activity doesn't always have to present itself in the traditional P.E. manner, typically taught in North America. Instead, it can look like dance, and not just any type of dance, but a cultural dance. It can still increase heart rate, teach muscle isolation, cardio, stamina and co-operation as a team. All the components which a typical sports activity would entail were also present in an African dance routine.

It's also very nice because dance is not something that kids always enjoy, but I feel like most girls would do it, like female students and males don't typically do that sort of thing because it's not been their stereotype it's not something that's expected of boys to be taking part of...especially at a young age where they don't have that sort of stigmatism of boys dancing and allows them to sort of experience something that may not enjoy but at least they can say "I did try it" (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: Gender stereotyping is a common factor in many dance genres and many pre-service teachers try to steer clear of it in their lesson plans. Amelia gave her thoughts on this topic, revealing how she viewed African dance as something geared towards

girls, but still an activity that boys would take part in, particularly in the primary junior sector because they are still young and not yet exposed to the stereotypical biases that negatively influences boys towards dance. The participants in this inquiry were all exposed to a new paradigm in thought about men wearing sarongs and African Worldview that implies; culturally, men are considered the best dancers in many African societies due to their ability to jump higher, dance faster with longer stamina, as opposed to the typically predominant, Western view of dance being considered a female activity.

Her comments on this stereotypical thought about boys in dance was a subject matter I felt needed to be delved into further, as African dance was inherently free of gender stereotypes. Culturally both male and female were welcomed to take part, in fact encouraged. Traditionally, the African men were trained to become master drummers and/or dancers. They were raised to understand the language of the rhythms and the story behind the dance. Entire villages knew a particular dance as it was a trademark of their village or tribe. The Kpanlogo dance, for instance, from the country of Ghana, was danced by everyone and celebrated harvest time. It was joyous occasion where everyone, young or old, regardless of gender danced, creating various renditions of the dance. There is one version of the Kpanlogo dance where the boys and girls turn to each other and clap hands high above their heads (like a 'high-10') and then turn away and clap hands above their heads with the person beside them, switching back and forth in a rhythmic pattern. Amelia's statement in this inquiry awakened a new question about African dance's potential to break possible stereotypical myths about boys' participation in dance.

I would probably say the first couple times were butterflies because learning something new is quite nerve-racking. Having seen you perform the dance it was still

sort of nerve racking because [I knew] that I was supposed to mimic that sort of body movement. [It] was kind of daunting. But at the end it was kind of nice where I was able to look at the work, like; 'I got this!' It was a different set of confidence where it's like, ok, I'm not doing it exactly the way I'm supposed to but I'm on my way, I'm trying. So it was refreshing at the end. I'm relatively nervous to slightly confident and then refreshing. So it was a nice sort of transition where I didn't pummel to the ground, sort of idea (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

The body's movement and freedom to move is a growth process, similarly found in Amelia's experience. She described stages of transition, the last being a stage of "a kind of refreshing", as she names it. For her, she seemed to consider African dance as a means of rejuvenation. She was able to step back and look at her accomplishment comparatively from when she began to after her first workshop and conclude that she had improved but not just on a physical plain. She was refreshed. That signaled kind of spiritual state of being. A state of mind that was more than just being able to move her hips in time to the beat of the drum.

Discussing her perspective of the meaning behind the movement with Amelia was eye-opening.

Moving my hips in a circular motion was difficult. It was that understanding and then the breakdown of it. Each movement was new to me. Having listened to you explain this movement represent this and [moving] hands away, bad energy, hands in, good energy, was just more of a logical understanding. Most of those dance moves, I found a logical explanation behind it instead of this being a movement of "THIS" and then it was just a name for it instead of [with] an explanation, or a description. So it was nice when learning particularly this African dance because all the movements had a logical

explanation. For a logical person like myself it was practical to have because it was easier to memorize. So for each individual part it was nice and simplistic, but it was logical also and abstract (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

Golden Egg Moment: She seemed to attribute her success in learning some movements that were foreign to her body with the explanation and story behind it. She spoke about understanding the movements in a logical manner initially and then how her ability to memorize the dance increased as her physical understanding of it increased. She was not satisfied with simply naming it and moving on, Amelia was more engaged in a meaningful dance lesson when she was taught what each represented, and she shows her understanding with an example of the symbolic moving of good and bad energy with hand movements. Through actually doing it, Amelia was *re(turn)ing* to the body.

Besides attuning toward the significance of the *meaning behind the movement*, Amelia also expresses her appreciation for the opportunity to become a part of a community who dances.

I guess the overall feeling I had was being a part of something. It didn't matter if it meant being a part of something great to the overall world or the general community. I was just being a part of something that was meaningful to either myself or just our group of six or seven, but it was more [about] the fact of being a part of something and me being able to be a part of that. I decided to participate in the workshop because it was something a little out of my comfort zone. It was also a unique, free, experience to get to know some of my classmates as well as people in the community (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016).

She implies that she had some sort of intrinsic understanding from the beginning that she was partaking in something meaningful. Just the fact that she was getting involved with a team of her peers seems to constitute a meaningful activity for her. Regardless of who else deemed it meaningful, it was going to be meaningful to her. Amelia named various reasons for participating, but the fact that she was doing it in *comm-(Unity)* with others was the draw that made her decision a commitment. The fullness of Amelia's understanding about engagement as *comm(Unity)* moves her through the Sankofa Wave, inching closer with every milestone towards Ubuntu.

Chapter Nine: Viola Steps into the Wave

I'm Caucasian right, so why would a white girl sort-of-speak, you know, teach an African-style dance? It was literally a thought that I had in my mind, but [the instructor] was so open and inviting to experience this, you know, I thought yeah, I want to know what it's like. I want to put myself out of like, outside of my comfort zone (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016).

Viola is invited into the wave but is hesitant because of her non-African heritage. She is contemplating, even after the welcoming invitation by the dance instructor if she really belongs in the dance circle. Viola begins her ascent up the Sankofa Wave as her own ideals about who should dance push back against her.

SAN (to return) to the Body and Things

Despite her self-doubt Viola participates anyway, and then discovers something that interests her. Viola became excited about her experience with wearing African printed sarongs. van Manen explores this concept of attachment to “things” and how it can bring about a deep understanding of the Other. He maintains that materiality “may guide our reflection” by asking how “things are experienced with respect to the phenomenon” (van Manen, 2014).

In a real way we see and recognize ourselves in the things of our world. And things tell me who I am... Bruno Latour (1992, 2007) and Peter-Paul Verbeek (2005, 2011) suggest that things, Especially in their technological state, have agency just as human Persons do. Thus, in our encounter with things, we experience the Moral force they exert on and in our lives (van Manen, 2014, p. 307)

Snug as a Bug in a Rug

I loved it (laughs). I loved it. I, ah, you brought a lot of different colours as well right. So I kinda liked choosing, or looking at the different colours and I think once I put that on, it's true right?.. um.. But putting those on, I realized it gave me like this little, 'emph', like this moment of power, reinforcement, like "yeah I'm doing this", and I don't know, it felt like, a warrior, I don't know why I am thinking warrior. I just felt strong at that time. I just had that confidence I needed to be, like okay I can do this. Even though, you know, it's a garment (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016).

Wave Crescent: There seems to be a presence, or a connotation of strength gained with the body feeling securely wrapped with a sarong. The sarong tied snug around the body seems grounding. The slight tension is like a hug. The body is being pulled into sync with the mind. Although strength is a physical quality, here Viola describes a mind-generated, lofty concept inspired by the wearing of African printed attire, a mere cloth, but its vibrant colours were powerful enough to make the wearer feel and think they were strong. "A warrior" is an example of a person who puts on armor to go into combat. When a dancer, learning African dance, is preparing to dance they also need their armor; in this case the appropriate attire is a sarong. Similarly, the purpose of African war-dances was to prepare warriors emotionally for battle. A "moment of reinforcement" describes Viola's realization that the cultural aspect of the dance is just as important as the movements themselves. There is confirmation that she is "ready." She can now participate in the "circle" with "the other". She is welcome to come in and join. I sensed in Viola, her need for this confirmation. Perhaps, prior to putting the sarong

on there was a sense of not belonging, but now, in this moment, she had the confidence and knew she was ready.

Putting something around my waist I find exceptionally a sense of, ah, you know the women empowerment like... it's just having... you know, it's the hips right, like, this is where women bare children. I didn't feel like it accentuated anything it's not to say that it made us look sexy or whatever, but it was just that an empowering feeling to have it around there. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

Golden Egg Moment: Here we get a glimpse of femininity through the lens of African Worldview. Through the *thing* that is wrapped around her waist Viola felt an impression of empowerment, a feminine characteristic that has been given value in African culture and is expressed through the dance. It was well noted here how Viola is feeling empowered by her feminine attributes, because of the emphasis placed on her hips when wearing the African print fabric tied around her waist. It suggests that the female role of bearing children is highlighted by the attire, thus creating a notion of being valued for being a woman, and who she is. This is a piece of culture that students can physically step into and experience as they step into the sarong.

It is also an opportunity to explore what to call it. Giving it a name, not just any name, but its original name and speaking it out loud, changes the discourse surrounding various evocative cultural objects. Referring to them in the language of its origin helps students speak about it accurately, and understand the complexities behind it. For instance, although it is worn all over the continent, there are many names of the fabric such as “kitenge” [kee-teng-gay], (East African) and “wrapper” (West Africa). In South Africa both the men and women from Lesotho wrap themselves up in colourful, warm Basotho blankets over the shoulders,

and people of the Zulu and Ndebele nation wear beautiful shawls, etc. Every community has placed a different name on it, but the meaning behind it remains the same; femininity and female power, creative artistic expression, and mood. Printed with a plethora of patterns, colours that depict mood, and symbols that communicate messages about political events and happenings of that era; the kitenge is an intricate piece of the culture to discover while engaged in African dance.

Additionally, the North American gender bias that only girls wear skirt-like attire is also confronted and dispelled during these dance lessons. Males also don this piece of fabric around their waists but with a different connotation. They wear it to adorn the body when dancing, much similar to wearing other adornments such as beads, shells, woven grass skirts, body paint, etc. (Refer to: Appendix D for examples) It is considered masculine attire. Additionally, the fact that males in the community are usually the most dynamic dancers in many African societies is a revelation for some who consider dancing a female-oriented activity. The learning curve is widened if a student can understand that in many African communities men are trained from an early age to become drummers and considered highly skilled in dance and drumming. Men have the physique to jump higher and dance faster, with stamina for a sustained performance. “Women discriminate from the men in terms of dance performance vigor and endurance” (Clayton, 1979. 117).

The colours of each sarong are inviting. The fabric makes the idea of dancing more interesting. The vibrancy of the colours is an expression of personality and possibly the participant’s mood in that moment. Viola takes that feeling of being strong, armed warrior, and prepared teacher onto Ubuntu.

The colours too eh? The colours made a huge difference. Not the actual

act of wearing it, but just the brightness and all that it just adds to the whole confidence and feeling good and all that. It felt good. It definitely felt good wearing it. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

There is a good feeling that comes with wearing the cultural garment suited for the dance you are partaking in. Perhaps Viola was beginning to get the fullness of what it is to be emerged in that culture. She was gaining a sense of inclusion with “the Other”. Suddenly a bridge is created between the proverbial gap between “us and them”. The Other is now closer. The Other, in that moment, essentially has crossed over and has become “us” and not “them”. Possibly this creates empathy. Perhaps a deeper sense of understanding is being fostered when you can see yourself as a part of the whole.

Empathy, through dance, creates an intersubjective space where individuals, whether acquaintances or strangers, enter into intimate relations with each other. According to Koss-Chinino (2006), through this space, individual differences are often melded into one collective feeling and experience. This experience of being connected and the establishment of relationships through dance are viewed, in various therapeutic modalities, as predominant catalyst for therapeutic change (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 239).

Connecting to Mother-Earth & the Motherland

I don't think I was wearing socks, I think I chose not to wear socks. I wasn't in shoes. I think I was barefoot. I love walking around barefoot.

I like that contact with the ground. And it's not every day that I dance barefoot. So ah, definitely, to connect on that level, you know what I mean? (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

Wave Ascent: Experiencing the connection between earth (the world) and the body is an African-based concept that resonates in the testimonies of many who partake in African dance. Interestingly, it is often one of the first questions asked by a beginner; whether they need to remove their footwear. I noted that the novice participant is subconsciously making inferences about the way African dance is done, and as a perception I felt it owed further exploration. According to van Manen, there are some small details that we miss which require us to look deeper and glean more details (van Manen, 2014). Viola was dancing in a gymnasium of a school yet she found a connection to African culture and customs by dancing barefoot. She seemed to automatically sense that the best way to get the most out of the experience was to “do as they do”. Viola envisioned the benefits of more natural time and space had she the opportunity to dance as my African ancestors danced, in West Africa, feeling the red earth beneath their feet, the dust arising as they shuffled on the earth’s surface, as the rhythm of the drum beat pulsed in the air. We were not outside on the grass in a natural environment, or even in a dance studio, which may have been more conducive for dance, but Viola intuitively discovered that wearing a sarong and dancing barefoot was not only the proper attire for the dance, but also good for her soul.

...all I was doing was with my feet... lifting my heels, so a lot weight was actually on my heels and the front part of my foot... going back and forth. My weight felt like, I didn't feel it. It didn't bother me, I was fine with it. I didn't feel heavy at that point. I felt grounded. I did feel grounded. Because I always had both feet on the ground. Even though I was moving. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

As she dances she becomes grounded, yet Viola is weightless. She is not bothered by the heaviness she once had. It is lifted. She knows she has both feet on the ground, because her

bare feet are planted and she feels connected to African culture through the unique feeling of dancing with no socks, no shoes, no restrictions, just a sense of freedom. Shoes are not required to part take in this dance and Viola is enjoying the freedom of doing what she loves; being barefooted and that being okay.

Wave Crescent: Viola begins to discuss her ideal place to teach African dance. In spite of her short experience learning and instructing it, she visualizes what would make the workshop more engaging for students:

The thing about the purpose or the message of this song; should we be dancing or celebrating, you know in a gym? Like you know? No. It would have been a lot more fun to be outside. So being in the gym was it safe? Obviously, the students that we had, and the set up that we had, and in terms of organization and all that it was great, but it definitely would have been a lot more fun to be doing this outside on the grass. On a nice, you know, hot day where we could actually make more of a connection with the dance and the message that is being sent. Right? So being in this building, I guess, at the time, I wasn't thinking about it, but now when I think about it, it's a bit unnatural. ... to be doing this dance in the building with this school of concrete. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

Golden Egg Moment: Viola wants to relay to students everything that is involved in African dance in a way that gives it justice; not only in part, but the whole, and in all that is meaningful. She is envisioning how teaching African dance outside would enable the environment to stimulate the senses and precipitate more meaning for students. She sees how more natural scenery would be more indicative of the natural African climate and thus serve as a more conducive space for the holistic vibration of the dance to be evoked. She wants the

lessons to be as connective as possible for its meaning to be absorbed into the students' spirits. The dance would then encompass, not just movement but, include all the necessary elements for total immersion into the language that is African dance.

Gaining a connection with nature through African dance is a common theme. The meaning of the dance is often reflective of nature and village life. Many dancers speak about visualizing dancing in a natural setting. They recognize the dance movements that depict the flight of birds or crawl of snakes and show their disapproval of being in an unnatural environment that is in the four walls of a concrete building. Dancers instinctively preferred to participate in the outdoors. They chose the opportunity to unify with nature than with concrete, which is interestingly a recurring concept of African worldview.

In Africa there is a deeply held respect for the earth. This is particularly evident in the harvest dances where the dances express thankfulness of the fruits of the earth, the hunger that is past and a purification of ground and water. Often songs are used to accompany these dances in homage to farming and the earth (Welsh, 2009, p. 16).

It seems a new connection is formed with the culture as Viola steps closer to an understanding of the people who originated the *Kpanlogo* dance- which incidentally, happens to be a harvest dance. It is depicting a celebration of a good fish harvest which is the main livelihood of the coastal Ghanaian community who originated the dance. Knowing a little history of the dance and then actually doing the dance has helped to form a connection that gives her permission to accept that fishing community's way of life and even desire to teach it.

KO (to go) Through Time and Space

... everything was going by really fast. It was going by really fast., It's like, ok we are with a group of kids and boom, boom, dance routine, ok next, switch! I know it was just like constant, constant, constant, so, definitely yeah. So it felt like I had no sense of time and if I did, it was just going right by me. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

While teaching, time seemed fluid for Viola. She describes a constant flow of activity yet, the task at hand was not taxing. Although there were many groups of students flowing through the gymnasium, there was synchronicity between her, as the dancer and time. Viola's explanation, compared to the other participants, was the one who felt time pass quickly. I wondered if this was due to her being more fully engaged. She seemed focused as an instructor and wanting to accomplish what we set out to do. I wondered if her focus was aligned with her connection to the dance the meaning and possibly discerning its relevance for students. She was determined to ensure that the student got something out of our efforts in the school that day. Viola's loss of time and heartfelt, (spirit-felt) focus demonstrates her willingness to bear the burden of the innocent faces that call me Auntie. She was *Responding to The Call*.

She expresses her feelings about witnessing students become engaged as she goes on to discuss the most meaningful part of her day teaching at the intermediate school.

FA (to look) for the Other

I remember specifically, there was one group, I think they were all boys, and I had this dance move and they ended up calling it "slam dunk", and they just went with it. They were just having so much fun, and chanting "slam dunk!" That's what resonates with me the most it was just how much fun they were having. When it was moments like

that, it was fun 'cause I saw they were engaged, getting into it, you know. When it came to that group of boys specifically, and the way that they were just so responsive and engaged and they were having fun, and when they were doing the slam dunk and they were chanting all the time, it wasn't done in a way that was, you know, meant to be disrespectful, or mocking. Sometimes kids do that, right. They can be a bit mean, but they were really enjoying themselves in the present moment, and that is also what I sensed from them. That was the best moment for me, because I saw that they were genuinely just going with it, you know. Just going with the flow and enjoying the movement. I think ah that's what got me the most. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

Golden Egg Moment: Viola made a connection with the students in this particular group. This was her connection to the Other through African dance. The students who were open to the lesson, became the most memorable to her. They touched her heart because they were taking a step towards understanding of African dance and the culture by personalizing it and “*genuinely just going with it*”. They coined their own term for that particular dance move they were learning which demonstrates that they were truly making an effort to be involved in something that they may or may not be familiar with. With their efforts to make it fun, they were stepping in a direction of deeper acceptance of the dance, the Other and a step towards Ubuntu.

Engagement is an important part of the learning process. The dancers must feel engaged. Connected. This is the *meaning behind the movement*. Without the meaning: the why-am-I doing-this-connection to the dance, the dancer is literally just going through the motions. Those dancers who are able to identify with the cultural meaning behind what they

are learning will have a deeper understanding and appreciation for the dance, the culture and the people who do the dance. Those that participated, but did not make the effort to make it meaningful were less likely to show retention about the African dance lesson.

CommUNITY in Togetherness

In keeping with the traditional circle formation, Viola comments on the nonjudgmental atmosphere that it fosters among the group.

I feel like there was more connection when we are all just dancing together in a circle, or in a line when we were all trying to do it together. Whether we were clumsy or not, or if we were successful or not, in being able to do it all, the idea was that we were all together. We were doing it together. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

While practicing on campus we utilized the circle formation and also at the intermediate school while teaching the dance segments in small groups. Viola warms up to the feeling of community and togetherness at the end of the workshop when she witnesses an entire gymnasium of students, of various grades and abilities engage in one single dance. Viola notices that there is an non-judgmental atmosphere in the gym, mistakes turning the wrong way, off time with the drum beat, or out of sync in step did not mean you were out of sync spiritually. We were all “*doing it together*”, and that is what mattered the most to Viola. Unity on the gymnasium ‘dance floor’ translated in her mind as oneness, as a means to the end we were accomplishing.

There is an acceptance found in African dance, in spite of cultural differences. Viola expands on this realization as she is prereflecting on the ultimate meaning which she acquired while co-instruction with her peers:

Well I realized, I'm very fortunate that I was able to experience this. Like I am very happy that I put myself in this situation, [to] experience this. I went into it and I really enjoyed myself and if anything, it reinforces any feelings I have about learning new dances and learning about new cultures. Like it doesn't matter what kind of background I have necessarily. Like why would that stop me from learning about it; another culture or another dance? Or putting myself out there, for me, myself, I have to think about not worrying about what other people might think, right? Like I mentioned at the beginning; would I want to teach this dance in a school to a group of people? I don't know. That idea worries me a little bit, but I shouldn't have to think about that. I really should just focus on what makes me happy and what I think, and how it will benefit others in the long run. I think that's the main message that I got. Culture, background, you know, like, it doesn't make a difference. At the end of the day, we are here to dance and learn from that culture based on the dance. It doesn't matter what I look like, you know, why not just go for it? As long as it is done in a way that is respectful at the end of the day. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

Viola was already predisposed to the joy of dance and had exposure to different cultures but she feels “*fortunate*” to have experienced African dance. Previously to this experience, it seems she had an interest in learning from other cultures as she mentions the reinforcement of her feelings around exploration of new cultures. Viola is not a stranger to learning from The Other. In fact she “*puts herself out there*”, in order to do so. That shows the value Viola places on learning from other cultures, she must see that there is something to gain to be willing to sacrifice her comfort. She makes a concerted effort to think less on people who may

be judgmental of her due to her own Otherness and standing out within their circles, but rather about how it benefits her knowledge “*in the long run*”. This shows me that Viola is committed to learning in the short term, but also has long term goals to utilize African dance in some way. She has internalized a sense of self that will not allow her to be intimidated by Others, but only listen to her *heart beat, her pulse, her fire*. Viola knows that that is what really matters, that is what is important. She has learned, through African dance, to focus finding the culture inside the dance and not the exterior of the dancer.

Viola’s energy level is high and she remains positive throughout our discussion. As she speaks, I can tell that she left our dance workshop and her African dance instructing experience confident, and willing to stretch her teaching abilities for the sake of students who may be craving culture.

I’ll take it in the classroom. You know, definitely go out of my way and teach different things. Am an expert? No. Like, right now with class [she is currently employed as a elementary school teacher] I’m learning. I’m teaching the kids how to rap. Am I a rapper? No (laughs). [My attitude is] like listen guys, were gonna try this out. If works, it works, if not hey, we’re going to learn something from this...So definitely trying new things is what I’m trying to get at. I want to put myself out there. I want to try do things. I started a Zumba program at my school so [we’re] learning different dances, and I want put myself out there and get the kids to realize that you know we’re different and that’s cool. (Viola, personal communication, June 29, 2016)

Golden Egg Moment: Viola is open to experimenting with different types of music and dance genres she is not familiar with. There is a sense of bravery about her ambition to step out onto the front lines and do what she must. She exudes an attitude that what she is doing is

a heroic act for which she will sacrifice anything, and “*go out of her way*” for the sake of her students’ education. She is prepared to try new pedagogical strategies in spite of the possibility that her lesson plan may be unsuccessful. I sense that Viola is challenging herself to go above and beyond her contracted duties to insure that students leave her classroom with exposure to a variety of cultures because she wants them to experience the same level of acceptance that she knows. She says that she wants them to know “*we’re different and that’s cool*”. For Viola, difference in the Other is to be celebrated. She has tried Zumba and venturing into Rap and knowing full well that she does not claim to be an expert, but weighs the benefits of her efforts in what the students will gain. There is an enlightenment about Viola’s quest to learn about and share a culture that is not her own. Her thoughts reflect the Ubuntu philosophy which professes that no particular culture is above another, but rather, places the Other on an equal plain with your own. Viola will now take this onward in her journey towards Ubuntu.

Chapter Ten: Discussion

The Cyclical Continuum

With the most genuine acceptance of the Other being a life-long journey that must be worked through on a continual basis, a final state of mastery is never attained, but rather something aspired to. Through this continuous journey towards Ubuntu, a holistic point of view about mind body spirit Other, shifts into closer alignment with African Worldview. Through the experiential learning of a West African dance called Kpanlogo, pre-service teachers move through a continuum of remembering, returning, seeking and fetching as they engage in learning about themselves, and the culture in an African dance. By doing it, and feeling it for themselves, their state of mindfulness, and awareness about the Other is stirred up. As they practice, and also teach meaningful African-derived dance movements they are able to take a step forward, closer to Ubuntu, with every hurdle they overcome. It is a step-by-step process that takes time, and which originates with being invited to take part, and stepping into the Sankofa Cyclical Wave. Then, by moving through soulful connections within oneself, mind, body, spirit and others, a deeper understanding is gleaned through the physical body, and working in conjunction with others. Additionally, by remaining open to making a personal connection with evocative objects of African culture, (things) and flowing with ease into oneness with the culture, just as one moves effortlessly through waves, each pre-service teacher, individually, at their own pace, gradually becomes fully engaged, allowing their humanness to emerge, and in turn, informing their pedagogy.

Students who are beginners tend to start on the outside parameters (the shore) and as they become more confident in their learning they eventually step out of their comfort zone (off the shore) and into the first wave (SAN – to return). Although it is possible to remain on

the shore of the Sankofa Cyclical Waves, the waves are inviting, and the journey to Ubuntu is an inspiring challenge for making progress in ones' professional and personal development.

Next, to inch closer to the destination, a pre-service teacher must return to their past to discover their future. They must remember what they are forgetting, (Sankofa). They must go (KO) and hurdle over a wave in order to fetch (FA) a golden moment (golden egg) in their learning. Each wave is an ascent against the force of a current (a challenge in their personal or professional life) which may hold them back for a time, but eventually becomes a personal triumph, when it is hurdled. This is a shining moment in their personal journey, but also a shared victory with others (I am because we are). Due to the communal learning environment in which Kpanlogo was taught, each participant could attribute their success to the support of their peers, not only themselves.

Barriers and stagnation can make it difficult to stay in your comfort zone and not discover one's 'golden egg'. It is also possible to hurdle only one wave and not venture out, up, and over the next wave. It is even possible to hurdle two waves triumphantly but only to remain there for a time after that. The journey is tailored to the individual and their journey to Ubuntu is uniquely their own.

Each pre-service teachers' experiences have been analyzed as being on 'the shore' and awkward at the start, (an uphill battle as they move upward, over the crest of the wave), and (downhill, flowing with the current) as the dancer becomes more competent with the dance steps, self-image, ore professional development, and moves towards the golden egg. When the dancer becomes familiar with rhythms, movements, the African dance attire, and becoming a part of the whole, the Other's community, they hurdle the wave and have retrieved what they have forgotten. They become equipped with their golden egg and ready to move out of that

wave and on to the next - if that is what their individual journey to Ubuntu requires. Most importantly, a dancer must remember what they need to go and fetch. They must remember what it is they need to return to, otherwise their journey is futile, and they come out empty.

The Sankofa Dance

The wave represents an upwards, around, backwards, down, and out dance of mind body spirit Other awakening that informs their pedagogy and humanness as they move towards Ubuntu. It is a motion that can be expressed and ‘spoken’ with the body. It is a story that can be told with the language of African dance. Each dancer, of life, can take these Sankofa derived movements and express them in their own interpretative dance. Possibly pre-service-teachers could be questioned; “What is your Sankofa dance?” to initiate the process of pushing off the shore or, perhaps at the end of their CRC experience as a self-reflective summary.

Pushing off the Shore

The most common Sankofa Cyclical Wave (SCW) that the pre-service teachers had to move through was first getting off the shore and the most surprising SCW was their interaction with the sarongs. Each pre-service teacher mentioned that they either voluntarily wanted to ‘get out of their comfort zones’, or that it was a little bit of a struggle to get out of their comfort zones, and then once they had indeed fetched a golden egg from the wave, they seemed to want to encourage others to do so as well. It seemed that they wanted others to experience what they experienced, particularly if they did not have very much or any previous exposure to African dance at all.

Connecting to Things

Interacting with the sarongs was a golden egg fetching moment for many of the pre-service teachers and also interacting with the smaller items like the beaded ankle shakers and the lastly the sound of the drum. These things and being able to touch them, and wrap them around their physical bodies seem to help the pre-service teachers find meaning in the dance, in their personal lives, and in their pedagogy.

Gail found that she had a strong personal self-image and comfort in her own sexuality which was empowering for her pedagogy. She was able to harness that by putting on the sarong and demonstrating it confidently to the students she was teaching. It enabled her to stand tall, speak louder in front of many people even though she personally felt that her dancing skills were lacking.

In contrast with Aneka whose body image was not at a level where she wanted it to be, Aneka found an opening to self-love and the way she was created to be naturally as a woman. Through the wrapping of the sarong around her hips and the culture of African dance as seen through African Worldview, Aneka came to realize that her hips were not a hindrance but had purpose in her womanhood and gift of femininity. She was able to ‘look back’ at what she once thought about the size and shape of her body discern where those notions stemmed from, and then make a conscious decision to shift her thinking to that of African Worldview.

This in turn informed her pedagogy by empowering her to feel confident among her peers, who were a different shape and size than her, and still be confident in her abilities to teach the dance. She learned to see her hips as an asset in African dance, particularly when the Kpanlogo movements called for shaking and twisting, Aneka could feel good about the gift of having hips to shake. It became something to ‘show off’ as opposed to hiding.

Viola also shared a positive interaction with the sarongs. She viewed it as protection which she could arm herself with. She became a warrior. She was ready, prepared and equipped to deal with anything she encountered within the gymnasium where we were dancing, and perhaps in life. Viola was very strong in her commitment learn the dance Kpanlogo moves and had a very take charge attitude in the teaching workshop. She jumped out of her comfort zone fairly quickly and was ready to get down to work. She moved through her SCW very confidently and had some strong advice for those who might not consider trying African dance.

Viola too had a shining golden egg moment of when she realized that the boys in her group showed the most engaged interest in the Kpanlogo dance movement she was teaching. After returning to her thoughts about boys possibly being disinterested in dance, she realized shifted needed to shift her thinking to an African Worldview of male dancers on the African continent who are indeed, very skilled in dance and enjoy dance.

Helene was also quite confident pushing off the shore at the start with her extensive dance back ground, but she still encountered a wave she needed to ascent. She was worried about judgment both in the circle, and cultural appropriation in her pedagogy. Helene's fear of judgment from the Other was a resisting current force that kept her from delving deeper into connecting with African culture. It was interesting that the same judgment she feared coming into the dance circle at the workshop, was similar to what she was worried she would encounter in the classroom from students and even parents who might question her motivation for teaching about African culture. She kept her connecting at a distance, restricting her dance instruction only to allowing an African dance expert to come to the class and teach it for her. It seems Helene felt it was not her place to teach CRC at the level. There was a plateau in her

wave and she did not fetch that golden egg in that moment. This may mean that Helene needed more time with the kpanlogo because she was only engaged a one hour and a half workshop, as opposed to her peers who had an opportunity for several practices, an opportunity to teach it and some even had an opportunity for a kpanlogo performance at a talent show on campus. Perhaps Helene would have continued her journey to Ubuntu if she been exposed to more opportunities to go and fetch her Sankofa golden egg(s).

However, when it came to lesson plan extensions Helene was willing to incorporate that into her future lessons. Helene was intrigued by the items she could pick up and hold in her hands, such as the beaded ankle shakers, the Popsicle stick dolls, and the maraca shaker. She was always searching, and seeking to take (FA) something from her encounter with culture. This golden egg moment was indicative of African dance being a positive source of culturally relevant material for pre-teachers to glean from.

Moving back to Helene's experience within the dance circle, we see another golden egg moment emerge as she learns how to learn within community. Through African dance, Helene realizes that there is a different format of teaching in a circle that allows all to feel welcomed and that her presence can aid others' learning as much as her own. Her expertise in dance could support others who were perhaps less coordinated, and she, in turn, could benefit from their non-judgmental, communal, unity; which was the atmosphere of positive energy she found joining the dance circle that was collective, rather than competitive, which she often experienced in the world of dance studios and auditioning for productions. As opposed to learning in rows, Helene's thinking shifted to the golden egg possibilities that learning in a circle could bring to her pedagogy and perhaps her life.

Amelia showed a wide range of golden egg moments in her journey towards Ubuntu. She stepped off the shore timidly, but also made many connections in her SCW. To highlight just a few:

Experiencing Kpanlogo seemed to have helped Amelia venture into teaching dance in spite of how she initially viewed her body's rigidity. Her confidence was found and fetched in the doing of African dance and her personal worldview shifted as she recognized kpanlogo as something that should be shared with others, her non-pre-service teacher-friends, who had no vested interest in learning the dance but shared in the joy of the culture embodied in African dance.

*I first felt connected with the dance when there was the explanation of hands going in, hands going out and that was significant for me because in my culture we talk a lot about good and bad energy. So I thought it was great, because it was translated in a whole different culture all together, but it [had] the same significance and the same sort of meaning. It was very earthy, very natural, in the sense that my culture is also where everything goes back to the earth at the end. The earth is where we came from, and the earth is where you will go back, so you need to respect it, and your energy comes from it... So that is where I found it very similar and it was just like "Ok, it's going for the same thing, it's keeper of the earth, and you want to take care of it!" So you know, that's it, that's what's familiar to you. That's **home** for you, sort of thing.*

(Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016) (emphasis added)

An earth-based and energy-based culture as she refers to "good and bad energy" and the dance being "natural, and earthy" which is similar to her culture and parallels African Worldview

African dance also involves repetition with emphasis on the earth. This emphasis on repetition reveals that the community is attempting to express the perceived stability of its environment. That the majority of dances focused on the earth emphasize its importance because men and women till the soil to survive and at the time of death, their remains are laid there to rest. Dancing in the Orient also relishes the centrality of gravity and earth (Clarke & Crisp, 1981, p. 7) In contrast the idea of ballet is to defy gravity. (Snipes; Welsh-Asante, 1989, p. 66) (emphasis added)

European derived dance such as Celtic dance, or ballet orients the body, mind and spirit towards an aerial, lofty state which forces the body to take an upright position. All that you are is then purposed towards leaping; the muscles, mindset and spirit is prepared for flight. Lloyd (2015) describes a body which has been trained for several years to move with constriction and resistance, which then, due to the unity of mind, body and spirit, spills over into life, causing the same approach to be transferred over into the “lifeworld ” (van Manen, 2014).

Many variations in force, tempo, and intensity exist for a ballerina, though there is something that distinguishes ballet dance from other genres. The upright posture prevails and with that a tendency to become, at times, uptight. Tension in keeping everything pulled in and up is a vitality affect and form that can leave the ballet studio and can seep into one’s bodily way of being, long after the professional years of training have come to a close. Suck it in or suck it up is a way of being that endures, particularly as one experiences a difficult time in one’s life. (Lloyd, 2015, p. 35)

Comparatively, African dance is earth-bound, the movements are low, and the earth’s gravitational pull is blended with bended-knee stances, shuffling feet across the earth, and a

“how low can you go” mentality to exhibit skill and strength. Ground-spinning, Breakdancing on the street corners of African American neighbourhoods, and the backward bending Limbo dancing of the Caribbean islands are remnants of these earth-oriented movements. The mindset connected to these dances is also similar: an African dance circle is a place of release, as opposed to holding in. It is a time of letting go, hence a place for healing the mind, and to set your spirit free. Possibly Amelia, Aneka and Gail found a personal connection in this indigenous perspective, approaching the world from a culture that embodies release from worldly tension as opposed to holding in.

Barriers to Stepping into the Wave

As a researcher, it is clear to me that not everyone will be willing, or able to carry the burden of love that I carry, nor will everyone be able to be the *Response to the Call*. Gail’s accounts of her experience attests to this. She was very focused on administrative cues and not enough on her own convictions as a teacher to fulfill the cultural needs of students. Helene too was overly worried about herself and students possibly disrespecting the culture to become engaged. Although we must take into consideration, that Helene had the least amount of exposure to African dance, which may have contributed to her misconceptions, she did recognize the value of bringing dance and culture into the classroom. Gail, on the other hand, who did have more exposure, still saw African dance strictly as a unit for physical education. She did not connect to the meaningful pedagogical values of adding it to in-class subjects, in a multidisciplinary way.

Using a multidisciplinary approach to instructing African dance alongside other subjects in the classroom would maintain the traditional value of holistic-oriented instruction of African dance. The wholeness that is experienced by the other participants is connected to

the holistic approach to teaching that is inherent in African dance. Amelia considers the overall meaning she gleaned from this experience:

What meaning spoke to me? I think wholeness, being whole. And I mean wholeness as in wholesome. Being wholesome, being true. Like, there isn't any sort of pretense in dance. you dance what you feel, Um and the movements are based off your feelings, because they demonstrate how you feel, it's difficult to hide how you are you feeling or your true sort of feelings or your whole sort of feelings...[how you] exaggerate your movements, or how your body is moving, or the space you are occupying. It's all sort of a whole kind of experience where your body very wholesome. Your attitude is wholesome. You're trying to just be whole with yourself and the earth and the world and the community and yourself. You are trying to be true. (Amelia, personal communication, Feb. 22, 2016)

Gail seemed to agree with implementing a rather vague version of 'diversity' in classrooms simply because it was required of her by the school board. Whereas Amelia's lived experience gravitates towards a holistic approach to African dance. She sees that it is connected to everything and anything, and can therefore, be included with all aspects of learning, whether or not the school board deems it multidisciplinary. African dance is connected to science, mathematics; social studies, history, etc. (Refer to *Figure 13*. Jean-Paul Dionne Symposium 2016 Poster)

The Shift

Aneka discovered how much she liked West African music and began listening to it on her daily playlist. Gail discovered how familiar African music was to her own Indian music and decided she would venture out to explore different cultural music. Amelia came out of her comfort zone and spontaneously taught her friends African dance, Viola felt like a warrior

wearing her sarong, and Helene discovered the potential for extended activities and crafts after being able to touch and feel the African-centered props I introduced to her pre-service cohort during an hour-long African dance workshop. These are all strides in the right direction towards *Ubuntu* - but what will they do when they get there? Will they continue with the same positive attitude and enthusiasm?

According to Kariamuwelsh Asante (1993) implementation of African dance in mainstream curricula will require “insertion and substitution, location and content” (p. 48).

Taken together all three areas constitute a paradigm for scholarship

and praxis. **Insertion and substitution** deals with the issue of how curricula inclusion is achieved and continuity of discourse; **location** situates the African American dance regionally, socially and aesthetically and makes the necessary and appropriate connections with Africa, and **content** enables students to identify the characteristics of African-American dance and to diminish some of the ambiguity that presently exists.

(Asante, 1993, p. 48) (Emphasis added)

Asante’s (1993) suggestions are in line with acknowledging that African dance has the potential to be included as pedagogical praxis if implemented through lived curricula. The answer to my question regarding sustainability of their new found ideals about African dance as pedagogy lies in how pre-service teachers *feel* in their hearts/spirits (African Worldview). If students must have the opportunity to feel each movement to understand the meaning and learn the appropriate discourse, then teachers too, must know what it feels like themselves in order for it to stay with them.

You must *feel* it to Teach it: Practice Develops into Theory

Through the practice of doing African dance, pre-service teachers must develop their own theory about the pedagogic value of culturally relevant curriculum. “Gadamer questions the justification of the oppositional contrast between theory and practice. He asks whether it is perhaps not so much theory, but practice itself that points to the source of meaning in our lives...” (van Manen, 2014, p. 70).

.. Just as the individual who needs relevant knowledge must constantly re-integrate theoretical knowledge into the practical knowledge of his everyday life, so also a culture based on science cannot survive unless rationalizing the apparatus of civilization is not an end in itself. (Gadamer, 1998, p. 35-36)

Theory can, thus “be seen in the service of practice, following practice, or as the essence of practice itself” (van Manen, 2014, p.70). Pre-service teachers may develop a positive, culturally relevant theory of praxis that includes African dance for the benefit of cultivating students’ of African descent sense of self, and developing a genuine connection with all students of diverse backgrounds, not simply because they read it in a textbook or educational journal article, but because they genuinely felt it was necessary and relevant to their students’ cultural, mental and physical health.

There is a reason to be hopeful about the future, however. The following quote gave me hope as it encapsulates some of what pre-service teachers took away from their experience participating in the African dance workshop:

Not only does African dance embody the idea of employing healthy school programs, but it also explores a cultural aspect of education that can sometimes be a challenge to link to a physical education class. Implementing workshops as enriched as this one,

allow for students who are familiar with the culture to feel a sense of pride and act as leaders amongst their peers, and those who are unfamiliar, to learn and partake in a culturally innovative experience. (Emily Meilleur & Aashna Pardhan, Comprehensive School Health Cohort Blog, 2016)

Wave of Understanding

Re(turn)ing to the Sankofa Cyclical Wave, the indigenous knowledge system utilized to analyze pre-service teachers' lived experiences, I noted that each participant had an awkward start, in the outer circle. Then, while stepping in closer to the inner circles, as the participant becomes familiar with rhythms, attire and becoming a part of the other's community, time, space, things, other, they become more comfortable. Then in the place of belonging, and place of complete, meaningful understanding - *home*.

Merleau-Ponty posits that pathos is a life force that grounds the human experience "with the world and animals and gives depth to Being" (Van Manen, p. 17, 2014). He professes that human beings crave not just meaning, but real meaning and the sources of meaning" (p. 17, Van Manen). I believe that Amelia and Viola found the most meaning in their experiences and the type of meaning that will remain sustainable. Their lived experiences were the most descriptive, personalized and forthcoming, most importantly they seemed to connect with the Other. They were willing and seem able to Respond to The Call of the Other- the innocent faces that have taken me hostage and call me Auntie. Their openness and insight into the needs of students, above their own teacher-imposed mandates makes me hopeful that I do not have to carry this burden alone. Amelia's new found excitement gives me cause to feel hopeful about her commitment to CRC:

Being out of your comfort zone is a huge instigator and motivator to learn, to be exposed, or to change. I think I am going to take it and I'm going to disrupt people and I mean disrupt as in take them out of their comfort zone. (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016)

Ascent to Accepting the Other

Otherness is one of three key aspects of the word “Sankofa” and also included in transitional waves in the Sankofa Cyclical Wave; a concept developed to explore the growth and meaningful understanding of African culture from an African Worldview lens, as opposed to a Eurocentric perspective. For the person of African descent living in the diaspora this means reconnecting to their African ancestral roots, however for a pre-service teacher, Sankofa may have an entirely different meaning, as this inquiry demonstrated. Regardless, we must attempt to see the Other for who they really are. This is an aspiration of Ubuntu and how to recognizing your place/space in the world from an African Worldview. You are a small part of the whole, but Others depend on your contributions, and you, depend on theirs; therefore both are equally valuable, because you are equally dependent on Others for survival.

Although African dance has been researched extensively on the continent of Africa in a therapeutic context, its interdisciplinary implications have not been studied in the classroom setting. For example, Clarke (2013) and Harris (2007) discuss the effectiveness of dance/movement therapy with African adolescent torture survivors, and El Guindy & Schmais (1992) take an ethnographic observational approach to learning about the spiritual possession and healing of *The Zar* dance from the women of an East African community. However, African dance has not been studied extensively for the purposes learning by doing culturally relevant curriculum (CRC) in a pre-service teacher program in particular. This inquiry helped

to exhibit the possibilities of how other cultural dances can be used as pedagogy to assist pre-service teachers in CRC competency by experiencing it themselves.

It is important to address the lack of training in CRC pedagogy in higher education institutions, as another component of this inquiry pertained to the fact that many pre-service teachers who graduate from the Bachelor of Education programs in Canada are predominantly Caucasian females who are sometimes unprepared or disconnected with the fact that their future classroom may consist of an increase number of children of diverse heritage, particularly students of African descent, and how learning Kpanlogo in the context of CRC may inform their pedagogy. Given these narrative outcomes from pre-service teachers who have been interviewed, having experienced Kpanlogo during their current B.Ed program, it is evident that there it could be beneficial for pre-service teachers to be exposed to CRC prior to venturing out into the field.

Chapter Eleven: Implications & Conclusion

Onward to Ubuntu

Many of the participants mentioned a similar kind of progression while learning African dance. The novice African dancer tends to feel awkward at the start, on the shore, before entering into the Sankofa Wave. When moving up the wave (ascent) the dancer tends to become familiar with rhythms, attire and becoming a part of the whole, the Other's community. The opposite of wholeness is separation and therefore illness. Wholeness in all areas of one's life is necessary to journey towards Ubuntu. This includes the mind, body and spirit because in African Worldview "dichotomous, either/or thinking is not part of African belief, but instead complimentary ideas predominate. General health is related to balance and equilibrium within one's spirit...it is a harmonizing perspective that appreciates holism, but not at the expense of individualism" (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p.235). How one relates to the Other is just as important to your health and wholeness as how you relate to your body. Monteiro and & Wall explain;

African societies emphasize the social causes and impact of illness in terms of the individual's relationship to the community and the spirit world. ... those who are unable to navigate or appropriately engage the social and spiritual domains are vulnerable to illness as a result of being out of sync with the community norms and the balance and protection they offer. (Monteiro & Wall, 2011, p. 236)

Finally the dancer reaches home, the place of belonging, and place of complete understanding. This is Ubuntu. I turn our focus again to Amelia's sentiments about what it means find wholeness through African dance;

*How your body is moving, the space you are occupying; it's all sort of a whole kind of experience. Your attitude is wholesome. You're trying to just be whole with yourself and the earth and the world and the community and yourself. You are trying to be **true**.* (Amelia, personal communication, Feb 22, 2016), (emphasis added)

Amelia has arrived at a place within herself that is all encompassing of comm(Unity), the Other, and her real self. Through this experience she has connected with mind, body and spirit through honour-giving sarongs, earth-emphasizing movement, and the meaning-giving stories told through each dance movement. When Amelia speaks of being '*true*', possibly she is alluding to being '*whole*', therefore, to dance is to be whole. Snowber (2007) makes a parallel statement; "I focus on...dance as a way of knowing, dance as a way of listening, and dance as a way of reflecting; and how these ways can be a site for a pedagogy that includes both body and soul" (p. 1450). Therefore in light of these statements and this research, I propose that all students of colour and of non-African descent, regardless of ethnicity, can benefit from African dance. (Refer to *Figure 15*. Ubuntu Personified). This is not limited to African dance, but is inclusive of any cultural dance for the purpose of culturally relevant curriculum. The Brown and Evans (2002) study supports the inclusive addition of cultural activities, and with this inquiry I propose a positive activity such as African dance could be an appealing activity, for both students of non-African origin and students of African descent. Due to its cultural familiarity, students of African descent would be drawn to it, but its' physical health benefits, and therapeutic value would also attract many students from various backgrounds to engage in the movements. It also supports the "social reconstruction of pedagogy and curriculum theory that claims schools ought to contribute to the creation of a more just society" (Hesch, 1999, p. 370). (Refer to *Figure 13*. Children's African Dance

Workshop). As an extracurricular activity it may be an exciting alternative to engage students, but also serve as a motivating factor to help students stay in school. It may also foster pro-social behaviour and sustain a better learning environment. Given these benefits, would more pre-service teachers take an active, heart-felt role in including African dance or a derivative of it in their pedagogical strategies after participating in it themselves? Possibly, however, there is a need for *meaning* in the CRC. Irvine (2010) encourages teachers to be more knowledgeable about their students' rather than just being familiar with their religious holidays and ethnic foods, but instead include a better representation of their culture in the curriculum.



Figure 25. Children's African Dance Workshop Kahmaria Pingue instructing a children's African Dance workshop in Osler, SK with Dany Rousseau (La Troupe Du Jour administrator/ drummer), (2009). Dany is of French Canadian heritage and is an excellent drummer who has accompanied Kahmaria to several schools, and dance studios for dance workshops and classes. The Osler school is a small town with one elementary school who invited me to share African dance and culture with their students. This is an excellent example of students of all backgrounds engaging in African dance and both boys and girls enjoying wearing the sarongs.

This inquiry has demonstrated that time is an important factor in reaching *Ubuntu* and that it is a good gauge for assessing proximity on the journey towards Ubuntu. As their insights began to evolve into something closer to that of what reflects the values of African Worldview, they tended to exhibit more genuine oneness with the culture on a personal level.

Aspects of African culture became more integrated into their personal lives and no longer just the Other's culture, but a part of their own lives.

The depth of their participation, demonstrated by the embedded Sankofa Cyclical Waves, was signified by their proximity to meaning. The more a dancer participates, the more engaged they become and the closer they approach understanding of the dance, culture and people who originated the dance.

However, all is not lost if a teacher is unable to schedule six weeks of African dance. Ubuntu does not happen overnight. It is a mindset that must be worked on and developed every day, in all you do, not only in dance. A shift in priorities seem key to attaining Ubuntu. Motlatsi Khosi, maintains that "Ubuntu is an everyday struggle (Bhengu; Chibba, 2013).

Implications: Ubuntu Bound

It is my hope that this inquiry will help pre-service teachers to share somewhat of a similar burden, or at the very least empathize and feel an urgency to include African dance along with its benefits - not only for students of African descent, but all ethnicities in their pedagogy. My additional goal is that pre-service teachers will see its pedagogical value among their repertoire of curriculum enhancing ideas taking place within the classroom. Rather than reserving cultural-oriented activities for 'special' events, or extracurricular activity, or only as an exercise appropriate for gym class, I would propose that African dance and other diverse cultural dances be construed as an indication of progressive pedagogy. If indeed, pre-service teachers and higher institutions are to do as those do who are Ubuntu Bound, then they too must make an attempt to accept the Other by sharing in the journey towards African Worldview of mind, body, spirit with the Other; *I am because we are*.

Sometimes, due to the misunderstanding about the history of African people, many Euro-Canadian teacher candidates are unsuccessful, and are even fearful about using African-centered culture as pedagogy. There may be a fear of cultural appropriation or disrespecting even offending the people of the origin they are teaching about. I would propose training prospective teachers to equip themselves with the knowledge of African survival and contributions to Canadian society, rather than viewing African Canadians as victims and teaching from a deficit model, (i.e. the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade as a first choice versus engaging in a positive learning activity like African dance). They would then be better able to teach in Ubuntu-like fashion which "works to improve both individual and community status" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 389), thus creating a community of learners. The implementation of dance may be challenging initially, however, I propose that African dance could function as

pre-service teachers’ gateway to competency in culturally relevant curriculum, with students benefiting from the byproduct of enriched cognitive development via multidisciplinary pedagogy, in a community of praxis, thus fostering an “I am because we are” attitude towards education. As a tangible suggestion I offer the following poster which displays all the benefits of African dance when utilized in conjunction with other subjects, as a multidisciplinary strategy.⁶ (Refer to *Figure 13*, Jean-Paul Dionne Symposium Poster, for an example of four quadrants of holistic benefits when coupling African dance with other subjects, and *Figure 14*. Making Culture Tangible, for examples of tangible lesson extensions that unite African dance with art).

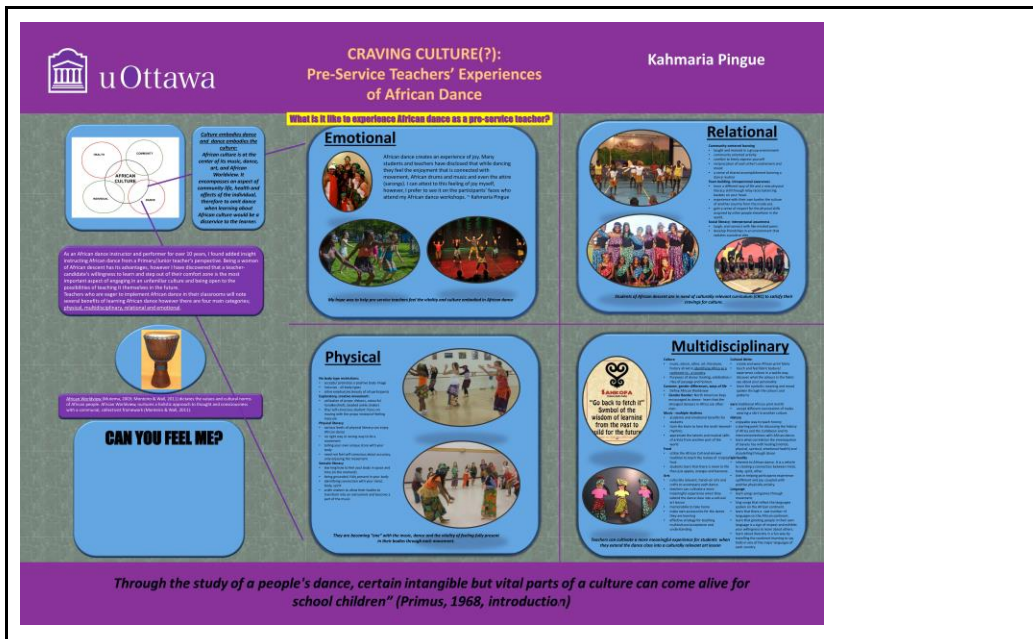


Figure 13. Jean-Paul Dionne Symposium 2016 Poster developed by Kahmaria Pingue to show the beneficial areas where African dance can be utilized in the classroom (refer to footnote 5 for details).

⁶ The Craving Culture (?) poster consists of four quadrants depicting potential areas of growth in a student’s academic life which encompasses an African Worldview to education; **emotional (spirit)**- bringing joy and emotional healing, **physical (the body)**- creating costumes, and positive physical activity, **relational (commUnity)**- bringing students of all backgrounds together instilling understanding and empathy, **multidisciplinary (mind)**- encouraging creating lesson planning and mindful connections with the other through social studies, history, music, arts, etc.

In the same fashion, where two subjects can be combined, such as Art coupled with Science, or Social Studies and Mathematics, I propose that African dance can support and be supported by other subjects to add deeper, holistic meaning, increase enthusiasm and student engagement, and a cultural relevant component to learning within the confines of the classroom.

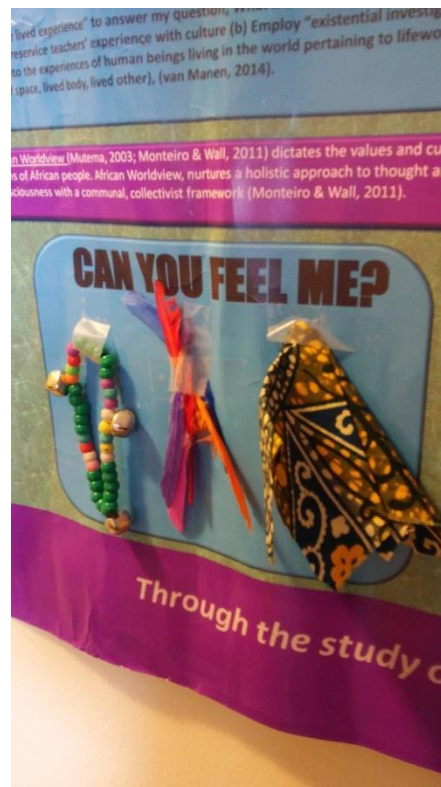


Figure 14. Making Culture Tangible. Employing the same strategy which allowed participants to touch and feel the items during the African dance workshop: **beaded ankle shaker, feathers, African print fabric**, etc., this poster was created to be interactive with viewers at the Jean-Paul Dionne Symposium 2016.



Figure 15. Ubuntu Personified. Kristin Dunn and Kahmaria Pingue performing for University of Saskatchewan Hanlon International School of Business Celebration of their Launch in Gabon, West Africa, (2011) (photographer: Larry Kwok) Saskatoon, SK. This is an example of Ubuntu as Kirstin Dunn is a Caucasian woman of Scandinavian, Saami and Gaelic heritage, but adopted and raised in an Anishnaabe & Cree family and community. Kristin has performed with Kahmaria several times with acceptance and appreciation for African dance and its culture. Kristin helped to make the costumes, beading the waist beads and choreographing the dance.

Ultimately, this research inquiry is significant for the validation of African dance and its ability to foster physical/ mental health and cultural and historical enrichment. The pre-service teachers in the CSH cohort who participated in the African dance workshop discerned this:

The Comprehensive School Health framework is essential in addressing school health. A workshop such as this one will link heavily to the pillar of teaching and learning, and also integrate the student engagement under the foundations of a healthy school. The students will be able to learn essential movement skills and be able to incorporate this into a healthy living exercise. This workshop would fit in perfectly when incorporating the dance portion of the arts curriculum into a physical education lesson

focusing on physical literacy and its connection with the performing arts. (Emily Meilleur & Aashna Pardhan, Comprehensive School Health Cohort Blog, 2016).

I propose that these two broad components (health and history) can be meshed together to support the overall development of the individual and therefore should be deemed noteworthy to the pre-service teacher, and the institutions of higher learning who wish to train teachers to go out into the world equipped to relate to all their students.

I think it [connects to] teaching, being able to learn about these different cultures. Like even say today is Chinese New Year, teaching about Chinese New Year and learning about Chinese dance...there's just so many different aspects we can teach [in] our current curriculum through other cultures. Like, we can talk about animals through the Chinese culture or we can talk about music through African dance and we can also talk about math through beats and things like that. So it's integrating our current curriculum with other cultures and other meaningful experiences (Aneka, personal communication, Feb 8, 2016).

Amelia, Viola, Aneka, Helene, and Gail helped to give insight into “a prominent social function of African communities” (Clarke, 2013, p. 14) and its potential place in their classrooms and in their lives. I hope that they continue to grow and be an answer to *The Call*.

African Worldview is based on cooperation and collectivism, as European Worldview is based on competition and individualism, therefore, in keeping with my ancestral culture, as I straddle between these two, rather conflicting worldviews I propose that to educate a child of African descent from a Eurocentric perspective, exclusively, is doing that child a disservice. It separates them from their identity and culture. It disconnects them from an inherent part of themselves which creates conflict within their souls, causing spiritual

disequilibrium and unwellness. “African societies emphasize the social causes and impact of illness in terms of the individual’s [imbalanced] relationship to the community and spiritual world” (Monteiro and Wall, 2011, p. 236) and therefore, I propose that our Canadian education system needs to *return and fetch culture* by including African dance in schools as culturally relevant curriculum and training teachers to view culture as an important piece in their pedagogy would potentially increase the academic performance of students of colour.

Developing a personal African Worldview lens, like Ubuntu is a mindset that must be worked on and developed every day, in all you do, not only in dance. Possibly a shift in priorities, like the pre-service teachers in this inquiry experienced is key to setting an Ubuntu journey in motion for educators and the general society. Motlatsi Khosi, a lecturer in African philosophy and Ubuntu at the University of South Africa, maintains; "*Ubuntu is an everyday struggle. It is a reaction to the dehumanizing world of individualism, materialism and isolation.*" (Bhengu; Chibba, 2013, para 28) (Emphasis added). Indeed, aspiring to ‘humanness’ is an admirable journey to take.

I propose that engaging in an African cultural dance, such as Kpanlogo, is a form of culturally relevant curriculum that needs to be ‘remembered and returned to’ by students of African descent to ground them in their cultural identity, as dance is one part of their ancestral heritage that may make learning engaging. Culturally relevant curriculum can give meaning to education, and can be utilized in training of pre-service teachers to connect to the Other, who are reflected in their diverse student population. I propose that doing an African dance, such as Kpanlogo, in a Bachelor of Education program can inform a pre-service teacher’s personal and professional journey to finding ‘humanness’ through collective, community-based Ubuntu-influenced pedagogy. Capturing the essence of how beneficial African dance and

culture could be for pre-service teachers and the institution of higher education, I conclude with this message: A Journey to Ubuntu may be one that is filled with many waves to hurdle; ascents, crescents, and descents, but there will always be shining golden moments to take away with you, propelling you, pushing you onward in the continuum... if you remember to return and fetch what you have forgotten is most valuable to you.

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APPENDIX A -Interview Process

The participants who have been involved in African dance workshops with me over the last two years in the Bachelor of Education program will be contacted with an email invitation. Upon their acceptance, they will be offered an interview time and location that is convenient for them. A consent form will be signed by each participant stating that they understand why they are being interviewed and that they agree to participate with minimal risk to their emotional or physical state. The interviewer will interview each participant individually, take written notes and record the conversation for accuracy and future analysis. 3 to 4 interview sessions will be conducted with each participant to confirm their reports and gain a sense of thorough data collection or “saturation”.

The pre-service teachers will be invited to write a short lived experience description (LED) about their most memorable moment learning to do African dance and submit it to the researcher a few days prior to a semi-formal interview at a location and time most convenient for them. The researcher will read the LEDs prior to the interview and develop prompts from the text that would further the discussion about their lived experience. During the in-person interview participants will be asked to discuss their most memorable moment. Warm-up questions will be asked to allow the participant to feel more at ease with the interviewer and establish trust, and also to refresh their memory about the topic. The interviewer will then proceed with more in depth questioning about the participant’s body, time, space and relation to others during their time learning African dance and teaching it to others.

APPENDIX A. 1. Participant Recruitment Poster

HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN
AFRICAN DANCE
IN YOUR B. ED PROGRAM?



**Have you ever thought about using cultural dance in the classroom?
IF SO, YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT
TEACHER EDUCATION!**

The purpose of this study is to understand and explore what it is like to experience African dance as a pre-service teacher in a Bachelor of Education program. If you have participated in an African dance workshop at the University of Ottawa in the B. Ed program within the last three years, (2013-14), (2014-15) and (2015-16) we would appreciate your assistance.

Participants will be asked to participate in one (1) to three (3) interviews about these experiences.

For more information please contact:
Primary researcher: Kahmaria Pingue
Research Supervisor: Rebecca Lloyd

APPENDIX B- Interview Questions

Because I believe that the Ghanaian term *Sankofa* appropriately depicts my quest to restore culture and meaning into my life and into the Canadian educational system through African dance, I have chosen to organize my prompting questions in accordance with the Sankofa principle: (**san** - to return; **ko** - to go; **fa** - to look, to seek and take) in conjunction with the principles of phenomenology: (body, space, time, and other). The following are simply guiding questions in order to prompt the interviewee and are subject to change in that it may prove unnecessary to ask all of these questions if the participant is freely speaking about their experience. In the same token I may ask these questions out of order, but will attempt to ask at least one question for every category to obtain a thorough description of each participant's experience.

1. What was it like to experience African dance?

SAN (to return)/ (Body)

What did it feel like in your body?

What did each individual movement feel like?

What did you feel when you put all the movements together?

What was the feeling of the African print cloth on your body like?

KO (to go)/ (time and space: The drum beats/ music/ clothing:)

What about the rhythms affected you?

Tell me more about your sense of time/ timing?

Tell me about you getting lost in a moment?

What was the connection to the music like for you?

What did the music make you feel inside?

What did it feel like in space?

What was your comfort level like, in terms of your body in that space?

What was the feel of the sarong around your waist, and hips like?

What did wearing the cultural clothing mean for you?

What did your body feel like in terms of size? Small, large, tall at any time?

What did your bodyweight feel like on the ground?

What did you envision your connection was like to the earth? What you feel your connection was to the building?

What did you feel about the country where the dance originated?

What were the significant moments for you?

When did you feel most connected to the dance?

What was it like at the beginning? in the end?

2. What is it like for pre-service teachers to teach students a cultural dance?

FA (to look seek, take)/ (other: Relationships with others; students, staff, etc)

What was it like teaching others African dance?

What was it like teaching with a group of your peers?

What meaning surfaced for you?

Where are you going to take this new found knowledge?

Questions about connection to the curriculum:

What did you feel regarding the students you were teaching, connection to a curriculum surrounding African dance?

What was it like for you to try it on your practicum, if at all?

The following will be “warm-up questions” to help the participant engage in less- complicated descriptions and informal language. They will be able to reflect on lighter, less detailed memory of their experience before the researcher begins more in depth questioning.

1. Why did you decide to participate in the African dance workshop?
2. Was this your first time doing any type of cultural dance and if so, how did you feel trying it for the first time?
 - a. If not your first time, what type of cultural dance have you done before and how was it different/similar?
- 3.) What did the movements feel like to you- foreign/ easy/ hard to adjust to
- 4) Was it an extracurricular activity when you taught the dance?
- 5) What was the most memorable moment when you were learning African dance?
What was your most memorable moment teaching it to the students at the intermediate school?
- 6) Would you be interested in learning more African dance? Or any other type of cultural dance?
- 7) Do you think it you would attempt to teach the dance you learned on your own? Why or why not?
 - a) Do you feel you need to learn more to feel confident enough to teach it?
- 8) Do you think it would benefit your fellow pre-service teachers to be exposed to any type of cultural dance? Why, or why not?
- 9) Do you think students could benefit from this type of cultural dance? Why or Why not?

APPENDIX C: Participant Consent Form**Project title:**

Craving Culture (?): Pre-service teachers' experience of African dance.

Name of researcher and contact information

Kahmaria Pingué

Master's Student, Faculty of Education,

University of Ottawa

Name of research supervisor and contact information

Dr. Rebecca Lloyd,

Professor, Faculty of Education

University of Ottawa

Invitation to Participate:

I have been invited to participate in a research project conducted by

Kahmaria Pingué under the supervision of Professor Rebecca Lloyd as part of a

Master's thesis research study at the University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to understand what it is like for pre-service

teachers to experience African dance in their Bachelor of Education programs in Canada.

Participation:

My participation will consist of participating in three(3) interviews about my experiences learning African dance in my Bachelor of Education program. The time needed for this is approximately 1 hour per session. This will take place at a time and location convenient to me. Kahmaria Pingue will audio-record my responses. There will be a two to three week period between each interview. Therefore, it is expected that these interviews will take place within two months.

Assessment of risks:

There is minimal risk that I might experience mild discomfort or stress when talking about or writing about my experiences with African dance. For example, negative or stressful memories associated with my experience in the Bachelor of Education program may cause me to experience mild stress or discomfort. Despite this potential for mild stress or discomfort Kahmaria Pingue has assured me that all measures will be taken to ensure that I feel comfortable and stress-free. There is also a minimal time commitment for participating in this study, as it is estimated that I will be required to commit only a total of 3-4 hours to this research over the course of 1-2 months. Thus, there is only potential for me to experience mild stress or frustration due to the time commitment associated with participating in this study.

Benefits:

By expressing some personal ideas about learning African dance within my teacher education program, I will contribute to an enlarged understanding of this topic from the perspective of a pre-service teacher. I will personally benefit from participating in this study as it will provide

me with a space to reflect on my own philosophies and practices as a teacher. This will benefit my professional development.

Privacy of participants:

I have received assurance from Kahmaria Pingue that the information I share will remain strictly confidential. My identity will be protected using pseudonyms to replace any variable which may compromise my privacy. Only Kahmaria Pingue and Professor Rebecca Lloyd will have access to the information revealing my identity. Revealing factors will be discussed with Kahmaria Pingue and I may request at any time that specific information may either be omitted or altered to protect my privacy. My participation will be used only for this thesis research. Kahmaria Pingue will also provide me with transcripts of the interviews.

Confidentiality and conservation of data:

I have been assured that all of the original research data will be kept secured in Professor Rebecca Lloyd's office at 452 Lamoureux building at the University of Ottawa after renovations to her office are complete, and no hard copy of the information will be available until such time. All data from interviews will be stored on Kahmaria Pingue's laptop indefinitely. I will be allowed to review the transcripts from my interviews prior to each interview and following the final interview. These transcripts will be given to me, in person by Kahmaria Pingue, prior to each interview, at a time and location that is convenient to me. The data will be kept for five years following the completion of the thesis in May 2016.

In May 2020, all material data will be shredded and electronic data will be erased.

Voluntary Participation:

I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be destroyed.

Acceptance:

I, _____ [Name of participant],
agree to participate in this first of three interviews for the above research study conducted by Kahmaria Pingue as part of her thesis research at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa under the supervision of Professor Rebecca Lloyd.

I, _____ [Name of participant],
consent to having each of the three interviews for the above research study audio-recorded: ____ Yes ____ No

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact Kahmaria Pingue or Professor Lloyd.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity, University of Ottawa,
Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street,
Room 154, Ottawa, ON

K1N 6N5;

Tel.: [613] 562-5387; Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's name Signature: **Date:**

Researcher's name Signature: **Date**

APPENDIX D: Photo Exemplars; Sankofa Lived**SAN – To Re (turn) to the Body and Things**

Figure 16. Return to Things. The St. Mark School student African dance troupe (students in grades 4 to 6 from various African countries: South Sudan and Congo)(2011) wear colourful African printed sarongs, and raffia skirts as they pose in front of a tipi after they were invited to perform at a Pow Wow at Mount Royal High School. The students each made their own beads and headbands for their costumes. (a re(turn) to *things*). This is also an excellent example of *Ubuntu* in a communal context, as two different cultural communities (Indigenous & First Nations, and Africans) are coming together as one to appreciate each Other.

SAN – To Re (turn) to Things**Waist Beads****Cowrie shell necklace and headwrap**

Figure 17. Beads and Cowries. The waist beads are worn like the sarong to adorn a woman's waistline. The headwrap can be worn as fashion and also as African dance attire. Cowrie shells were once used as currency in West Africa, but are now worn as jewelry and especially worn in African dance ceremonies.



Figure 18. Colours of the Caribbean. These colourful, vibrant Caribbean costumes with full-circle skirts and headwraps (*things*) were a manifestation of the cultural representation (Hall, 1997) which propelled me forward in time, via the Afro-Caribbean dancers who I enjoyed watching in a mall in Northern Manitoba at the age of seven.



Figure 19. Woven Kente. Authentic woven kente cloth which pre-service teachers were encouraged to *feel* at the African dance workshop. Participants were able to discern the high quality and why the fabric was considered valuable in Ghanaian societies once they were taught how the kente strips are woven on a loom and then sewn together to make the six meter long material. Retrieved from: <https://kuwala.co/blogs/news/52875777-african-fabrics-101-kente-cloth>.



Figure 20. Bandera Flag- Pan-African flag **Figure 21. Countries of the Pan-African Parliament**

KO (to go) through time and space: A Contrast in Environments

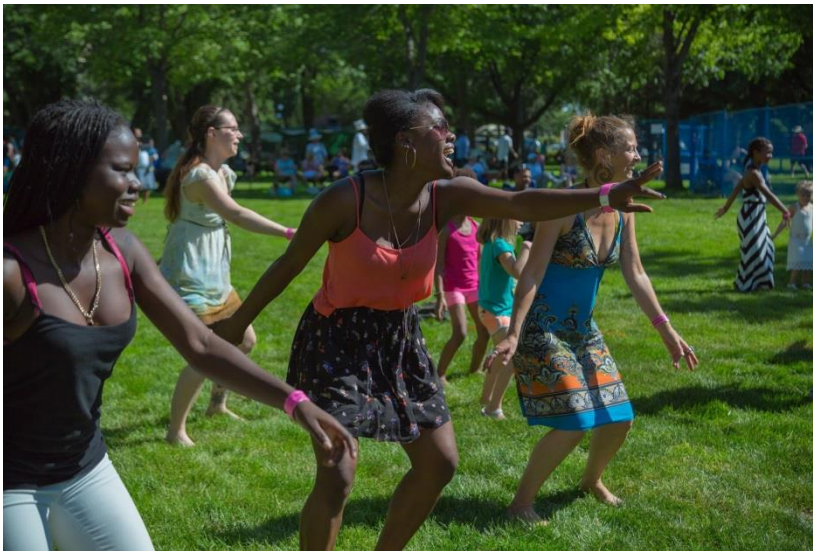


Figure 22. Dancing with Nature. African Princess Dance Troupe teaching a dance workshop outdoors on a sunny summer day. The environment can affect the space where African dance is being taught/learned. (Saskatoon, SK).

FA (to look) for the Other: Acceptance of the Other

(Photo credit: Richard Goodman retrieved from www.musclephoto.com)

Figure 23. Males in Sarongs. Men from Ghana, West Africa display masculinity in their kente wrappers/ sarongs. Males wearing a sarong is not often seen in Canadian schools. Learning to accept the Other involves accepting all parts of their culture including attire.